
OPENING REPORT

by

Prof. Dr. Thira Sutabutra
President, Kasetsart University

Professor Dr. Her Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn,

On behalf of the organisers I would like to express my deepest gratitude and cordial thanks for your kindness in presiding over the official opening of the FORTROP' 96 International Conference on Tropical Forestry in the 21st Century.

This conference is jointly organised by Kasetsart University, the Royal Forest Department and the National Research Council of Thailand with assistance, support and cooperation from various national and international institutions and organisations. Kasetsart University, as the only provider of forestry education in the kingdom and with the mission statement to secure its position as a national research and development-based university offering undergraduate and postgraduate education of the highest quality, proudly celebrates the sixtieth anniversary of forestry education in Thailand. The conference also marks the centenary of the Royal Forest Department which has safeguarded and nourished the forest and other natural resources for a century. The National Research Council of Thailand, a co-ordinator and provider of research funds, constantly supports research leading to sustainable development. Moreover, the organisers have selected Kasetsart University as the venue of this international gathering in order to inaugurate this conference centre built in commemoration of the Kasetsart Golden Jubilee.

As we all realise, we cannot afford to lose our tropical forests. But we are losing them. The task of safeguarding tropical forests represents a challenge as great as that of any other resource issue confronting humankind. The FORTROP'96 International Conference is therefore aimed to be a venue for the exchange of knowledge and experience of participants from different parts of the world in order to determine the future directions of sustainable tropical forestry in the 21st Century. The conference consists technical symposia, poster sessions, an exhibition and post-conference excursions.

The technical sessions consist of special lectures, keynote addresses, a panel discussion and individual oral presentations in eleven symposia:

Global Changes, Forestry Education, Ethnobiology, Biotechnology and Reforestation, Parks and Protected Areas, Watershed Management, Community Forestry and Agroforestry, Forest Products Utilisation, Remote Sensing, Mangrove Ecosystems, and the ASEAN Forestry Student Meeting. The sessions last for three days after which some participants will take part in a post-conference excursion to northern Thailand. There are 502 participants from 35 countries, by far the most being from Brazil, whose the world's largest plays tropical forest a crucial role in global climate change.

May I now request the kindness of Your Royal Highness to officially open the FORTROP'96 International Conference.

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