
FORTROP'96 DECLARATION

The FORTROP'96 Conference “**Tropical Forestry for the 21st Century**”, was held at Kasetsart University, Bangkok, from 25th -28th November 1996, with 502 participants representing research, educational and management institutions from 35 countries.

The conference participants recognised the global challenges that the conservation, management and utilisation of the tropical forests has to meet and emphasised the following specific issues that invite the attention of governments, organisations and individuals:

1. Tropical forests and trees have important global functions in the maintenance of biological diversity and in carbon cycling and its related processes; they also have crucial local functions in ensuring sustainable agricultural production, regulating the water supplies, and providing increasing material and non-material benefits for people, thus supporting the well-being of individuals, communities, enterprises and countries as a whole. Consequently, forest management should aim at understanding and intervening in the complex tropical ecosystems, instead of supplying single products only.

2. Strategies related to tropical forests and trees have to consider, more than has been the case to date, national and local development priorities, while also taking into account, as far as possible, international obligations related to the conservation, management and utilisation of forest resources.

3. When developing and adopting new tropical forest management models for the 21st Century it is essential to fully utilise existing traditional knowledge on tropical forests and trees, as well as forest management and scientific tropical forestry research experience gained over a long period exceeding one century.

4. Forest research and forestry education should strongly support the adoption and further development of national forest policies and national forestry programmes, whenever these are accepted as national goals.

5. In the tropical countries the national capabilities for forest research and forestry education should be strengthened by better co-ordination and utilisation of the available resources, as well as by the best use of international support mechanisms and regional and other international co-operation between related institutions.

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