

# Congratulatory Address

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Excellency, Honorable Mr. President of NIFoS, Dr. Chang Jae LEE,  
Honourable Secretariat Fellow of APAFRI, Dr. Heok Choh Sim,  
Honourable representatives of the National Institute of Forest Science, ROK.  
Honourable Acting Executive Director of AFoCO, Mr. Jun-Seok Choi,  
Honourable international representatives of Regional Wildland Fire Networks from  
Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and  
Thailand!

It is for the 4 time in 2017 that I have the privilege to attend and contribute to training and consultations on forest fire management hosted by the Korean forestry authorities, the National Institute of Forest Science (former Korea Forest Research Institute) and APAFRI.

In January 2013 the "International Symposium on Strategy Development of Advanced Forest Fire Policy and Organization" convened leading national and international fire management specialists from the Republic of Korea, from GFMC, Greece, Macedonia, and the United Kingdom. The Symposium participants exchanged views, experiences and future needs of developing national policies and implementation strategies in fire management, and recommended to follow the principles of Integrated Fire Management. These principles would include cooperative approaches and work with land owners, land managers, peasants and other rural dwellers to prevent wildfires, to capacitate land managers to safely apply, where appropriate, prescribed burning, and to actively participate in the preparedness and response of unwanted and destructive fires. It was agreed that clear jurisdictions are needed to efficiently implement the principles of Integrated Fire Management and to reduce the risk of wildfires at landscape level. Forest services and other rural land management services should be entrusted to lead these tasks.

While this Symposium in January 2013 addressed national-level policies and implementation strategies, we are now coming together at 3rd time and having training course in order to continue and enhance the dialogue and exchange of fire management expertise and resources in the Asian region.

The overarching theme of the 2013 meeting of the UNISDR Pan-Asia Wildland Fire Network was "Setting up the Secretariat and Regional Fire Management Resource Centers in

the Region".

What are the desirable means to continue the process of building up and enhancing the effectiveness of the framework for the Regional Networks under the umbrella of the Pan-Asian Wildland Fire Network? How can we strengthen efficient cooperation in wildland fire management among the Asian countries, notably by sharing experience, knowledge and resources?

Notable achievement of the cooperation is that today we organizing together the International Forest Fire Training Course as the result of the former trainings and consultations in the region.

Since NIFoS is serving as the Secretariat for the Pan-Asian Wildland Fire Network, which provides a sound institutional facilitation mechanism under which the forest services of neighbouring countries, apart of the founding members and initiators of the Regional Wildland Fire Networks, increasingly become involved. A strong institutional cooperation among the neighbouring countries is required to bring the initial strategic views to implementation.

The regional cooperation on fire management such as "UNECE Regional Forum on Crossboundary Fire Management" November 2013, which was held at the United Nations in Geneva and to which the Korea Forest Service has been invited. The intent of the Geneva Forum was to develop a UNECE-wide proposal to establish mechanism to facilitate and enhance efficiency and efficacy of regional cooperation in fire management. However, the concept of the Forum has been extended and other regions of the world are invited to provide their view, contribute and benefit from the first official UN Forum on International Cooperation in Fire Management.

Another important item was the establishment and achievement of the Regional Fire Management Resource Centers in Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia and Central Asia. Such Centers are needed to respond to the increasing demand on collection and distribution of data and information relevant to fire management among regional neighbourhoods, to facilitate capacity building in fire management at regional level and to exchange human and technical resources where needed.

In order to reach this goal it is necessary to agree on a common understanding of the themes to be addressed, a continuous flow of information both at institutional and at expert level, based on a common terminology. While most countries in West Europe, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Australasia and Africa are Indo-European languages and thus have common roots - this is entirely different in Asia. Asian languages like Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Russian, Nepalese, Burmese, Indonesian, Thai or Vietnamese, just to name a few, are entirely different. Fire managers in the Asian are used to be educated, trained and work in their native languages. A common fire management terminology in Asian languages cannot be a "simple translation" from English. Terms must be paraphrased and in some cases expressed by terms that may be unique in one language and may not have a corresponding term in another language. This is not easy – as we have experienced when adding the Russian and Mongolian language to the International Wildland Fire Management Glossary. Eurofire Competency Standard is now on more than 16 languages that recent ones are Korean and Parsi language.

But we need to take these challenges and push ourselves to establish sound foundations

for our cooperative endeavour to protect forests and other vegetation from the adverse impacts of fire.

In this regard the achievements of the Asian Regional Wildland Fire Networks Group are an important step, maybe a decisive step, as the results of the 6th International Wildland Fire Conference, which was hosted by the Republic of Korea in 2015.

Excellency, honourable participants of this training!

May I congratulate you for the endeavour of convening this International Forest Fire Management Training Course and the Pan-Asian Regional Network Meeting.

I wish the organizers, contributors and the audience a fruitful discussion and training, also a successful way ahead for enhancing cooperation in fire management between countries of Asia.