

Transitions to Sustainable Forestry in Developed and Developing Countries: Resolving Challenges with Lessons from Europe and Asia.

On January 18-19, 2010 scientists from Japan, South Korea, China, Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia presented papers at an International Symposium at the Forestry Department, Seoul National University. The paper all addressed issues of forest transition and the role that sustainable forest management does or can play in such forest transition. The symposium was co-organized between Seoul National University's Department of Forest Sciences and Kyoto University's Center for Integrated Area Studies. Financial support for the symposium was provided from Kyoto University's GCOE program: In Search of Sustainable Humanosphere in Africa and Asia.

Forest transition until date has largely been approached as a process driven by macro economic factors, and using forest cover change data aggregated at the country level to measure transition. This approach has resulted in a solid theory. However, contemporary needs to influence forest cover worldwide, for instance to mitigate climate change caused by atmospheric carbon increase, would be helped by a forest transition theory that suggest more specific intervention options. Hence, the papers presented at the symposium all explored to what extent intermediate factors that are amenable to policy interventions explain or cause forest transition.

The symposium was divided in three half days sessions to present two overview papers and five case study papers. The fourth half day session was dedicated to designing follow up activities.

The presented papers will be further developed to be published likely in an academic journal special issue. The full papers are also to be presented to an international audience at the XII IUFRO World Congress, to be held in Seoul, in August, 2007. In addition, the participants agreed to initiate a long-term collaboration exploring the central topic addressed at the symposium. Funding proposals will be prepared for ongoing meetings and to fund Ph.D researchers who will research in more detail selected case studies.

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