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**Forest and trees for healthy cities  
improving livelihoods and environment**

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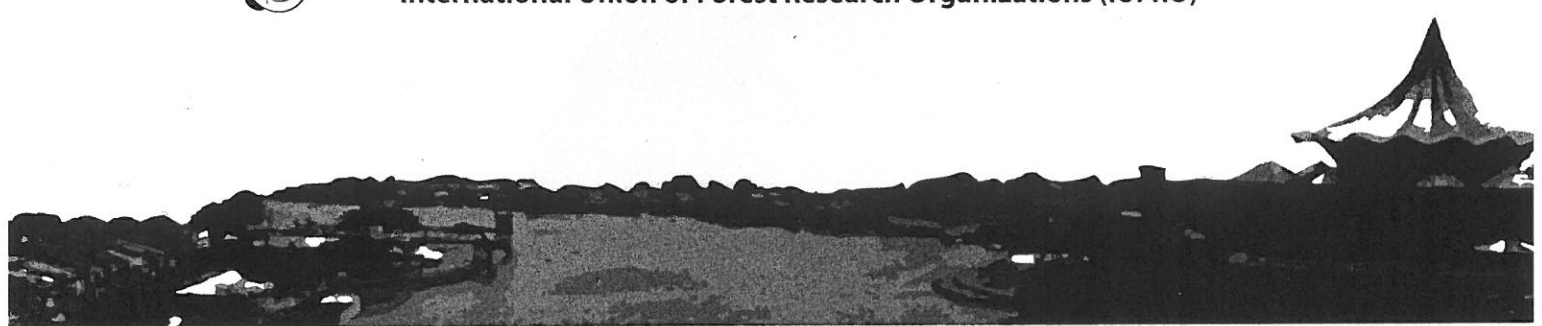
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## Session 1

## CHALLENGES IN SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

FOREST AND TREES FOR HEALTHY CITIES –  
IMPROVING LIVELIHOODS AND ENVIRONMENT

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Urban and peri-urban forestry has been defined as the art, science and technology of managing trees and forest resources in and around urban community ecosystems for the physiological, sociological, economy and aesthetic benefits trees provide. The importance of urban forestry has received limited attention in many developing countries as it is often perceived as being associated with beautification projects, which are considered a luxury benefiting only the wealthier part of the population. However, urban forestry may have a number of environmental, economic and socio-cultural values, which will also benefit poorer segments of city populations. Even in poorer countries, planning for urban trees and forests is a good investment, as these areas will be demanded when income levels increase. Once everything is allocated to other construction or infrastructure it may be very difficult to create new green areas unless these are planned for.

The Danish Centre for Forest, Landscape and Planning has been leading actor in the development of Urban Forestry in Europe during the last decade. CARE-FOR-US (Nordic-Baltic Centre for Advanced Research on Forestry Servicing Urbanised Societies), EUFORIC (European Urban Forestry Research and Information Centre), COST Action E12 "Urban Forests and Trees" and E39 "Forests, Trees and Human Health and Wellbeing", and the EU Project PLUREL on Peri-urban land use relationships, are all examples of activities initiated and coordinated by the Danish centre. It has also developed urban forestry and urban greening as a concept for environment and development aid projects in Eastern Europe and newly emerging economies, e.g. China, Malaysia and South Africa.

The international community, regional and global agendas are increasingly recognizing the needs to build the green vision for cities by optimizing the role of trees and forests in an integrated manner. FAO and other UN-Agencies are supporting the countries in facing emergency issues and constructing societies without hunger in line with the Millennium Development Goals. To illustrate the variety of solutions developed to respond to different realities, the paper presents cases of cities from many regions of the world. "Forest and Trees for Healthy Cities – Improving Livelihoods and Environment for all" is a common objective for achieving food security, improved livelihoods and a better environment for all people.

Over the coming years, the main challenge will be to ensure that the expansion of the green infrastructure in the world's urban areas is implemented within the framework of sustainability and human health and well-being, without the use of a technology inimical to man and nature and with as few chemical aids as possible.

**Keywords:** *Urban forestry, urban greening, green structure planning, urban environment, human health, public participation, development aid, environmental aid, urban-rural linkages*