Zhuhai Declaration: make forests and trees central to Asia-Pacific's future urban planning

We ... wish to send to send a message ... expressing our concerns, calling for action, proposing solutions and reaffirming our belief that forests and trees in and around cities are the key element to make cities in the Asia-Pacific region greener, healthier and happier and more resilient to climate change...

The Asia-Pacific region is home to 53 percent of the world’s urban population and is projected to have one of the largest urban growth rates over the next 20 years. In developing countries in particular, planting trees in and around cities can help fight hunger and malnutrition among the urban poor by providing a source of food, wood fuel and other non-wood products including leaves for livestock fodder. Urban forests and green spaces can also alleviate poverty by creating job opportunities in nurseries, gardening, food and furniture production and street vending.

The First Asia-Pacific Urban Forestry Meeting, co-organized by FAO, the Urban Forestry Research Center of the State Forestry Administration of the People's Republic of China, and the host city of Zhuhai took place from 6 to 8 April. The meeting was attended by over 200 participants from 17 Asian countries (around 150 from China), Europe and North America, representing around 60 government institutions, NGOs, universities, international organization and professional associations.

The participants explored the role of urban forestry in helping to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 11, which focuses on making cities in Asia Pacific safe, resilient and sustainable. Among the targets of SDG 11 are increasing resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters in cities, and providing universal access to safe and accessible green and public spaces by 2030.

Case studies from various countries, including Australia, India, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, were presented. Then, the role of urban forestry in health and wellbeing, cultural
heritage, green economy, urban planning and provision of ecosystems services was discussed in parallel working session. The results of the working sessions will be used to identify next steps in the development of possible joint activities.

At the end of the meeting participants unanimously adopted a final statement, the Zhuhai Declaration, which includes recommendations for future collaboration on urban forestry in the Asia-Pacific region.

Read more:

- [FAO Urban and Peri-urban Forestry website](#)
- [Full text of the Zhuhai Declaration](#)
- [More information on the First Asia-Pacific Urban Forestry Meeting](#)