

The politics of forest governance: understanding power and global complexity		
Panel 13		
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Abstract Panel 13 – The politics of forest governance: understanding power and global complexity.

The first two decades of this century have shown increasing public and policy attention for forest governance. The story told is one of both successes and failures. After failed attempts in the 1990s to institute a legally binding global forest convention, from the 2000s onwards we have seen major progress on voluntary certification instruments, global forest instruments, important policy declarations such as the New York Declaration on Forests, and integration of forests in political agendas of climate change (Paris Agreement) and sustainable development (SDGs), amongst others. At the same time, we are living in a period in which there has never been so little global forest cover as today. Moreover, pristine forest, untouched by man, is no longer a reality anywhere in the world. As the stakes for forest governance, both globally and locally, thus become increasingly bigger, political dynamics equally gain in presence and dominance.

This panel explores how the politics of forest governance are taking shape in a world increasingly dominated by power and complexity. Specifically, the panel asks questions such as:

- Should the complexity of global relations of politics, trade, and environment be matched by equally complex forms of forest governance?
- Are political dynamics in forest governance changing to accommodate global climate, biodiversity, and inequality crises or do old power structures still dominate?
- Can more politicized approaches to forest governance counter global trends of forest loss and forest degradation?
- What role does civil society play in national and international fora in forest politics?

The panel explores these and related questions by drawing on multiple case studies and analysis across the world. We ask how forest politics move from global to local scales and vice versa. Finally, we explore new vocabularies and imaginaries to understand the politics of forest governance in an increasingly changing world.