Global Forest Bioeconomy: Continuity or a Pathway to Transformations?		
Panel 2		
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Abstract Panel 2 – Global Forest Bioeconomy: Continuity or a Pathway to Transformations?.

This session highlights the research needs in the field of Forest Policy and Governance in an era of transitions to land- and forest-based bioeconomy and climate change emergency. It calls for methodological, theoretical and case-study contributions from disciplines and schools of thought, such as: *political ecology, environmental justice, feminist studies, global development studies, sustainability studies, transformations studies, decoloniality, degrowth*. At the European Union (EU) policy level concerns over climate change and the need for decarbonization of economy were met with bioeconomy policy, as a 'greener' and carbon neutral way of growth. Transitions to bioeconomy refers to transition(s) in economic and energy production from fossil-based to bio-based raw materials or resources. Land- and forest-based bioeconomy provides many opportunities, but it also poses various socio-ecological threats and challenges. It is therefore important to carefully scrutinize the potentials and risks in the context of bioeconomy transitions and decarbonization of economy more broadly. As the political will and commitment for bioeconomy in the EU increases, so does the global demand for biological resources, making their extraction more profitable. EU countries' reliance on import of biomass and agricultural products is in increase, (Fuchs et al. 2020, Hoff et al. 2018), while Asian and African bioresource markets along with those from Americas keep increasing (Hoff et al. 2018; Proskurina 2018). Developing EU's BE may cause additional degradation of nature, biodiversity loss, climate risks, food insecurities, and evictions of local people in the bioresource exporting countries, leading to externalization of social and ecological costs to other countries. Current evidence shows that the marginalized and disempowered societal groups are usually particularly affected, as they are especially vulnerable in losing access to land and resources to more profitable bioenergy crops. While bioeconomy discourse is most prominent in the 'Global North', until now 49 countries worldwide have adopted their bioeconomy strategies. Bioeconomy is promoted by the same policy actors, applying familiar policy tools and it relies on familiar approaches, including market-based approach and technological fixes. Bioeconomy is also linked with other commitments, including Paris Agreement, Zero Deforestation and SDGs. Past experiences

from these and similar policies urge us to assess power asymmetries, inequalities and justice related risks in the emerging global bioeconom**ies**.