

Forests

Sustainable Forests for Sustainable Fashion at Palais des Nations

"Forests for fashion – Fashion for Forests", on 21 March, was an event held to celebrate and advocate the linkages between sustainable fashion and sustainable forest management, and was organized by UNECE/FAO on the occasion of the International Day of Forests.

Forests and fashion are related in many different ways. Many cellulose fibers produced from wood pulp, such as lyocel and tencel, are already used in the fashion industry because of their properties. They can be an excellent alternative to synthetic textiles, cotton or wool, as their manufacturing process is often more environmentally friendly. At the same time, fashion also can drive the unsustainable use of natural resources, but the "level of risk depends on how it is managed," said John Scanlon, Secretary General of CITES. He also pointed out that given the world population (7 billion people) and the massive volume of international trade connected to fashion, mismanagement could be potentially devastating and "wipe out a species in very little time".

According to Paolo Naldini, Managing Director, Citta dell'Arte - Fondazione Pistoletto, we are currently witnessing a paradigm shift in the management of forests and environmental resources "from their exploitation to their sustainable utilization". "We see already a market shift to making more use of biotic raw material," said Rob Busink, Chair of the European Forestry Commission. He then added that without sustainable forest management there is no sustainable fashion because "sustainable forest management is needed both to secure supply of raw material and to demonstrate that ecological, social and economic aspects have been taken into account during the production".

This paradigm shift is synthesized by the Maestro Michelangelo Pistoletto, one of the leading figures of the Italian Arte Povera movement, in the symbol of the Forests for fashion – Fashion for Forests conference, the "Third Paradise Tree". This design metaphorically describes the area where the sphere of nature and that of the artificial come together, defining a new world where nature thrives and humankind lives sustainably.

Forests for fashion – Fashion for Forests was structured around a series of initiatives including, an art performance; a conference with high level speakers drawn from the public and the private sector; the opening of a fashion exhibit created with clothes made of forest fibers and wood accessories designed by 15 emerging young designers; and a dance performance by choreographer Marthe Krummenacher. Among the high-level keynote speakers for the event there were Maestro Michelangelo Pistoletto and Mario Boselli, President of the Italian National Chamber of Fashion. □



UN photo - Jean-Marc Ferré©



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For more information please visit: <http://www.unece.org/forests/forestsforfashion>.
Watch the photo gallery at: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/98046700@N04/>.

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UNECE Working Party on Land Administration is global model for supporting regional land governance

Activities of the UNECE Working Party on Land Administration were presented on 24 March at the World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty, which has as its 2014 theme, "Integrating Land Governance into the Post-2015 Agenda: Harnessing Synergies for Implementation and Monitoring Impact". The conference session "Vision for land governance and cooperation in Europe" included presentations by representatives of national land administration authorities and academia from six UNECE countries (Azerbaijan, Greece, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom); preliminary outcomes of a number of WPLA studies on land administration institutions were presented and debated at this session.

Another session "Regional initiatives to improve land governance" included presentations by representatives from the UN regional commissions, UN-Habitat, the Organization of American States, the World Bank and the Government of Dubai and discussed perspectives on land administration and management from different regions around the world. During this session, many participants and speakers highlighted the unique model that the UNECE WPLA provides for intergovernmental cooperation on a regional level. Although multiple regional initiatives on land administration exist in other regions, no other intergovernmental bodies have been established so far.

The WPLA also serves as a think tank for land administration authorities around the world – representatives of land administration authorities from Africa, for instance, stressed that they use WPLA indicators and guidelines in their work. Virginia Cram-Martos, session Chair and Director of the UNECE Economic Cooperation, Trade, and Land Management Division, outlined the major factors behind WPLA's success: the political commitment by governments to promoting transparent and robust land administration policies and the intersectoral cooperation at the national, regional and international levels.

The session concluded that there is a wealth of experience to be shared between different regions and that such an exchange should be organized on a regular basis. The next global information exchange session will take place in one year, during the next World Bank Conference.

The World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty is organized annually and aims at fostering dialogue and the sharing of best practices on the diversity of reforms, approaches and experiences that are being implemented in the land sector around the world. □

For more information, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=35241> or contact Gulnara Roll at: gulnara.roll@unece.org.

Campaign to promote tapwater re-launched

"This film was an eye opener for me - I had no idea about the negative impacts of bottled water. I will try to drink more tap water from now on, at work and at home." said one UN staff member after watching the film "Tapped". The screening at the Palais des Nations on 20 March was organized by the Geneva Green Group and the United Nations Office in Geneva on the occasion of World Water Day celebrated every year on 22 March.

The event aimed to raise awareness about the negative impacts of bottled water on the environment and human health. It also aimed at reviving the tap water initiative launched in the Palais des Nations two years ago. Testing by the Services Industriels de Genève (SIG) confirmed that the tap water in the Palais meets Swiss and WHO standards for safe and clean drinking water.

The film revealed that in developed countries, tap water is often more regulated and of better quality than bottled water. In the majority of cases in the United States, water is being bottled from municipal sources and resold to customers with a huge premium. Vast amounts of plastic bottles pollute the environment and the oceans, adversely impacting the fish we eat and consequently human health. Furthermore, PET contained in plastic bottles contains substances which may be carcinogenic and released into the drinking water, according to the film.

After the screening, Nick Bonvoisin, secretary to the UNECE Water Convention, presented the efforts led by the UN to provide safe access to water and sanitation to all. Jana Warming, Chief of the Operations Support Unit at UNOG, reported about efforts to green the Palais des Nations, including its cafeteria. She invited colleagues to approach her with suggestions on how to green UNOG's operations.

"Tapped" was shown as part of the Green Cineforums initiated by the UNAIDS and WHO Green Groups. The movie will be shown again on Tuesday 15 April at UNAIDS. Registration per email at: carbonfootprint@who.int. □

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FROM THE PRODUCERS OF WHO KILLED THE ELECTRIC CAR? AND I.O.U.S.A.

"With style, nerve and righteous anger, the film exposes the bottled water industry's role in sucking the public, harming our health, accelerating climate change, contributing to overall pollution, and increasing America's dependence on fossil fuels. All while gouging consumers with exorbitant and inflationary prices."
—Peter Hainberg, The Nation

