

Brief Report on Attendance at the IUFRO Working Party 7.03.12 on “Alien Invasive Species and International Trade”

I participated in the IUFRO Working Party 7.03.12 workshop on “Invasive Alien Species and International Trade” which took place in Jeldnia, Poland from 3rd to 7th July 2006. At the workshop, I represented the Malawi Government and the Forestry Invasive Species Network for Africa (FISNA) which is coordinated by the Forestry Research Institute of Malawi (FRIM). My participation was facilitated by the USDA-Forest Service and the Malawi Government. More than sixty scientists from various forest research institutions, government departments, NGOs and donor organisations from all the continents participated. Africa was represented by three participants, two of them from one institution (FABI) in South Africa. The workshop process involved presentation of 43 papers and 18 posters and two field excursions over a four day period. The presentations were categorised into four thematic areas as follows:

- i) The status of alien invasive species (AIS) in Europe
- ii) World ecological impact of AIS
- iii) AIS detection and policy
- iv) Prevention measures and treatments

I believe that my participation was very useful and fruitful for the following reasons:

i) Awareness on the African Situation: My presentation together with those from the South African participants imparted general awareness to the participants (all of whom were from the developed world) on the “realities” in the less developed regions. Information on the recent frequent occurrence of new forest AIS in Africa was presented and appreciated and so were the many problems and limitations facing the plant protection systems in the various African countries. The meeting was made aware of the generally poor implementation of permit systems for import and export of forest products and genetic materials, associated with inadequate human and material capacity and lack of risk assessments especially in most countries in the SADC region. Of special concern was the realisation that most African countries are facing problems with the adoption and implementation of ISPMs, particularly the recent ISPM No 15 on Wood Packaging Materials, due mainly to poor awareness and capacity.

The recent initiatives in Africa to harmonise approaches to AIS through networking were introduced, giving examples from the Forestry Invasive Species Network for Africa (FISNA) and SADC /IUCN program.

ii) Global AIS problems- Potential Impact on Trade: I appreciated from the meeting the global problems of AIS. Although most of the examples were on wood boring insects and tree fungal pathogens in Europe and America, it was apparent that AIS are a global problem and have serious potential impacts on international trade. It was clear that the potential impact of AIS on international trade involving wood products and wood packaging materials is enormous, and most countries which are not yet implementing ISPM 15 may be severely disadvantaged due to trade barriers.

iii) FISNA activities- FISNA activities, including the website were introduced to the participants, most of whom were interested and would like to collaborate through information exchange.

iv) New Avenues for Collaboration: During plenary and side meetings, many contacts were made and follow ups are needed on the following possible areas of international collaboration:

- Monitoring bark beetles (possible collaboration between FRIM and scientists in the Czech Republic)
- Baobab research (possible collaboration between FRIM and scientists in Germany)
- Capacity building and public awareness especially on ISPM 15 and inspection and quarantine systems (possible collaboration with NEPAD, FISNA, Malawi Government, USDA F-S, FAO).
- FISNA meetings (possible collaboration with IUFRO, USDA –FS, FAO-back to back meeting in South Africa?).

I appreciate the assistance given by the Malawi government and USDA Forest Service to enable my participation in Poland.

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