

FABIANS MAKE AN IMPACT AT ICFR SYMPOSIUM

FABI was well represented at the one-day Institute for Commercial Forestry Research (ICFR) symposium “Underpinning sustainable tree plantations in southern Africa,” held in association with the International Union of Forest Research Organisations (IUFRO), on 4 September in Durban. The symposium was organised as a side event to the XIV World Forestry Congress being held in Durban from 7-11 September.

The symposium showcased the depth and breadth of forestry research across South Africa, highlighting how research provides innovation, knowledge and technology to advance operational and management objectives, and influence policy and strategic decision-making, while growing the skills and knowledge base

The symposium was opened by South Africa’s National Minister of Science and Technology, Naledi Pandor, who emphasised the importance of scientific research in South Africa and outlined how local research was making an impact in the international scientific community. The Minister also outlined the success that Government funding, matched by contributions from the private sector has had in, specifically, combatting forestry pests and diseases.

FABI Director, Prof. Mike Wingfield, in his capacity as IUFRO President, addressed the group of researchers on IUFRO’s five year strategy for 2015-2019. The strategy addresses five research themes and associated emphasis areas, and three institutional goals. These five themes aim to guide the science collaboration within IUFRO’s global network: forests for people; forests and forest-based products for a greener future; biodiversity, ecosystem services and biological invasions and forest, soil and water interactions.

Prof. Jolanda Roux spoke on the threats posed by pests and pathogens to forests and highlighted work done in the Tree Protection Cooperative Programme (TPCP) to understand and combat these. Prof. Zander Myburg talked about the Forest Molecular Genetics (FMG) research group’s work and the role of molecular breeding and its application in plantation forestry.

Prof. Wingfield also presented Minister Pandor with IUFRO’s Little Bird, a special award presented to individuals that have a close bond with the Organisation. This was handed over by IUFRO Executive Director Alexander Buck.



Prof Mike Wingfield (A), Prof Jolanda Roux (B) and Prof Zander Myburg (C) speaking at the symposium. Prof Wingfield shaking hands with Minister Naledi Pandor (D)