

Key statements from the conference

Providing a synthesis of a conference with such density of information will never do justice to the full breadth of the discussions. A full report of the conference is being prepared and will be published soon on our website. In her concluding remarks on the last day of the conference, Prof. Tineke Lambooy of Nyenrode Business University provided her assessment of the challenges at hand in the promotion of New Forests for Africa, drawn from the numerous presentations and discussions during the conference, and the next steps to be taken:

- There is a need to invest in research and stock taking, i.e. where are we, where do new opportunities lie; we must also create publicly accessible data bases with good market information. Institutions like Indufor, World Resources Institute, the Development Finance Institutions, universities, and governments should launch a joint program.
- The AFR100 pledgers must be included in the discussion: where, when and how will the pledgers take action? How can the movement/foundation help to make this effective and to indeed realize pledges? We need to discuss the numbers and name the parties. Who will dive into which opportunity? Here lies certainly a role for the World Resources Institute, the commercial reforestation companies and investors.
- All stakeholders can take a share in expanding the communication on the positive impact of the forestry plantation sector, e.g. positive impact on conservation, biodiversity, water retention, rain, restoring and maintaining ecosystem services, climate change - carbon sequestration services, business opportunities, job creation, etc. This can be done by showcasing good examples and sharing best practices both to the broader public and to the parties working in the financial sector. This is where the movement/foundation probably has an important role to play as supporting sector organization (as discussed in the pre-session on March 15th, 2016).
- Most importantly: a collective approach is needed to lobby for accessing existing and future public funds designed for climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as development and conservation funds. We - as joint stakeholders in this sector - must advocate that such existing and future public funds bridge the gap to the private sector and include their efforts in their programs and budgets.

These concluding remarks can provide a foundation upon which next endeavors to promote commercial reforestation can build as a means to restore degraded forest landscapes.