

## IUFRO 2010

Prepared by: Ryan Nadel



**A few of the South African delegates representing FABI, DAFF and the ICFR who attended the IUFRO meeting in Seoul, Korea.**

In August this year, the International Union of Forest Research Organisations (IUFRO) hosted its 23<sup>rd</sup> World Congress in Seoul, Korea. Six FABIANS were amongst the 2743 participants from 93 countries and my participation arose from my winning the FABIAN OF THE YEAR award for 2010. Discussions and presentations at the conference focussed on the social, economic and environmental issues associated with forestry under the congress theme “Forests for the future: sustaining society and the environment”. The IUFRO World Congress was divided into nine congress themes encompassing 170 sessions. The FABI team was represented as either author or co-author in 12 scientific presentations.

A culturally rich opening ceremony as well as an address by the Korean President, President Lee Myung- Bak, initiated proceedings. He highlighted the importance of forests to Koreans. President Lee Myung-Bak and IUFRO President, Don Koo Lee, encouraged afforestation to address deforestation issues and climate change, using Korea as an example. Currently approximately 65% of Korea’s land is forested. This is largely due to a 35 year reforestation project for which over 10 billion trees have been planted. The in-congress tours gave the delegates the opportunity to view these replanted forests in addition to experiencing the cultural importance of the forests to the Korean nation. The congress tour that I attended, focussed on the protected forests for biological diversity. This included a visit to the Woljeongsa Buddhist temple, founded in 643AD located in thick *Abies holophylla* forests, and a visit to the Odaesan National Park where the plant and fungal diversity were highlighted. From the start of the IUFRO world congress and throughout its duration, the

Korean hosts ensured that delegates were exposed to, and encouraged to enjoy the Korean culture, which is strongly linked with that of forests.



**The Korean Little Angels performing traditional arts at the farewell gala dinner of the IUFRO world Congress**

The presence of FABI and the University of Pretoria was felt at this IUFRO world congress through several awards and accolades that FABIANS received. Marieka Gryzenhout received a IUFRO outstanding doctoral research award for her PhD on the Taxonomy and phylogeny of *Cryphonectria* and its allied genera. Jolanda Roux was elected as research group 7.02 co-ordinator (forest pathology) for Division 7 (tree health) and will now form part of the extended IUFRO Board. Mike Wingfield, who was formerly Division 7 (tree health) co-ordinator, was elected as vice president of IUFRO.

The congress concluded with a closing ceremony in which the Seoul resolution was ratified. This was followed by a spectacular gala event. During the closing ceremony, the strategy for IUFRO over the next 5 years was revealed and this will cover six focal areas that include: Forests for people; Climate change and forestry; Bio-Energy; Forest Biodiversity Conservation; Forests and water interactions; and Forest resources for the future. The gala dinner that concluded the IUFRO World Congress was an awe-inspiring event, showcasing talented Korean performers who astounded delegates with song and dance. This marked the end of a well organised and much enjoyed IUFRO world congress.

In addition to attending the conference three Fabians were extremely fortunate to be afforded the opportunity to attend the tree health post congress tour. The tour enabled the group to see reforested land, the threats posed by various pests and diseases, and to learn about the Korean cultural heritage. It also exposed participants to the damage to Mongolian oak trees (*Quercus mongolica*) caused by the wilt pathogen *Raffaelea quercimongolicae*, which is vectored by the insect *Platypus koryoensis* (Coleoptera: Platypodidae). Pine wilt disease vectored by Pine sawyer beetle (*Monochamus alternatus* and *M. saltuarius*) transferring the pine wood nematode (*Bursaphelenchus xylophilus*) was also seen. Cultural experiences included visiting several temples that are surrounded by protected forests with the Bulyeongsa temple having one of the oldest trees (800- years- old) in Korea still growing on these premises.