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PRE-SYMPOSIUM IFSS2017

Hosted by: LC SFSA



STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

PRE-SYMPOSIUM IFSS2017

29 June - 02 July 2017

Report by Noncedo Ngubane

INTRODUCTION

The pre-symposium tour of IFSS2017 took place in Western Cape and was hosted by the Stellenbosch University (Stellenbosch Forestry Student Association) Local Committee. The pre-symposium introduced the participants to the Dept of Forest and Wood Product Science of Stellenbosch University and also to the history of forestry in the Western Cape. They also had the opportunity to visit the most famous towns that form part of the wine route in the region, the beautiful landscapes/scenic routes of Cape Town as well as the apple farms of Grabouw in the Elgin Valley, which all together makes this province so unique in South Africa.

REGISTRATION

The registration of participants took place on 28 - 29 July 2017. There were 43 people in total which includes the following statistics: 31 Participants, 4 local Organizing Committee members, 4 Main IFSS2017 Organizing Committee members, 3 drivers and 1 FSA Representative. Upon registration, there was a gift package which included a USB drive, Notebook, pen, Name tag, Stellenbosch University bag, Maties water bottle and Agriscience booklet.

Everybody were then allocated to their rooms in the Erica residence and everyone loved the living conditions as they had so many thoughts about the country based on what they see on their local broadcast about Africa.

29 JUNE 2017- CAPE TOWN



This day started with the famous Table Mountain hike with an amazing view of the Mother City (Cape Town) and its blue cold Atlantic Ocean that everyone was looking forward to seeing. One of the fascinating things about the hike was that of the fynbos vegetation. The participants couldn't stop taking pictures of this unusual but endemic biome of South Africa.

It seemed everyone had been looking forward to this day as they all knew the tale

of the cloud above the Table Mountain. “Devils peak as the spears of clouds are shooting to the sea”, they said.

At an outdoor lunch in the winter sun with such a magnificent view, was where everyone felt like a forester in South Africa for the first time. It was a very nice atmosphere and everybody started to make friends.

During a scenic route back to Stellenbosch we made a few stops to appreciate the view of the ocean as well as one of the best sea food shops in Cape Town. We also stopped by the seal colony and had a few minutes before sunset to feel the seawater as everyone wanted to feel how cold it was compared to the temperature of the seawater at their different home countries.

30 JUNE 2017-GRABOUW

During the morning we had a few presentations at the US Department of Forest Sciences and Wood Product Sciences.

There was a welcoming presentation and information session from Stellenbosch University International Office to give information about research and exchange programs or even more if they would like to come and study at the university.

There was also a presentation from the Department’s Chairman who had just returned from France. The Chairman talked about the vision and mission statement and also explained the international connections from other universities in Africa and around the world. This seems a great point of focus for the upcoming Southern Africa Regional Representative to discuss and get more Local Committees to participate in the IFSA to involve youth in Africa and for them to have an opportunity where they can make a contribution.



Later we took a drive to Tru-cape, near Grabouw, one of the biggest suppliers of apples in South Africa. The tour of a factory was interesting as the forestry industry in our country is not very focused on agroforestry or fruit farming. The Tru-Cape team took us through the processes of their production and even gave us a few boxes of apples which lasted through the whole pre-symposium tour. It was a very welcome snack, especially when we were running behind schedule.

Some participants had been asking about cultural souvenirs, so we passed through the beautiful town of Franschoek on our way back to Stellenbosch. Here we had some time for shopping and chocolate tasting. It was surprising how many of our male companions appreciated the flowering trees and the flowers in general.

Although the weather was not on our side, the day was again well spent. Everyone was having an enjoyable time in South Africa which was the number one goal for the organizing committee of the pre-symposium.

01 JULY 2017-STELLENBOSCH



The day started off with a hike to Jonkershoek Nature Reserve and MTO Cape pine plantations. Before lunch everyone got to taste some of the wines of Stellenbosch and then they were dropped in town with their lunch packs. The afternoon was spent at free will.



The last dinner was followed by the closing ceremony at the Dept of Forest and Wood Product Science.

Everyone was happy and exciting about the next few days and to experience more of the country.



The Asian group had prepared a Shosholozza song performance to say thank you to the Organizing Committee. This also became the traditional song of the IFSA as many of the Organizing Committee and other participants have never attended an IFSA event before. The different countries sang their national anthems separately with the South Africans as the last, which got everyone relaxed and calm as there was too much energy.

02 JULY 2017-DEPARTURE TO GEORGE

The next day was a long drive on a bus to George with all participants and a few new ones joining for a ride. The journey continued.

THE END