International Arena of Knowledge Sharing Experience and Expertise

Opening the second day of the 6th IWFC, plenary sessions were held to shed light on the dynamics between wildland fire and humankind. The first plenary session on “Legacy of Fire” started early in the morning and was moderated by Brett Shields, Asia Pacific Team Director of Spatial Informatics Group. The first keynote speaker, Stephen J. Pyne, Regents Professor at Arizona State University, elaborated on the long history of fire and its relationship with humanity. He particularly provided profound explanation on how the meaning of fire has changed through time and that we should properly understand the relationship to cope with fire by diverting efforts to restore good fire into actions against bad fire. Next, based on his 40 years of study on fire in African Grasslands and Savannas, Winston S.W. Trollope, Research Adviser of the Working on Fire in South Africa, took the podium to send a strong message that fire can be a bad master, but a good servant. During the following Q&A session, it was highlighted that fire needs to be controlled particularly considering the social, cultural, and biological conditions of each region.

The second plenary session was moderated by Mr. Sang Man Jeong, President of the Korean Society of Hazard Mitigation. Dr. Sarah McCaffrey started the session with her presentation, Understanding the Social Dynamics of Fire Management: a review of social science research since 2000. She stressed that communities are key part of fire adaptation and we all need to be cautious of ‘imagined public’. Her findings also revealed that three influential dynamics are Knowledge, Trust, and Interactive communication. She was followed by Mr. Pieter van Lierop of FAO. His presentation was on Challenges for Community-based Fire Management (CBFiM). Among challenges he highlighted, one of them was financing CBFiM. In order to get investment in CBFiM, the economic costs and benefits need to be quantified and demonstrated. The last presentation was by Joseph C. Kreidi of UNESCO on Wildfire Threats and Fire Management in UNESCO World Heritage. He mentioned that not only World Heritage Sites, but also wooden heritage structures can be put in danger of wildland fire, giving an example of the loss of Naksan Temple in Yang Yang in 2005.