



STATUS OF TROPICAL FOREST MANAGEMENT 2005

SUMMARY REPORT



INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER ORGANIZATION

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The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) is an intergovernmental organization promoting the conservation and sustainable management, use and trade of tropical forest resources. Its 59 members represent about 80% of the world's tropical forests and 90% of the global tropical timber trade.

Cover photos

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This is a summary of *Status of Tropical Forest Management 2005*, a report by ITTO. The core team in the compilation and writing of the main report comprised Jürgen Blaser and Duncan Poore from consumer countries and Cherukat Chandrasekharan and Sofia Hirakuri from producer countries. Alastair Sarre, Steven Johnson and Hana Rubin were responsible for overall coordination and editing. Acknowledgements can be found in the full report, which is available from:

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ITTO welcomes comments on this summary and the full report, which can be made at the ITTO website (www.itto.or.jp). Updates of the information presented in the report, and other relevant materials, will also be posted as they become available.



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ACRONYMS

C&I	Criteria and indicators
CAR	Central African Republic
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMU	Forest management unit
ITTA	International Tropical Timber Agreement
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
IUCN	World Conservation Union
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NWFP	Non-wood forest product
PFE	Permanent forest estate
PNG	Papua New Guinea
SFM	Sustainable forest management
UNEP-WCMC	United Nations Environment Programme-World Conservation Monitoring Centre

FOREWORD

Is forest management improving in the tropics? This report sets out to answer that question.

The fate of the tropical forests has been on the global agenda since at least the 1970s. ITTO itself was created in the early 1980s partly out of a desire to assist tropical countries in their efforts to improve the management of their timber-producing tropical forests. An early survey by ITTO (in 1988) found that a miniscule amount of such forest was being managed in accordance with good forest practice; the remainder was either being 'mined' for timber or had not yet been reached by the tractors and chainsaws. Some activists, particularly in developed countries outside the tropics, called for bans on tropical timber imports.

At the same time, many tropical countries were undergoing profound political, economic, social and cultural changes, and restricting the tropical timber trade was often neither possible nor desirable. Forest-based industries supplied many tropical countries with much-needed foreign exchange and local employment, and also assisted the development of agriculture by providing access to previously inaccessible land. This process has arguably taken place in almost all now-developed countries, and tropical countries were thus pursuing a tried-and-true development model.

ITTO's approach has been to urge countries to undertake land-use planning, in which land is assigned as 'permanent forest estate' for the sustainable production of timber and other forest goods and services. On this land, ITTO has encouraged countries to adopt sustainable forest management, whereby the inherent values of the forest are maintained (or at least not unduly reduced) while revenues are earned, people employed and communities sustained by the production of timber and other forest products and services.

It hasn't always worked. Some countries have already lost a significant part of their natural forest heritage and now have relatively little forest and large areas of degraded, unstable and unproductive land. A key task of the forestry sectors in such countries is to restore forest cover where possible and appropriate. But others still have vast natural forests and are better placed to implement sustainable forest management on a large scale.

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of the forest management situation in all 33 of ITTO's producer member countries. Using information submitted by the countries themselves and supplemented by data from a wide range of other sources, it addresses the policy and institutional settings in each country, the approaches taken to the allocation and management of resources, and the status of management of those resources.

The data indicate that significant progress has been made since 1988 towards the sustainable management of natural tropical forests, but the extent of such progress remains far from satisfactory. It is clear that the security of the tropical forest estate is still in jeopardy in many countries. Processes that allow the greater participation of local communities and other legitimate stakeholders in the management of and sharing of benefits from forests are often still insufficiently developed.

We know that tropical forests are important at the global level. Therefore, the international community must strengthen its assistance to countries in their quest to establish sustainable forest management across their permanent forest estates. This report adds considerably to our understanding and knowledge of the status of management in tropical forests and provides a basis for informed debate on how best to encourage further progress.

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