

**National Report to the Fifth Session of the
United Nations Forum on Forests**

Name of country: ITALY

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I. Key Contacts

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II. Progress and issues related to implementation of IPF/IFF proposals for action

General

1. Please provide additional or new information on initiatives taken or lessons learned since 1997 further to the information on forests included in your national reports¹ to UNFF 2, UNFF 3 and UNFF 4, the Commission on Sustainable Development, and other international instruments and organizations on the following points:

- **assessment (including of the relevance, priority, status of implementation, planned actions) of the IPF/IFF proposals for action in the national context**
- **development and implementation of your national forest programme or similar national policy framework for forests,**
- **international cooperation, including development and implementation of partnerships**

Report

The general considerations set out in Italy's reports for UNFF3 and UNFF4 are confirmed for the current report, in particular the inapplicability of the suggested method of referring to IPF/IFF Proposals for Action, due to the Italian administrative situation.

It is also to note that much of the information concerning the thematic issues of UNFF5 are already contained in the reports submitted for the previous session.

Therefore this report will make specific reference to the following items:

- participation of to the MCPFE process;
- the international cooperation initiatives;
- integrated research project to combat desertification;
- projects on the sustainable management of forests included in protected areas;
- projects in the field of land rehabilitation through forest plantations and reforestations;
- progress in the second Italian Forest Inventory (National Inventory of Forests and Carbon Sinks);
- schemes of standard for sustainable forest management.

Italian participation to the MCPFE process

The forest sector has experienced a rapid change in Europe in the past decades and increasing attention has been paid to sustainable forest management issues in European forest policy since 90s. Italy, like many others European countries, joins the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) a high-level political initiative for regional cooperation. In the last three years Italy has actively supported the improvement and implementation of the MCPFE set of criteria and indicators (C&I) of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), coordinating an international group of expert working on the development

¹ National reports related to forests may be easily accessed on the CPF website at <http://www.fao.org/forestry/foris/webview/cpf/index.jsp?siteId=2461&siteTreeId=6947&langId=1&geoId=0>, however UNFF4 reports are available only at <http://www.un.org/esa/forests/reports-unff4.html> at the time of writing.

of a European Forest Type classification to facilitate MCPFE indicator-based assessments. In 2004 the European Environment Agency has funded a project coordinated by the Italian Academy of Forest Sciences and carried out by an international consortium of experts, aimed at consolidating and finalizing such a scheme of European Forest Types.

International cooperation

The Italian Cooperation has been active in the Brazilian Amazon since 1999 through its emergency fire control program, “Fogo: Emergência Crônica”, an initiative aimed at protecting the tropical forest through tackling the problem of fire prevention and control. The program, initially financed with emergency funds, is currently entering a bilateral three-year phase with its direct counterpart, the Brazilian Ministry of the Environment, and is operating in thirty two municipalities in the states of Pará, Acre and Mato Grosso, an area that comprises 177,000 km² of Amazon forest and contains a population of almost a million inhabitants. The project has allowed, so far, a reduction of 75% in fire occurrences in participating municipalities.

This project has been presented in an International Symposium on Forest Fires, organized by the Italian Cooperation Department - Ministry of Foreign Affairs -, held in Reggio Calabria, 24-25 November 2004. The Symposium particularly concerned the problems of forest fires in the Mediterranean basin.

Furthermore, the Italian cooperation is actively involved, in partnership with IUCN-The World Conservation Union, in a program to promote SFM in transboundary Protected Areas, that often occur in highly sensitive areas from the political and socio-economic perspective. A number of its are associated with areas of territorial disputes or social conflicts where forest conservation, conflict resolution and confidence building could be achieved through the application of the Peace Parks concept. These activities have been presented by the Italian representative at the FAO International Mountain Day, 11 December 2004, dedicated to the item “Peace on Hight”. This item was also concerning the Project for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in Mountain Regions, formulated by FAO with the support of Switzerland and the participation of several Countries, included Italy.

Further information is available in point 7.

Implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to thematic issues of UNFF 2

Please provide information on: activities undertaken since 1997, progress made, constraints encountered, lessons learned, and issues that have emerged, as well as relevant information related to means of implementation (financing, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, and capacity-building) related to the following elements:

Combating deforestation and forest degradation

- 2. preparing diagnostic studies to analyse historical and underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, including processes outside the forest sector**

Report

The Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research in the framework of the National Program of Research, Technological Development and High Level Training 2000-2006 has co-financed a project named 'RIADE' (Integrated Research for Applying new technologies and processes for combating DEsertification) aimed at developing an integrated and technologically innovative system for monitoring desertification processes in the southern areas of Italy; in the framework of RIADE the Italian Academy of Forest Science has prepared a technical report to contribute at determining the cause-effect relationships underlying forest degradation and desertification phenomena in forest areas of Italian southern regions.

Intensive diagnostic studies and setting up of new controlling and monitoring tools have been provided for operational routine to combat forest fires by National and Regional forest services.

- 3. formulating and implementing national policies and strategies, through an open and participatory process, for addressing the underlying causes of deforestation**

Report

Since 1997 – when Italy ratified the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification – it has been set up in Italy the Italian National Committee on Desertification, organization in charge of the UNCCD implementation at national level, like the adoption of a national action plan to combat desertification. The National Committee is assisted in its work by a technical-scientific board composed of representatives of national agencies and research organisations with relevant experience in the fields of combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. As part of its mission, the National Committee is going to adopt a working programme aimed at consolidating existing knowledge, contributing to capacity building and strengthening the ability of government research and service agencies throughout Italy in combating land degradation and desertification.

The work programme includes the development of methodologies to map areas vulnerable to forest degradation and the elaboration of guidelines for forest measures aimed at combating desertification and soil degradation caused by drought phenomena. Such guidelines are elaborated in close connection with the operative directions for the establishment of new forest plantations in the framework of the national actions to comply with the Kyoto protocol issues.

- 4. raising awareness of the importance of issues related to deforestation and forest degradation and the multiple values of forests**

Forest conservation and protection of unique types of forest and fragile ecosystems

- 5. creating or expanding protected areas to safeguard forest and related ecosystems and their full range of values and, developing and applying criteria and methodologies for assessing the conditions and management effectiveness in protected forest areas**

Report

Since the end of 90s there has been an increasing attention in Italy to the development of operational guidelines targeted to the sustainable management of forests included in protected areas and Natura 2000 sites. Two main projects are relevant in this respect:

1. “Natura 2000 network in Italy: management models” (LIFE99 NAT/IT/006279); one of the main outcomes of the project are management guidelines for Italian Natura 2000 sites having forest habitats as features of interest. Management guidelines include descriptions of forest habitats ecological requirements, threats for habitat conservation and indicators for monitoring habitat conservation status.

2. “Guidelines for the sustainable management of forest, agricultural and pasture resources in Italian National Parks”, project carried out by the Italian Academy of Forest Sciences and funded by Nature Conservation Direction of the Italian Ministry of Environment. Main outcome of the project is a guide describing relevant forest types found in Italian National Parks and related guidelines for their sustainable forest management, tailored for different regimes of forest protection.

6. developing and implementing partnership mechanisms to engage forest owners, private sector, indigenous people and local communities in the planning and management of forest conservation areas and developing and implementing a range of innovative mechanisms for financing and encouraging forest conservation

7. giving high priority in national forest programs to the rehabilitation and sustainable management of forests and trees in environmentally critical areas, recognising the linkage between forest protection and sustainable development and improving the coordination among such policies and programmes

Report

Within the activities of the international cooperation, which are supported by the Forest Corps and financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in June and July 2004, a basic training course was taken in the Italian military base in Kosovo aimed to put out forest fire by the help of tools, which was addressed to 250 persons of the Kosovo Protection Korp. In November 2004 this initiative had a following addressed to the Directors involved into the same activity. The second training took place by the School of the Forest Corps in Italy.

During the current year has been arranged another cooperation project by the Forest Corps with the Albania, intended to give technical assistance and support the institutional strength of the Albanian forest administration. The project, with the approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is on the way to be performed on next month.

Rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover

8. expanding forested area, establishing and managing plantations to enhance production of forest goods and services, while avoiding the replacement of natural ecosystems, and recognizing the role of imports in satisfying the needs for forest products and services

9. promoting the regeneration and restoration of degraded forest areas including through partnerships and building capacities to promote effective participation in decision making, and development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies

10. improving the efficiency of international cooperation to support the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and building capacity to monitor forest resources

Rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands and promotion of natural and planted forests

11. promoting the creation of new forest resources through plantations and recognizing their role in rehabilitation of degraded lands and forests in environmentally critical areas

Report

Forest research has provided a specific contribution to strengthen capacity building in the field of land rehabilitation through forest plantations and reforestations. Two main projects are relevant in this respect:

1. "Models for sustainable forest tree cropping in Southern Italy" this project, carried out within the national Multi-regional Operative Program (POM), implemented a land evaluation model based on fuzzy GIS technologies to define areas suitable for the establishment of forest productive plantations in the southern Regions of Italy.
2. "RIMBDES", national project founded by Ministry of Scientific and Technological Research aimed at evaluating the potential of reforestations in combating desertification processes in Italian Mediterranean environments.

12. **promoting policies to meet increasing demand for wood and non-wood forest products and services, through sustainable forest management.**

Implementation of the IPE/IFF proposals for action related to thematic issues of UNFF 3

Please refer to your national report if appropriate, or provide new or updated information on: activities undertaken since 1997, progress made, constraints encountered, lessons learned, and issues that have emerged, as well as relevant information related to means of implementation (financing, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, and capacity-building) to support the following actions:

Economic aspects of forests, including trade

13. **valuation of forest goods and services (this may include, among other things, the development and use of new valuation methodologies, valuation of a wider range of goods and services, and policy decisions that reflect a more comprehensive assessment of forest values)**
14. **the amount, scope, or quality of market data and information for wood and non-wood forest products and their substitutes**
15. **use of economic and policy instruments to facilitate progress toward sustainable forest management (these may include improved tax policies and forest revenue collection systems)**
16. **efforts to reduce negative impacts of trade,**
17. **participation in forest certification and labelling schemes and work toward mutual recognition and comparability of such schemes, and**
18. **efforts to reduce illegal trade (exports from or imports into your country) in wood or non-wood forest products. Please indicate achievements made, lessons learned, constraints encountered, and planned initiatives.**

Report

About Italian scheme of forest certification, see at point 30 below.

As it regards illegal trade in wood products, an important reference has to be made to the Italian report at the "Joint UNECE/FAO Workshop on Illegal Logging and Trade of Illegally derived Forest Products in the UNECE Region", which took place in Geneva, September 16 - 17, 2004. This report, among other information, recalls the tendency of the word "forestry" to identify itself with the word "sustainability", that found significant application in the Ministerial Conference of Lisbon on the Protection of Forests in Europe (1998). In presenting such report it has been made reference to the Symposium "The European Forests in Ethical Discourse", that will be held in Berlin, 18-19 January, 2005

Forest health and productivity

- 19. If damage to forests from air pollution is a significant problem in your country, please provide information on recent national strategies or programmes to minimize damaging air pollution. Please indicate if your country is involved in any international cooperation efforts aimed at strengthening scientific knowledge, increasing information access or reducing the impacts of long-range air pollution on forests, as well as your views on the role of enhanced cooperation at the regional and international levels to facilitate such work.**

Report

The National Programme for Forests Ecosystems Control (CONECOFOR) started in 1995 to meet the obligations taken at international level in the framework of II Level forest monitoring (Regulation EC n. 1091/94) and to answer the new questions in this field. The establishment of a national network allowed to unify and integrate in one project the efforts of those promoting or carrying out, for several years, activities aimed at investigating forests condition in Italy. In this respect the CONECOFOR Programme is both an extension and integration of projects already existing at regional or national level co-financed by the European Commission. The first 8 years of the CONECOFOR Programme implementation allowed to in depth describe the main forests ecosystems in Italy and to obtain duly indications for their sustainable management. They have been studied in all the most important components such as soil, ground vegetation, macro- and micro-climate, atmospheric pollutants. Information have been collected on the health of wood populations and their structure and functioning.

Maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs

- 20. Please indicate progress made and lessons learned in efforts to harmonize or to make compatible policy frameworks in your country (e.g. national forest programme or a similar policy framework for forests, biodiversity strategies and action plans, national action plans to combat desertification, etc.) that collectively address the full range of forest values.**

Report

The reference legal framework for the development of a national forest policy in Italy is the National Law 227/2001; the law, in accordance with the international agreements undertaken in the global Conventions (CITES, CBD, UNCCC, UNCCD), in the MCPFE process, as well as IPF/IFF PoAs and UNFF process, sets out goals, guidelines, technical and financial instruments for the sustainable and multi-functional management of Italian forests.

Implementing afore said law, Italian Government and Regional Authorities, the 15 July 2004, adopted Guidelines for National and Regional Forest Programmes in accordance with International Forest Policy regime.

- 21. Please provide information on recent efforts to assess long-term trends in national supply and demand for wood, non-wood forest products and services and whether your country's national forest programme or similar policy framework for forests takes into consideration future needs for forest goods and services. Please provide views on how enhanced cooperation at the regional and**

international levels, including through UNFF, could further facilitate implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action

Report

See the same item in the previous reports.

Implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to thematic issues of UNFF 4

Please refer to your national report if appropriate, or provide new or updated provide information on: activities undertaken since 1997, progress made, constraints encountered, lessons learned, and issues that have emerged, as well as relevant information related to means of implementation (financing, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, and capacity-building) related to the following elements:

Social and cultural aspects of forests

22. **promoting the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of forest genetic resources and addressing the issue of intellectual property rights, including the identification of the origins of forest genetic resources, taking into account work undertaken by the Convention on Biological Diversity and other international agreements**

Report

The legal framework for the conservation of the forest genetic resources is set out in the National Law 386/2003, implementing the European Directive 1999/105.

23. **strengthening the role of women in sustainable forest management, including through capacity building and greater participation in community-based forest management**
24. **integrating local and indigenous communities in sustainable forest management programmes, particularly as regards (a) recognition and respect of the customary and traditional rights and privileges of indigenous and local communities, (b) participation in decision making regarding the management of forests, (c) the attainment of secure land tenure arrangements, (d) capacity building and technology transfer for sustainable forest management directed at indigenous and local communities**

Report

Regarding such items, general considerations are presented in the paper of the Italian focal point for the Symposium “The European Forests in Ethical Discourse”, mentioned in point 18.

Traditional forest-related knowledge

25. **inventorying, cataloguing, and applying traditional forest related knowledge for sustainable forest management and promoting research on TFRK with the involvement of the knowledge holders**
26. **supporting the application of intellectual property rights and/or other protection regimes for traditional forest related knowledge, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of traditional forest related knowledge, innovations and practices**

Scientific forest-related knowledge

Report

See Italy National Report for UNFF4.

- 27. **disseminating scientific knowledge to all interested parties, including through new and innovative ways, and strengthening capacity and mobilizing funding for national and regional research institutions and networks**
- 28. **enhancing interaction between scientific research and policy processes, including priority setting of research, addressing of knowledge gaps and using scientific knowledge to support decision-making**

monitoring, assessment and reporting, concepts, terminology and definitions

- 29. **improving information on national forest resources, making the information widely available, assisting other countries in their related efforts**

Report

In 2003 was launched the second Italian Forest Inventory (National Inventory of Forests and Carbon Sinks). This new National Inventory is devoted to comply with information requirements under the FAO Forest Resources Assessment, the MCPFE process, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, and specifically the UN Framework Convention on Climatic Changes and the Kyoto Protocol. The inventory is configured upon three sampling phases: the first one (already finished), it is constituted by point photointerpretation on orthophotos to assess forest area (according to the forest FAO FRA definition), while the second and the third phases (ongoing) are devoted to field sampling, for qualitative and quantitative attributes, respectively. From the first phase, an area of more than 10.5 million hectares of forest and other wooded land has been estimated for our country (i.e. more than 35% of the national total land).

Italy joins also international projects in the field of forest inventories, like the European level ENFIN process and related COST Action E43 (Harmonisation of National Forest Inventories of Europe – Techniques for Common Reporting) aimed at harmonising national forest inventories in order to come up with comparable forest resource information at European level.

criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management

- 30. **developing and using criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management (at national level and/or subnational level and for policy, planning, management and/or monitoring purposes), and participating in regional and/or international C&I processes**

Report

Besides its participation to the MCPFE process and related initiatives (see before, European Forest Types), other activities have been carried out in Italy to formulate criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management of application at national and sub-national levels; some schemes have been developed in the frame of the international of forest certification schemes, like the Forest Stewardship Council scheme of ‘Standards of sustainable forest management for the Alpine forests’, or the Italian scheme of forest certification in process for approval by the Pan-European Forest Certification.

In 2004 the «Standard for sustainable forest management of Appennine and Mediterranean Forests (SAM)» have been also formulated. SAM is the result of a discussion and consultation process involving many stakeholders; the document aims to rationalize in standards behaviours in the management of Appennine and Mediterranean forests coherent with sustainability criteria, specifically formulated taking into consideration the critic points and peculiarities of forest management in these specific contexts.

III. Preparation of the Report

31. Describe the process of preparing this report, including which government agencies and stakeholder groups were involved, and the extent to which they contributed. Provide information on successes, challenges and lessons learned in the preparation of this report.

The same conclusions of the previous reports can be repeated here, as follows:

This report was prepared on the basis of existing documents, which have been mentioned, and which have been an extremely important source of indications and reflections.

It is worth recalling how the process that brought to their drafting has been fruit of intense debates that have largely involved public administrations, private sector, media and social society as a whole.

