

Study Completed for the United Nations Forum on Forests

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In the years that followed the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the United States worked with other members of the United Nations to develop a comprehensive and integrated set of actions to guide nations toward achieving the goal of sustainable forest management. The Proposals for Action emerging from the IPF (1997) and IFF (2000) were meant to address all aspects of sustainable forest management—ecological, economic and social. The UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) was established to foster the implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action by all countries. Key to this role is facilitating effective monitoring, assessment and reporting by each country on specific policies, programs and other activities to implement the Proposals for Action.

As part of a five-year program of work culminating in 2005, UNFF is sponsoring a series of sessions in which countries come together to share information on their efforts to

promote sustainable forest management and to learn from one another. A session held in 2002 focused primarily on ecological aspects of sustainable forest management; the 2003 session focused primarily on economic aspects; and a 2004 session will focus primarily on social aspects. A final session in 2005 will review overall progress towards sustainable management of all types of forests, and review the effectiveness of this process.

Last May, the Pinchot Institute completed a study that served as a basis for the country report of the United States to the third session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF 3), held in Geneva, Switzerland on May 26–June 6, 2003.¹ The primary purpose of this report is to describe the policies, programs and other activities currently being undertaken in the US that address the Proposals for Action that emerged from earlier UN-sponsored efforts through the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF), and the subsequent Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF).

The report by the Pinchot Institute provides additional background and analysis not included in the US country report. The corresponding reports of many other countries have focused primarily on the policies, programs, and actions of their central governments. The Pinchot Institute's study took a somewhat different approach, recognizing the importance in the US of sustainable forest management activities undertaken not only by the federal government, but by state and tribal governments, the corporate sector, and nonprofit non-governmental organizations.

This report is referred to as an "interim" assessment, since it represents only the first stage of a full U.S. assessment of the Proposals for Action related to UNFF 3 themes.

The full text of the Pinchot Institute's report can be found at www.pinchot.org. The US country report to the third session of UNFF can be found on the Forest Service website at www.un.org/esa/forests/reports-unff3.htm.

The second phase of the assessment process will include a multi-stakeholder evaluation of the adequacy of policies and program for addressing the Proposals for Action, and priorities for additional action. The Pinchot Institute for Conservation has already begun to gather input from federal agencies through interagency assessment workshops held in 2002 and 2003. Notes from interagency assessment workshops can also be found at www.pinchot.org. A full assessment report that covers all domestically relevant Proposals for Action will be completed by 2005. For more information, please contact Research Associate Stephanie Kavanaugh at (202) 797-6582 or skavanaugh@pinchot.org.



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1. United States of America, 2003. *Preliminary National Report to the Third Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests: Progress and Issues Related to the Implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action*. US Department of State, Washington, DC.