



PRESS COMMUNIQUÉ

UE to curb global deforestation and forest degradation APAT presents a report on the EU FLEGT initiative

Rome, 4th of June 2008
APAT - Via Curtatone 3 - AUDITORIUM
Starting 09:30

The global forest cover nearly 4 billion hectares, which is about 30 percent of the world's land area. UN FAO estimates that during the period 200-2005, gross deforestation continued at a rate of 12.9 million ha/yr.

Deforestation (and forest degradation) is concentrated South America, Africa and Southeast Asia, where forests are also the world's most critical basin of biodiversity and terrestrial carbon.

Main drivers of deforestation and forest degradation are wood extraction, cattle ranching, infrastructure, swidden/slash&burn, agriculture, cash crops, production of bio-fuels and illegal logging.

Illegal logging is massively widespread - more than 50 per cent of all timber in some countries - and hugely damaging. It causes environmental damage, costs governments billions of dollars in lost revenue, promotes corruption, destabilizes the rule of law and good governance and in some places has financed armed conflict. It retards sustainable development in some of the poorest countries of the world. Importer countries plays a part to these problems by importing timber and wood products without ensuring that they are legally extracted.

In recent years, however, producer and consumer countries alike have paid increasing attention to illegal logging and it has risen to the top of the global policy agenda. National governments and international organisations are starting to develop initiatives to tackle illegal logging. The G8 Forestry Action Programme, agreed by G8 foreign ministers in 1998, featured illegal logging as one of its five areas of action, and this helped catalyse many subsequent activities in the area. In March 2005 in Derby (UK) and more recently in May 2008 in Kobe (Japan), illegal logging was discussed at the meetings of G8 environment and development ministers.

In 2003 the EU adopted an Action Plan for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) to address illegal logging. The Action Plan combines measures in producer and consumer countries to facilitate trade in legal timber, and eliminate illegal timber from trade with the EU countries.

The Action Plan sets out a range of measures including: support to timber – producing countries; activities to promote trade in legal timber; promoting public procurement policies; support for private sector initiatives to promote corporate social responsibility; safeguards for financing and investment; use of existing legislative instruments or adoption of new legislation to support the Plan; addressing the problem of conflict timber.

In December 2005, Council agreed a Regulation for a FLEGT licensing scheme and the mandate for negotiation of partnership agreements. One of the cornerstones of the FLEGT Action Plan are the Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPA) with producer countries suffering from problems of illegal logging and poor forest governance.

To discuss the issue of combating illegal logging and illegally logged trade of timber, the Italy's Agency for Environmental protection and Technical Services (APAT) has organised a workshop, to be held in Rome the 4th of June 2008 (see the programme below here), with the aim to deepen knowledge on the issue and its major causes and impacts on biodiversity, societies and local economies; and to discuss actions and measures to curb the phenomenon.

During the workshop a joint report produced by APAT and the University of Padua will be presented. The report examines the key issues including law and enforcement, supply and demand, corruption, forest certification, poverty, local livelihoods, international trade and biodiversity conservation and deal with ways of implementing the EU FLEGT Initiative in Italy (which is the world's sixth importer of tropical timber).

During the workshop attention will be given to market instruments for promoting sustainable forest management and bringing about better global environmental stewardship, such as biodiversity conservation, watershed protection, eco- tourism and carbon sequestration.

Conference presenters are Andrea Todisco (APAT), Mette Løyche Wilkie and Laura Russo (FAO), Davide Pettenella and Laura Secco (University of Padua), Bruno Agricola (Italy's Ministry for the Environment), Gianfranco Bologna e Massimiliano Rocco (WWF International Italy), Mario Boccucci (World Bank), Lorenzo Ciccicarese (APAT), Duncan Brack (Royal Institute of International Affairs).

Rome,

APAT Press Office
Cristina Pacciani – 329.0054756

Filippo Pala – 06.50074025