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## FOREWORD

The forests of our country, besides maintaining ecological balance and environmental stability, play a great role in subsistence economy of a large population of our country, especially of those who live in and around the forest areas.

The National Forest Policy 1988 aims at maintaining 33% land mass of the country under forest and tree cover. To achieve this objective the Ministry of Environment & Forests has taken several initiatives but at the same time forest resources face mounting pressures owing to land based development activities and increasing human and livestock population. Periodic monitoring of the forest resources thus becomes essential to know the impact of various measures undertaken to conserve and expand the forest resources.

FSI has been assessing the forest cover using remote sensing technology since 1987 on a two year cycle and presenting results along with other parameters of the forest resource through 'State of Forest Reports' ('SFR'). The 'SFR 2005' is the 10th assessment of the forest cover. As per this assessment the forest cover of the country has been estimated to be 23.4% of the total geographical area. The overall accuracy level of assessment is more than 92%. A comparison of the forest covers of the country between the present and preceding assessment (SFR 2003) shows that there has been a marginal loss of 728 km<sup>2</sup> during the period 2002-2004. This loss has occurred mainly due to destruction caused by *Tsunami* in Andaman & Nicobar Islands in December 2004, submergence of forest land due to construction of dams in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh and shifting cultivation as well as bamboo flowering in the North-East (Nagaland and Manipur). Most other States have improved their forest cover.

The 'SFR 2005' also reveals the potentials of the trees outside forests (TOF) resources. Against the total growing stock (wood volume) of 4.6 billion m<sup>3</sup> in forests, the TOF supports 1.62 billion m<sup>3</sup> meeting most of the industrial wood needs in the country.

I am happy to present this report and hope that the information will be of immense use to government departments, public sectors enterprises, non governmental organizations, academicians and planners. I congratulate the Forest Survey of India for bringing out this Report.

  
(S. Regupathy)