



**Outcomes of the International Wildland Fire Summit
Sydney, Australia, 8 October 2003**

Editorial Remarks

The outputs of the International Wildland Fire Summit are the result of more than two years of preparation by the International Liaison Committee (ILC) and a number of contributions from international organizations and individuals. The work of the ILC has been conducted jointly with the Working Group on Wildland Fire of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction (UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction – ISDR). The complete set of background materials and references to earlier international wildland fire conferences and related processes, including international cooperative agreements in wildland fire management that are in place, have been published on the Summit website of the Global Fire Monitoring Center:

<http://www.fire.uni-freiburg.de/summit-2003/introduction.htm>

The following documents provide the main outputs of the summit:

1. Summit Communiqué (summary of recommendations, without technical follow-up action items and lists of invited countries and attendees)
2. Guiding Principles for Wildland Fire Management (Strategic Paper 1)
3. International Wildland Fire Management Agreements Template 1 (Strategic Paper 2)
4. Incident Command System (ICS) (Strategic Paper 3)
5. A Strategy for Future Development of International Cooperation in Wildland Fire Management (Strategic Paper 4)
6. Community-Based Fire Management (Strategic Paper 5)
7. Background Paper to the Summit
8. Opening address by the United Nations
9. Statement by the UN Convention on Biological Diversity

PART I

1. Summit Communiqué

Introduction

The Summit was convened following the 3rd International Wildland Fire Conference to proposed and agree on pragmatic and sustainable solutions to the human health, environmental, and economic consequences of unwanted wildland fires. Each person attending the Summit provided valuable experience and insight that contributed to developing synergistic solutions intended to strengthen international cooperation in order to reduce the negative impacts of wildland fires on humanity and the global environment. The Hon Tony Kelly, MLC, NSW Minister for Emergency Services hosted the Summit. The Hon Neville Wran QC, former Premier of NSW, chaired the Summit.

The drive to hold a Summit came from a widely held concern that more needed to be done to improve cooperation at an international level in the prevention and suppression of wildland fires. The overall goal of the Summit is in line with, and supported by, the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR).

The Summit participants reviewed, and discussed four papers tabled to stimulate ideas, solutions, and strategies to improve communication and coordination between agencies and organizations, and to improve fire management practices for the sustainable use of natural resources and the safeguarding of food security. Adoption of the principles and outcomes provided in the papers will assist organizations attempting to build a coherent response in reducing the negative impacts of wildland fires on humanity and the global environment, while encouraging ecologically and socially beneficial fire use where this is appropriate

Participants

The Summit was for invited participants with a key interest in the outcome. Invitees were selected for their expertise in wildland fire management and their capacity to influence the implementation of the outcomes of the Summit within their own domestic jurisdiction. In all, 92 people accepted the invitation from 34 countries and 12 international organizations.

Summit Outputs

The Summit participants discussed and agreed either in principle or in substance to a series of strategies that will build on the work of many groups, conferences and regional summits: (An agreement in principle means that the participants agree that the strategies have merit and will begin to discuss and/or implement the strategies either within their agency or work with local partners to implement the strategy in the region.)

- An agreement that the *principles* presented in Summit Paper 1 should apply to international wildland fire management projects and exchanges when adapted to local ecological and social conditions.
- An agreement that an *international agreement template* presented in Summit Paper 2 can be used by agencies wishing to form a cooperative or mutual aid arrangements with one or more other countries for.
- An agreement that an *Incident Command System (ICS)* presented in Summit Paper 3 should become the international standard for all wildland incident management participating in international or interagency agreements and exchanges.
- An agreement to a *strategy for future development* as presented in Summit Paper 4.

Specific Actions by Summit participants

- Agreement with the concept that a series of regional conferences, summits, or roundtables will be held and lead into the 2nd Global Wildland Fire Summit no later than 2007, and the 4th International Wildland Fire Conference and Exhibition in Spain in 2007.
- Agreement to work individually and collectively to secure resources and funding for hosting the regional sessions and implementing other Summit outputs. The regional summits will be hosted and supported financially by local agencies or organizations. The agenda and themes will be developed locally. The meetings can be held in conjunction with established conferences and meetings.
- Agreement that the Summit outcomes will be transmitted to the following organizations: The United Nations through the International Strategy For Disaster Reduction (ISDR); the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO).
- Agreement to request the assistance from the UN to lead the implementation of the outcomes of this strategy, including securing funding in support of the establishment of regional networks, conferences, and summits.

Other Issues and Business Carried Forward

In addition to the actions noted above, a number of other issues were identified that require further attention, possibly at a future Summit. These issues carried forward include:

1. The role of gender in fire management;
2. Fire danger rating and fire early warning systems
3. Linking Incident Command System with community-based fire management systems
4. Fire investigation and management of causes of fires.

Funding Support

Funding support for the Summit was provided by:

- The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO);
- The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry of Australia (AFFA);
- Telstra, Australia
- The Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC);
- The United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service;
- The United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management;
- Emergency Management Australia.



Photograph of the participants of the International Wildland Fire Summit, Sydney, Australia, 6 October 2003