

GLOBAL AND REGIONAL VEGETATION FIRE MONITORING FROM SPACE: PLANNING A COORDINATED INTERNATIONAL EFFORT

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Increasing conflagrations of forests and other lands throughout the world during the 1980s and 1990s have made fires in forests and other vegetation emerge as an important global concern. Both the number and severity of wildfires and the application of fire for land-use change, seem to have increased dramatically compared to previous decades of the twentieth century. The adverse consequences of extensive wildfires cross national boundaries and have global impacts. Fire regimes are changing with climate variability and population dynamics. Satellite remote sensing technology has the potential to play an important role for monitoring fires and their consequences, as well as in operational fire management.

In response to this need as well as to respond to other needs for more rapid progress in forest observation, in 1997 the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS) initiated Global Observation of Forest Cover (GOFC) as an international pilot project to test the concepts of an Integrated Global Observing Strategy. The GOFC program is currently part of the Global Terrestrial Observing System (GTOS). GOFC was designed to bring together data providers and information users to make information products from satellite and in-situ observations of forests more readily available worldwide. Fire Monitoring and Mapping was formed as one of three basic components of GOFC.

This book contains thirteen contributions authored by scientists who represent the most active international research and development institutions, aiming at coordinating and improving international efforts for user-oriented systems and products. These papers were initially presented at a GOFC Fire Workshop held at the Joint Research Centre, Ispra. The volume is a contribution by the GOFC Forest Fire Monitoring and Mapping Implementation Team to the Interagency Task Force Working Group *Wildland Fire* of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR).

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