

Platform for Agrobiodiversity Newsletter May 2011 ISSUE No. 008

From the Editor

Dear Colleagues and Friends

Welcome to the eighth newsletter of the Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research. Many thanks to our recipients, who have already registered as members of the Platform Website, and welcome to those who have recently become subscribers to our Newsletter.

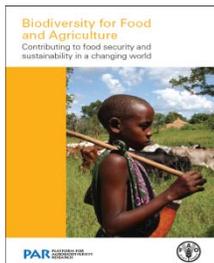
In this edition you will find:

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As always, we welcome your comments, news and suggestions for the Platform and for activities which you might be involved in.

The deadline for contributions to the Ninth edition is **June 30 2011**. Please send them to platformcoordinator@cgiar.org.

News from the Secretariat



[Release of a PAR Publication: *Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture: Contributing to food security and sustainability in a changing world.*](#)

We are pleased to announce this publication produced jointly by FAO and the Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research. This publication is a result of the Expert Workshop, held in Rome at FAO Headquarters in April, 2010. We take this opportunity to thank all who made their valuable contributions to the development of this publication and those who are playing a major role in supporting the work on improving the maintenance and use of biodiversity for food and agriculture:

Measuring agrobiodiversity: Metrics webpage.

A significant amount of agrobiodiversity is found in managed landscapes though we lack information on how much of it is out there and how much is it worth. Many national level criteria and indicator systems already exist that attempt to assess biodiversity in forests and the impacts of forest management, but there is generally less experience in measuring these values in agricultural landscapes. We are joining a group of scientists, policy makers and communities for the development of indicators to measure agrobiodiversity within these landscapes. We will be creating a webpage aimed at collating different tools and methods that have been used to assess and value agrobiodiversity at all levels. We hope some of the tools presented here may be of use to your research work. We also know that some of you have used some of the tools or developed your own, please feel free to share your experiences and publications. Send them to platformcoordinator@tcgiar.org.

Group dedicated to discussions about the International Day for Biological Diversity – Forest Biodiversity. We have created a group dedicated to the International Day for Biological Diversity – Forest Biodiversity, on 22 May 2011. Since we consider this day to be very special and of utmost importance, we would love you to share information with us and to know if you are involved in any projects and activities dealing with forests, agroforestry and forests biodiversity. Any discussion, ideas and opinions on the theme, on how you think you will contribute and celebrate this important day and on what you think should be done to save, improve and preserve forests and their biodiversity are very welcome! The discussion will end on the **6th of June 2011**.

In order to join the group you just need to register [here](#) (if you are not a member already), log in and [join the group!](#)

Current research activities

• **Assessing the resilience of small holder farmers in Kitui.**

A small research activity is being undertaken by a PAR associate expert to assess the resilience of small holder farmers to climate change in Kitui, Kenya. This research will focus on assessing farmer's resilience to climate change and its impacts in the context of agricultural production. Some issues that concern the study are: what farmers perceptions of climate change are; what on-farm management strategies do they select to cope with the impacts of climate change and how do these strategies enable them to be resilient i.e. ecologically, socially and economically. It is hoped that this study will help increase knowledge regarding resilience to climate change and be an initial step towards developing indicators of resilience at household level. The study will end in August 2011. For more information, please contact Bongie Khumalo-Mungoni on email s.khumaloATcgjar.org.

News articles

GFAR prioritizes Agro-Biodiversity.

The multi-stakeholder constituencies of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) have prioritized the issue of agro-biodiversity as one of prime global importance. The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources in Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) recognizes the importance of agricultural research and contains special provisions for the exchange of information, transfer of technology and capacity building related to plant genetic resources.

[Read more](#)

The Suwon Agrobiodiversity Framework 2011: Managing agrobiodiversity for sustainable agriculture in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Suwon Agrobiodiversity Framework is a result of discussions held in Korea at the “*Sustainable Agriculture Development and Use of Agrobiodiversity in the Asia-Pacific Region*” International Symposium in October 2010. The focus of this symposium was to provide an opportunity to review, identify, and redefine the role and directions of agricultural R&D, especially in the context of conservation through use of valuable agrobiodiversity for sustainable agricultural development. Included in the discussion were issues pertaining to the access and the benefit sharing of valuable genetic resources. To address the questions at hand, the organizations thought best to adopt an integrated systems approach while defining the framework: research and S&T developments are to focus on genetic resources, conservation techniques, traditional knowledge, ecosystem services, and rely on information and communication systems to enhance regional collaboration. [Read more](#)

Depleting agro-biodiversity a risk to food security.

By Fahim Nawaz

The replacement of indigenous varieties of crops, fruits, vegetables and livestock species by high-yield crop varieties and improved breeds of animals, in the past few decades, has depleted agro-biodiversity. Indigenous varieties and livestock species have lost their significance due to intensification of farming and separation of local communities from indigenous biological resources. [Read the original article.](#)

Announcements

- [Vacancy announcement: Genetic resources policy specialist](#) (deadline 30 May 2011)
- **May 2011 Call for Applications for the African Climate Change Fellowship Program (ACCFP)** The Institute of Resource Assessment at the University of Dar Es Salaam (IRA-UDSM), in partnership with START and CCAA, announces the May 2011 Call for Applications for the African Climate Change Fellowship Program . [Read more](#)
- **Unique training opportunity on plant genetic resources management and climate change.** The course will focus on community biodiversity management (CBM) and resilience, Participatory learning and action research Multi-stakeholder processes and social learning, conservation

strategies, genetic resources and climate change policy frame, and it will be held in November 2011 in India. [Read more](#)

- **Call for training in Research Design and Data Analysis with focus on underutilized crops research. Accra, Ghana.** The International Foundation for Science (IFS), Bioversity International, RUFORUM, and the Plant Genetic Resources Institute, Ghana, will conduct a training workshop on Research Design and Data Analysis with focus on underutilized crops research. [Read more](#)

More announcements can be found the in [PAR main website](#) and also in the [Climate change website](#)

You can also check latest funding opportunities in latest [Gender and Diversity funding news](#) or [Terra Viva grants](#).

Forthcoming Events

1. [Indigenous Terra Madre, Jokkmokk, Sápmi, Northern Sweden, 17 -19 June 2011](#)
2. [2nd International Symposium on Underutilised Plant Species “Crops for the Future – Beyond Food Security”, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia June 27- July 1, 2011](#)
3. [International Conference: A Global Partnership for Plant Conservation – Supporting the worldwide implementation of the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation St-Louis, Missouri, USA,5-7 July 2011](#)
4. [Conversations with the Earth Exhibition: Indigenous Voices on Climate Change, Washington DC, USA, 22 July 2011-2 January 2012](#)

For more information on future events, visit our [Events](#) page

Resources

- [Banking for the future: Savings, security and seeds.](#)
A short study of community seed banks in Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Honduras, India, Nepal, Thailand, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- [Agrobiodiversity Management for Climate Change](#)
This article by R. Ortiz is an extraction from the book “Agrobiodiversity Management for Food Security”, edited by J. M. Lenné and D Wood and published by CABI.
- [A new publication about quinoa in Chile: \(in Spanish\) “Quinoa y biodiversidad: cuales son los desafios regionales”](#) (D. Bazile y J. Negrete), Revista Geografica de Valparaiso, Numero especial 42: pp.1-141
- [Gardens of Biodiversity](#) is a publication by FAO that highlights the importance of maintaining the genetic resources of the Southern Caucasus, which was home to many populations who learned how to live in a rough land and make a living out of it by using adapting techniques and selecting a wide range of crop varieties.

More publications can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

PAR's goal: Is to enhance the sustainable management and use of agrobiodiversity by improving knowledge of all its different aspects. It seeks to promote research and integrate, mobilize and share research findings on the sustainable management of agrobiodiversity.

The PAR Newsletter is published by the Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research and distributed to members and other subscribers. The Secretariat welcomes news, letters and other items of interest from individuals and organizations.

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