



The International Centre for Underutilised Crops

P. O. Box 2075 Colombo, Sri Lanka. Tel: +94-11-2787404, Fax: +94-11-2786854
www.icuc-iwmi.org / icuc-iwmi@cgiar.org

ICUC-News #80

2 December 2008

Dear colleagues,
Greetings from the CGIAR Annual General Meeting in Maputo, Mozambique, where I am very pleased to announce the official launch of “Crops for the Future”, resulting from the merger of ICUC and GFU. Last Sunday, 30 November, saw a the launch as a specially organised seminar including speakers from Bioversity International, the World Agroforestry Centre, the University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus and ICUC. Thus, from 1 December, “Crops for the Future is the new operating name of the International Centre for Underutilised Crops (ICUC) and the Global Facilitation Unit for Underutilized Species (GFU).”

In this issue:

- 1. **Funding & job opportunities**
 - 1.1. Senior Program Specialist, Rural Poverty and Environment and Ecohealth
- 2. **Workshops & training courses**
 - 2.1. World Biodiversity Congress 2008, Chiang Mai, Thailand
- 3. **Publications & information**
 - 3.1. New centre to boost knowledge on underutilised crops
 - 3.2. Laws to protect native knowledge 'are failing'
- 4. **ICUC-related information**
 - 4.1. Report from the Crops for the Future official launch event
- 5. **ICUC network**
 - 1 entry

With best wishes,
Nick

+++++

1. Funding & Job opportunities

+++++

1.1. Senior Program Specialist, Rural Poverty and Environment and Ecohealth

Location: New Delhi, India. Salary Range: \$86,383 - \$107,979. This position may be filled at a lower level of experience (i.e. minimum of 5 years for Senior Program Officer). Closing Date: December 7th, 2008 at Midnight (Canadian EST.)

The Rural Poverty and Environment (RPE) initiative supports research and scientific capacity development globally, including a significant presence in South Asia, that strengthens countries' capacity to manage the environment and natural resources in a manner that is more equitable and sustainable while reducing rural poverty. The Ecosystems Approach to Human Health (Ecohealth) initiative supports research on the relationship between all components of an ecosystem to define and assess problems that affect the health of people and the sustainability of their ecosystem. Based in New Delhi, India, the Senior Program Specialist, under the guidance of the Program Leader and the Regional Office Director, will lead the development of research projects in Rural Poverty and Environment (70%) as well as in Ecohealth (30%), primarily in South Asia and occasionally will contribute to inter-regional and global projects. He/she will contribute to overall programme

development by providing advice on key issues related to regional priorities in South Asia and the areas supported in programming.

A Ph.D. in a relevant environmental and natural resources management sciences discipline, with a minimum of eight years' relevant experience related to poverty reduction issues.

- Applied; and field-oriented research of rural and environmental change in South Asia
- Managing environmental research projects and/or program management
- Experience in policy analysis would be an asset
- A superior knowledge of English is essential for this position
- Knowledge of issues of rural environmental change and sustainable development including
- knowledge of issues related to energy and climate change Understanding of social science perspectives on environmental and natural resources management issues
- Excellent interpersonal and oral/written communication skills
- Good organisational, problem-solving and negotiations skills
- Ability to manage complex and diverse tasks while travelling or in the field
- Ability to establish, manage, guide and monitor relationships with diverse stakeholders
- Ability to work in a multidisciplinary team of people from diverse cultures, expertise and experiences
- Awareness of and sensitivity to gender dimensions of poverty and vulnerability

This position involves travel of 60 - 90 days per year.

Please complete the [Online Application form](https://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-116504-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html), https://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-116504-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

For more information, visit http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-133596-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

+++++

2. Workshops & Training Courses

+++++

2.1. World Biodiversity Congress 2008, Chiang Mai, Thailand

The new date is 11-13 March 2009, which has been changed from earlier announcements.

Biological diversity is the variety of life on Earth, from the simplest bacterial gene to the vast, complex rainforests of the Amazon. Human beings are an integral part of this diversity, as is the food, medicine, clothing and other biological resources that sustain us. Biodiversity is being threatened at an unprecedented rate due to habitat alternation, degradation and fragmentation and human misuses or over-exploitation. It is therefore not surprising that biodiversity conservation in recent years has gained considerable importance all over the globe. On the other hand, every country, particularly the developing countries, is facing the needs of developing its economy, improving peoples' livelihood or providing food security and supply for a rapidly increasing population. After the United Nation Conference on Environment and Development was held in Rio in 1991, many countries have formulated or are implementing a series of action plans associated with their own environmental protection, biodiversity conservation and priority development. Judicious planning and meticulous implementation of different innovative programmes of United Nations, Governments, and Research institutions, Private Organizations, Universities and NGOs have paved the way for the conservation of biological diversity on our earth. The First World Congress on Biodiversity will provide a forum for reorienting policies and programmes for any country in more productive and sustainable biodiversity utilization and conservation.

The four day congress organized by Century Foundation, Bangalore, India will help to develop an agenda to ensure conservation of bioresources and ecosystem protection for sustainable development. It will bring together the international scientific community involved in the study of biological diversity and an unique opportunity to deepen our understanding of nature and natural resources and experience the wonderful Thailand.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.upm.edu.my/WCB2008Thailand.pdf>, or contact Dr. V. Sivaram, Department of Botany, Bangalore University, Bangalore – 560056, India. Fax: 91-80-22961315. Email: sivaram900@gmail.com

+++++

3. Publications & Information

+++++

3.1. New centre to boost knowledge on underutilised crops

<http://www.scidev.net/en/news/new-centre-to-boost-knowledge-on-underutilised-cro.html>

An international body for gathering and promoting knowledge about underused crops is to be established in Malaysia. Crops for the Future will encourage investment and research into neglected and underused plant species — such as Africa's baobab and marula trees — for the benefit of the poor and the environment.

"There are thousands of crops that poor people rely on but are not commercialised as are maize, wheat and beans," said Hannah Jaenicke, director of the International Centre for Underutilised Crops (ICUC), which is merging with the Global Facilitation Unit for Underutilized Species (GFU) to create the new body.

"This is about promoting awareness and encouraging novel uses and marketing methods." ICUC, currently based in Colombo, Sri Lanka, says that Crops for the Future will be hosted by a joint venture between Bioversity International — an NGO promoting the use and conservation of agricultural biodiversity — and the UK-based Nottingham University's Malaysia campus.

"This is a really exciting development," said Christine Ennew, pro-vice chancellor for internationalisation and Europe and professor of marketing at Nottingham University. She said their agenda could "have major benefits for improved food security and the ability of food systems to adapt to climate change."

"We will bridge the gap between science and the use and marketing of crops," added Jaenicke. Topics might include studies of the market chain and niche markets — to determine what risks producers of low volume high value crops face; promoting extended shelf life, for example by dehydrating jackfruit; or encouraging dual use of crops such as making juice from marula fruit and using the oil from its nut for cosmetics.

The centre is seeking up to US\$1 million a year in funding from donors. Currently the majority of ICUC funding comes from the UK's Department for International Development, with Canadian, Swedish and Swiss governments also contributing.

Its formation will be announced at the annual general meeting of the Consultative Group of International Agricultural Research in Maputo, Mozambique, on Sunday (30 November).

+++++

3.2. Laws to protect native knowledge 'are failing'

<http://www.scidev.net/en/news/laws-to-protect-native-knowledge-are-failing-.html>

Global moves to improve the rights of indigenous communities over their local knowledge have largely failed, say experts. This has resulted in intellectual property rights (IPR) claims by indigenous people dropping to "barely a trickle", according to the Montreal-based International Expert Group on Biotechnology in their report launched this month (13 November).

In Brazil, for example, only seven phytotherapeutic items have been developed with local resources compared with 700 patents on similar items filed almost entirely by foreigners worldwide. The authors say attempts to ensure benefit-sharing with numerous indigenous communities have been hindered by an overemphasis on the ownership of intellectual property rights, which has proven a roadblock to progress.

They highlight Brazil's case, where legislation was passed in 2001 with the aim of protecting indigenous rights. "Our legislation assures property rights to the communities, but there is an overabundance of overlapping rights," says Edson Beas Rodrigues, co-author of the report and a researcher at the Institute of Law on International Trade and Development, Brazil.

"Use of traditional knowledge and local, natural products depends on the consent of several indigenous groups that -- theoretically or actually -- 'own' them, and these groups do not always agree on these questions," he told SciDev.Net. "Research institutes and industries cannot access the knowledge and indigenous groups do not benefit from any research that could have been done.

"We try to protect indigenous rights so hard that our laws are in fact preventing the use of traditional knowledge," said Rodrigues. "We have to find a balance between assuring intellectual property and

promoting access to traditional knowledge." The report also considers case studies from Kenya and northern Canada.

"We found the same stumbling blocks in the traditional communities of Brazil as we did in the boardroom of a corporation that holds the patent to a gene that can determine the chance a woman will develop breast cancer," says Richard Gold, chair of the group from McGill University, Canada. "Most striking is that no matter where we looked, the lack of trust played a vital role in blocking negotiations that could have benefited both sides, as well as the larger public."

+++++

4. ICUC-related information

+++++

4.1. Report from the Crops for the Future official launch event

Crops for the Future was officially on 30 November at a specially organised seminar during the CGIAR Annual General Meeting in Maputo, Mozambique. This is the culmination of a long processing of discussion whereby ICUC and the GFU now work under a new name. A strategic plan (2009-2013) has been developed and produced, bearing the new logo, which details the strategic objectives and the means for achieving these. A press release announcing the launch and a photograph of the event are on the ICUC website.

The launch seminar was opened and chaired by Prof. George Rothschild, interim Chair of the Crops for the Future board. Four speakers gave short presentations including three case studies on success stories with underutilised crops. Dr Kwesi Atta-Krah (Bioversity International) began with by explaining how the forming of strong partnerships had allowed the development of traditional leafy vegetables in East Africa. Dr Festo Massawe (University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus) presented the story of bambara groundnut, and how a series of project over 15 years had allowed the transformation of this crop from a little-known legume to a valuable drought-resistant crop. Dr Ramni Jamnadass (World Agroforestry Centre) then presented the case of the domestication and promotion of indigenous fruits in southern Africa. Dr Hannah Jaenicke then presented an overview of the Crops for the Future Strategic Plan, before George Rothschild closed, and announced the new organisation officially 'launched'.

+++++

5. ICUC network

+++++

In this section we introduce new and old subscribers to ICUC-News to encourage greater interaction and benefit from the great diversity of readers. If you haven't done so, please send a brief introduction of yourself and your interest in underutilised crops to h.jaenicke@cgiar.org. We will not publish your email or phone contacts and if anyone is interested to establish direct contact, please write an email to me.

- Omotayo B. Adebayo, Department of Agricultural Engineering, Faculty of Technology, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. Special interest in water use patterns of underutilised crops.

+++++

International Centre for Underutilised Crops, P. O. Box 2075 Colombo, Sri Lanka. Tel: +94-11-2787404, Fax: +94-11-2786854, www.icuc-iwmi.org / icuc-iwmi@cgiar.org
Championing underutilised plant species for food, nutrition and sustainable development