



The International Centre for Underutilised Crops (ICUC)

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

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Dear colleagues,

I have been "on the road" for the past two weeks in Germany, Belgium, UK and France to strengthen the underutilised crops network and raise awareness on our activities. There is a lot of real interest in what ICUC and its partners are doing and we identified several potential openings for project proposals. More immediately, we have discussed a project with Tropical Wholefoods, an ethical trade company and manufacturer in UK, to study the feasibility and marketability of a variety of processed underutilised fruit and vegetable products. One of the major outcomes of this study will be concrete recommendations for small-scale entrepreneurs on how to penetrate the domestic and international market.

Further information in today's issue:

1. CGV LIBRARY: Gateway to Global Agricultural Knowledge
2. 'Managing Change' theme of SPC Regional Meeting
3. World Food Day Symposium "Capital for Development" hosted by the Syngenta Foundation

Best wishes,
Hannah

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1. CGV LIBRARY: Gateway to Global Agricultural Knowledge

Here is a really excellent resource from our CGIAR library COP and the ICT-KM Program, congratulations on the release of this fantastic and really great on-line resource.

The CGIAR Information Managers and ICT/KM Program are pleased to invite you to visit the new CGIAR Virtual Library at <http://vlibrary.cgiar.org>.

Get instant access to research on agriculture, hunger, poverty, and the environment using a valuable new resource—the CGIAR Virtual Library. From just one search engine, tap into leading agricultural information databases, including the online libraries of all the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) centers. Use the CGVlibrary to discover resources, go directly to the full text of thousands of publications, and stay current on CGIAR research. Custom select databases you want to search or use the topic-based QuickSets preselected by CGIAR information specialists.

For further information contact CGVlibrary@cgiar.org.

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2. 'Managing Change' theme of SPC Regional Meeting

Press Release from the Secretariat of the Pacific Community

Thursday, September 14, 2006, SPC Suva Regional Office – The 2nd Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services (HOAFS) Meeting, to be held in Nadi, 18-22 September, at Tanoa International, will focus on ‘Managing Change’, the theme for this year’s gathering of agricultural CEOs from the 22 member countries and territories of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC).

The Meeting will be officially opened by Hon Gyani Nand, Fiji Minister for Agriculture. HOAFS is the advisory body to the integrated agriculture and forestry programme being implemented by SPC’s Land Resources Division (LRD). Previously, SPC’s agricultural services, including support for forestry, animal production, plant genetic resources and plant protection, were delivered independently of each other. Recognising that new thinking was needed to achieve more sustainable land management and facilitate trade, these services have now been integrated under a single management structure and the LRD – with the help of its partner organisations – is putting into action a strategy for managing the rapid environmental and socio-economic changes that are set to dominate management of land resources in the Pacific in the coming decades. A critical aspect of the strategy is the need to mitigate the effects of change and support adaptation to changed conditions.

Delegates will discuss the theme of Managing Change under the broad topics of Biodiversity, Health and Nutrition, Agriculture and Forestry Commodity Trade, Atoll Agriculture and Forestry and Climate Change and Food Security. In the future, pressures such as climate change will mean that many of our crop varieties will not be adapted to the new conditions, the distributions of some useful native forest species will shrink, and those of some exotic pests and invasives will expand. Devastating pests and diseases – of crops, livestock and humans – will not be kept at bay forever in the face of changes in climates and the ever easier movement of people and goods, despite the best efforts of quarantine services.

Coping with change will need to be accompanied by sustained effort to reverse the trend of poor economic performance across the region. Regional economic integration and thus increased regional and international trade are important goals for the region. The LRD is therefore positioning itself to contribute more to trade facilitation beyond its current efforts to improve the region’s capacity to deal with biosecurity issues. New areas of assistance to countries will include increasing the competitiveness of products in the market place through consistent supplies of quality products; improving access to and understanding of market and production related information including agriculture and forestry trade statistics; and post-harvest and downstream processing.

Delegates will also review on-going LRD projects including Development of Sustainable Agriculture in the Pacific (DSAP), Plant Protection in the Pacific (PPP) and LRD/GTZ Community-based Natural Resources Management. The LRD is developing partnerships and meeting new challenges for the Pacific region through initiating new projects including the Pacific Regional Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Project (PRIPP), Facilitating Agricultural Commodity Trade (FACT), Pacific Ant Prevention Programme (PAPP), Centre for Pacific Crops and Trees, Pacific Agriculture and Forestry Policy Network (PAFPNet), Sustainable Land Management and Land Care Concept for the Pacific, Organic Agriculture and the Pacific Regional Crops Improvement Program.

The meeting will end with regional delegates endorsing the LRD’s work programme for the next two years.

The LRD’s main partner organisations and donors include AusAID, NZAID, France, EU and GTZ.

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3. World Food Day Symposium “Capital for Development” hosted by the Syngenta Foundation

Where: Hotel Royal, Basel, Switzerland
When: 16 October 2006, 11.30 – 13.00 hrs with a buffet lunch immediately following
Speakers: Hans Dieter Seibel, University of Cologne, Christopher West, Shell Foundation and
an introduction by Nikolaus Schultze, Syngenta Foundation
(The lectures will be in English)

Background:

A recent World Bank study found that investment in entrepreneurial activities is much more successful in helping poor families achieve economic prosperity than traditional foreign aid.

A 'Blue' financial revolution is needed to repair critical and too frequent market failures faced by small and medium enterprises in developing countries, particularly in Africa. In this symposium the speakers examine how innovative funding mechanisms, including microfinance, can build prosperous rural SME sectors, and offer examples on how enterprise solutions are remarkably effective ways to reduce poverty.

Prof. Dr. phil. Hans Dieter Seibel, Head, Development Research Centre, University of Cologne, is a specialist in rural and microfinance. His recent research has examined linkages between banks and Microfinance Institutions in developing countries, on principles and products of Islamic finance, and on reforming agricultural development banks.

Chris West, Deputy Director, Shell Foundation, has responsibilities for the Shell Foundation's network of Pan-African SME funds. His business and development experience encompasses work in over 60 developing countries and emerging economies. The Shell Foundation's report Enterprise Solutions to Poverty was described by The Times as "essential reading in Downing Street". The Foundation's Aspire facility, launched in 2006, is specifically designed to help Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in Africa, whose growth is often hampered by an inability to obtain funding from risk-averse local banks.

Nikolaus Schultze joined the Syngenta Foundation in 2005 as Head, Strategy. He has held a number of positions in financial management and business development in both private and public sectors. He recently led the Private Sector and Capital Markets operations of the International Fund for Agricultural Development 'IFAD' in Rome.

Register at http://www.syngentafoundation.org/world_food_day/register.htm

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