



The International Centre for
Underutilised Crops

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ICUC-News #69

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Dear colleagues,

Today we have another bumper issue with 16 pages. There are two interesting thought-stimulating articles sent in by Tevita Kete of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC). I should thank Tevita here especially for the interesting information she circulates so regularly through the PGR News blog (<http://papgren.blogspot.com/>).

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2 entries

With best wishes,
Hannah

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1. Funding & Job opportunities

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1.1 SNV – Senior Advisor Value Chain Development

SNV-Niger develops the capacity of partner organisations through advisory services and knowledge development. Special attention is given to the position of women.

SNV Niger intervenes through five (5) teams: two teams based in Niamey covering the area of Tillabéri, Niamey and Dosso. The three other teams cover the areas of Tahoua, Maradi and Zinder. In each area, multidisciplinary teams of advisors are stationed and provide Capacity Development Services to local NGO's, producers and governmental organisations amongst other.

For the coming years, SNV position itself in education and Health in addition to the development of market value chains (namely onions and cowpea, produced in the agricultural zone) and the pastoralist area (cattle). For those last two sectors the aim is to increase production, create income and improve

employment opportunities. To reach those objectives, we work on building capacities for local organizations, improving the enabling environment and bridging the micro-macro divide. In these efforts we work with producers, civil society organizations, local governments and Local Capacity Builders. One primary technical approach we will utilize to accomplish the above is to strengthen value chains and to ensure that producers benefit from added value in the chain.

SNV-Niger aims to reinforce the capacities of micro finance institutions connected to the producer organizations, so that they can better develop their activities. Well run micro finance systems can make an important difference to poor people, especially for women. SNV-Niger has given organizational and institutional support to the umbrella organisation of micro finance. From now, focus will be on the links between producers and financial institutions. So, SNV-Niger will only participate in the dialogue between the actors of the sector of micro finance, the harmonization of the approaches, sharing experiences etc To help carry out these efforts SNV Niger is looking for a suitable candidate to fill the position of International Senior Advisor in Value Chain Development & Micro Finance. The position will primarily support activities in the development of market value chains produced in the agricultural zone (onions and cowpea). This advisor will be based in Niamey.

The main tasks/responsibilities will be:

- Refine SNV-Niger Strategy, contribute to the subsector and value chain analysis, and evolve the value chains selected and translate them into continued support activities to a wide range of actors within the value chains with the aim of creating income and employment opportunities in agriculture sectors.
- Ensure updated information about trends, market developments and market requirements (regulations, quality standards, trade conditions) in agriculture.
- Identify key stakeholders, actors and Local Capacity Builders (LCBs) in the value chains and support initiatives to establish market linkages, networks and partnerships between them.
- Identify leverage points and design intervention strategies for value chains development including the enabling environment. Support the actors/stakeholders in the selected value chains through participatory processes and by providing advisory services.
- Establish networks and where possible collaborative partnerships with similar and complementary initiatives, undertaken by other organisations, institutions or programmes,
- Take the lead within the SNV team to further develop and fine-tune the value chain development concept, give strategic direction to the scaling up of the programme activities, give technical backstopping and guidance to the SNV Niger team, provide on-the-job support and coaching of advisors and LCBs on the above mentioned issues.
- To assist local councils to develop win-win relationships with relevant private sector organisations (ECOLOC approach)
- To develop partnerships in the micro-finance sector and to take part in the dialogue organized in the sector

REQUIREMENTS:

- Relevant academic MA/MSc qualification
- Knowledge of value chain approaches for economic development and value chain applicability in agriculture and micro finance sectors
- Minimum of 8 years of work experience in advisory work and value chain/private sector development
- Broad experience in capacity building, facilitation of multi-stakeholder processes, product development, organisational learning, change processes, and strategy formulation
- Knowledge of (inter) national strategies for poverty alleviation, rural development
- Knowledge of SNV cross-cutting themes as good governance and gender equity
- Experience in networking, coaching and alliance building

LANGUAGES:

- Fluent French
- Good knowledge of English (official language within SNV).
- Very good knowledge of data processing (Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Internet)

Description duty station:

Health Services: Reasonable local and international hospitals and health care.

Security: No security risks.

Education: English, French and American schools available.

Accessibility: Niamey is the capital city of Niger, five (5) hours away (by road) from Ouagadougou Burkina Faso where the Regional West and Central Africa office is located. It is also 1 hour by plane from Ouagadougou.

Communication : Networks with other parts of the country and West Africa region, telephone, email and fax (VSAT has been installed)

Contract period: Two years.

Starting date: Starting date as soon as possible.

Salary Scale 11: minimum of 2795,02 Euro - maximum of 4294,82 Euro gross per month (hypo tax will be deducted) depending on relevant working experience, excluding attractive secondary conditions and individual allowances.

Application Information:

You can apply by sending your application (CV and cover letter in English) to: Rahila Arma (rarma@snworld.org), under reference number NE 3908 until the 7th of July 2008.

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1.2 Leader, Climate Change Research

The World Agroforestry Centre seeks to recruit a world-class researcher to lead its Global Research Project (GRP) on Climate Change.

Agricultural systems most vulnerable to climate change are those already affected by unsustainable management, and land and resource degradation. Trees have an important role in reducing vulnerability, increasing the stability of farming systems, and buffering households against climate-related risks. Moreover, whole-landscape carbon accounting (combining REDD, A/R CDM and the gaps in between) may provide a basis for investment in trees managed by farmers and rural communities.

The objective of the Global Research Project on Climate Change is to improve the stability of farming systems and livelihood strategies of smallholder farmers in the face of current climate variability as well as long-term climate change, through the increased use of trees for intensification, diversification and buffering of farming systems. The GRP focuses on four areas: vulnerability assessments, impact of climate change on agroforestry systems; adaptation to climate change; and synergies in agroforestry systems between climate change adaptation and mitigation.

The successful candidate will report to the Deputy Director General, and will work with other scientists within and outside of the GRP.

Responsibilities

- Develop an internationally recognized research program in the area of climate change, agroforestry and sustainable land management.
- Develop a system for carbon measurement and monitoring in smallholder agroforestry landscapes
- Lead a research program that examines how trees can improve the resilience of farming systems to climate variability and change
- Backstop regional programs and help them integrate research on agroforestry and climate change into their research
- Mentor young scientists and interns
- Lead synthesis and meta-analysis of lessons and research results across sites
- Represent the Centre in global climate fora such as UNFCCC
- Prepare research proposals and lead fund raising efforts for the GRP

Requirements

- PhD or equivalent in forestry, environmental science, soils, ecology or another related field
- Minimum of 10 years of research experience in agriculture, forestry or environmental studies
- Solid publication record in research of mitigation of and adaptation to climate change
- A good network of international working relations

Location

At the Centre's headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya

Application Procedure

The closing date for all the positions is June 30th 2008, or until the positions is filled

Application letters and resumes should be sent to:

Helena Brykarz
Global Recruitment Specialists
P.O. Box 7382
Berkeley, California (CA) 94707 USA
Tel / Fax: 510-527-3316
E-mail: HBrykarz@GlobalRecruitment.net

World Agroforestry Centre offers a competitive salary and benefits package and a collegial and gender-sensitive working environment. We believe that staff diversity promotes excellence. Qualified female candidates from developing countries are strongly encouraged to apply.

World Agroforestry Centre (<http://www.worldagroforestry.org>)

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1.3 Marketing Specialist

World Agroforestry Centre <http://www.worldagroforestrycentre.org/>
Nairobi, Kenya

The World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) is an autonomous, non-profit research organization whose vision is a rural transformation in the developing world resulting in a massive increase in the use of trees in agricultural landscapes by smallholder households for improved food security, nutrition, income, health, shelter, energy and environmental sustainability. ICRAF is one of the 15 centres supported by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

Headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, ICRAF conducts research in 23 countries in Africa, Southeast Asia, South Asia and Latin America.

The Position:

The World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) seeks to recruit a senior research scientist on agroforestry tree product markets and enterprises. The position will be based at the Centre's headquarters in Nairobi and will provide research leadership and support to tree marketing and enterprise development research in World Agroforestry's six regional programmes. The specialist would fall within the project, Improving Market Access and Performance and be supervised by the Global Research Project Leader under the oversight of the Deputy Director General-Programmes. The appointment would initially be for three years subject to a nine-month probation period. Reappointment would be possible provided high performance and securing of new funds were achieved.

Responsibilities:

- Designing and implementing research in market analysis and tree product enterprise development. The research should be of global value leading to generation of new knowledge, methods, policies and capacity.
- Identifying, developing and managing strategic alliances with private sector, enterprise development NGOs, Micro-Finance Institutions, national agricultural research systems, and other relevant partners.
- Working together with other ICRAF staff and partners to assist existing market-oriented initiatives and develop new market-led opportunities.
- Facilitating the exchange of ideas and experiences between ICRAF regional staff and partners.
- Interacting with other senior staff to ensure useful incorporation of market-oriented activities into other aspects of ICRAF's work.
- Project development and fundraising for new enterprise development activities.

Qualifications and Experience:

- Minimum of a Masters degree in agricultural economics, international marketing and business management, or a related discipline;
- Sound publication record through journal articles, trade reports or related documentation;

- Minimum of 10 years experience working in research, agribusiness, and/or enterprise development NGOs or consulting firms, ideally in developing countries;
- Clear evidence of an ability to manage increasing responsibilities and resources;
- Strong track record in working with or managing collaborative relationships with a range of partners, including the private sector, in the agricultural or natural resource management sectors;
- Strong skills in market analysis; enterprise development, financial; training; monitoring and evaluation skills;
- Demonstrated fund-raising and proposal writing abilities;
- Familiarity with international agricultural and environmental research issues;
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, fluency in English and, ideally, French and/or Spanish;
- Ability to work in multidisciplinary and multicultural teams;
- Willingness to travel frequently internationally.

ICRAF offers a competitive salary and benefits package and a collegial and gender-sensitive working environment. We believe that staff diversity promotes excellence. World Agroforestry Centre is an equal opportunity employer, and encourages applications from qualified women and developing country nationals.

To Apply: Email cover letter and resume/CV to:
 Jill Solomon, Senior Contract Recruiter
 Global Recruitment Specialists
 91 Oakview Terrace
 Short Hills, New Jersey (NJ) 07078 USA
 Tel / Fax: 973-379-7325
 E-Mail: JSolomon@GlobalRecruitment.net

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2. Workshops & Training Courses

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2.1 II International Symposium on Papaya - Papaya for Nutritional Security

December 9-12, 2008, Madurai, Tamil Nadu (India)

Deadline for abstract submission: June 30, 2008 !

Papaya, a native of tropical America, is grown in almost all tropical and subtropical regions of the world. Papaya fruits are valued for its high nutritive and medicinal value. Papaya also yields a valuable proteolytic enzyme 'papain', which has valuable industrial applications. This important fruit ranks fifth in global production next to citrus, banana, pineapple and mango. Quite extensive research on papaya covering development of new varieties, production technologies, crop protection measures and post harvest handling etc is being carried out in many parts of the world in the recent years.

Most of these findings remain at regional level and in order to bring limelight to these findings at global level, a common platform is required. In this context, International Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS) in collaboration with Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore, India and other scientific organizations is organizing Second International Symposium on Papaya at Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India during 9-12 December, 2008; following the successful conduct of the First International Symposium on Papaya held at Genting Highlands, Malaysia during 22-24 November, 2005. The theme of this symposium 'Papayas for Nutritional Security' appropriately addresses the need for cultivating papaya from traditional small holdings to commercial orchards to alleviate the problem of malnutrition especially Vitamin A deficiency in many developing countries.

The organizers of this symposium cordially invite everyone involved in papaya research, extension, education, trade and commerce to be present at this meeting to share their experiences and build up the fraternity and network for advancement of this important fruit. The symposium will consist of three days of technical proceedings with a one-day mid symposium tour. A strong scientific programme will be presented with invited speakers / several high-quality oral presentations to address the latest progress made in research on papaya. In addition, a comprehensive poster session will allow delegates to present their own research results.

Symposium Topics:

- International trade and marketing
- Breeding and genetics
- Biotechnology
- Cultural practices and cropping systems
- Pest and disease management
- Post harvest handling and storage
- Product development and processing

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Proceedings:

The official language of the Symposium will be English. The Symposium will be conducted in several sessions, each of which will be led by a keynote speaker. Oral and poster papers are invited and acceptance is based on recommendation of the Scientific Committee after review of the abstracts. The papers presented at the Symposium will be refereed and published in a volume of Acta Horticulturae, the official journal of ISHS.

Info: Dr. N. Kumar, Department of Fruit Crops
Horticultural College & Research Institute
Priyakulam, 625 604, India

Phone: (91)4546231726, Fax: (91)4546231726
E-mail: kumarhort@yahoo.com

Web: <http://www.ishs-papaya2008.com/>

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2.2 Asia-Pacific Symposium on Assuring Quality and Safety of Agri-Foods

August 4-6, 2008, Bangkok (Thailand)

Abstract submission deadline: JUNE 20, 2008

The organizing committee of APS 2008 would like to remind you that the deadline to submit an abstract of a paper or poster for presentation at the symposium is June 20, 2008.

APS 2008 is organized by King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT) and is supported by the International Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS).

Please visit <http://www.kmutt.ac.th/APS2008> for additional details.

The goal of APS 2008 is to highlight the most recent and exciting developments and innovations in the area with an emphasis on the effect of fruits and vegetables on human health, quality modeling, quality management in supply chains, food traceability and safety, postharvest pest management, postharvest physiology, storage and transport technology, value adding and innovation agro-processing technologies, marketing and distribution systems.

Authors of all accepted oral and poster presentation will be given the opportunity to publish their papers subject to the rules for publication in Acta horticulturae.

Abstracts should be sent directly to the following email address: Sirichai.kan@kmutt.ac.th.

Note that a pre-conference tour will be organised to Chiang Mai, Ayudhya or Kanchanaburi. We look forward to welcoming you to "The Land of Smiles" in August 2008.

Yours sincerely,
Dr. Sirichai Kanlayanarat
Convener of APS2008

Info: Dr. Sirichai Kanlayanarat, King Mongkut's University of Technology, Thonburi, Division of Postharvest Technology, Thungkru, Bangkok 10140, Thailand.

Phone: (66)2 470 7720, Fax: (66)2 452 3750

E-mail: sirichai.kan@kmutt.ac.th

E-mail symposium: aps2008@kmutt.ac.th

Web: <http://www.kmutt.ac.th/APS2008/>

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2.3 Call for Research Notes and Invitation to Proposal Writing Workshop on Neglected and Underutilized Species of Plants

International Foundation for Science (IFS) and Bioversity International

Bioversity International and the International Foundation for Science (IFS) recognize that neglected and underutilized plant species (NUS) include hundreds of locally domesticated and wild species, which are rich in nutrients and adapted to low-input agriculture. Such crops can play a key role in supporting rural livelihoods, and in sustaining traditional production systems and enhancing their capacity to alleviate the effects of biotic and abiotic stresses - particularly, including those related to climate change. NUS are important in traditional pharmacology. Their commercialization can provide income opportunities. Due to the intensification of agriculture and the commoditization of food markets towards a narrow range of the most important food crops, diversity of NUS and associated local knowledge is rapidly being lost. Research, therefore, on NUS needs strengthening.

Bioversity and IFS are pleased to announce a new initiative to develop the capacity of young scientists in Sub-Saharan Africa to carry out research on neglected and underutilized species. The theme of this initiative is orientated towards under-utilised species which will have a potential role in mitigating the effects of climate change in marginal agricultural zones with regard to their ability to withstand abiotic stresses such as drought and salinity. We hereby invite young scientists interested in this theme to submit a Research Note and apply for participation in a proposal writing workshop in Nairobi, Kenya.

Who should apply?

Applicants eligible for this call should:

- be a citizen of a country in Eastern and Southern Africa
- be national scientist attached to a university, research institution or a research-oriented NGO
- be under 40 years of age (or up to 45 providing the last higher degree was obtained in the previous 5 years) and at the beginning of their research career
- have at least a Master's or equivalent degree.
- For further information on eligibility, please visit <http://www.ifs.se/Programme/eligibility.asp>

How does the research grant scheme work?

1. The workshop will be held from 24th -29th November, 2008.
2. Applicants should write a Research Note of one or two pages (please refer to attached guidelines) outlining a project with potential for submission to IFS's Granting Programme. An IFS Research Grant has a maximum value of USD 12,000 and a duration of 1-3 years.
For further details on the IFS Granting Programme, please visit http://www.ifs.se/Programme/granting_programme.asp
3. The proposed research should address research topics related to the conservation and use of NUS which may mitigate the effects of abiotic stress in marginal zones vulnerable to climate change, as described in this call.
4. The Research Note should be submitted to Bioversity International (and copied to IFS) by 31 August, 2008 (see below).
5. The Research Notes will be assessed by a joint panel from Bioversity and IFS. Fifteen to 20 successful applicants will be invited to a proposal writing workshop to be organized on 24th -29th November, 2008 in Nairobi, Kenya.
6. Selected participants are required to prepare a draft research proposal prior to the workshop, using the IFS application form.
7. The workshop aims to mentor the applicants regarding their research proposal, research methods, etc, and to develop skills in writing quality proposals.
8. Submission of full project proposal to IFS Granting Programme. Deadline: 31 December 2008.
9. Applications for an IFS Research Grant will be screened according to the normal IFS process, including assessment by IFS Scientific Advisers and recommendations from the IFS Scientific Advisory Committees. The timeframe from deadline for applications to final decisions is roughly 6-7 months.
10. Contracts are signed with the new IFS Grantees and their institutions.

Applications should include:

- o Research Note (please refer to attached guidelines)

o Curriculum Vitae

Applications should be sent to:

Elisabetta Rossetti
Bioversity International
Via dei Tre Denari 472/a
000 57 Maccarese
Italy
Email: e.rossetti@cgiar.org
Tel: +39 066118207

And copied to:

Richard A Hall
International Foundation for Science,
Karlavägen 108,
Se 11526, Stockholm,
Sweden.
Tel +46 8 545 818 14
Email: richard.hall@ifs.se

Deadline for applications is 31 August 2008

Research topics for this Call

This call covers a wide range of biophysical, economic and social issues related to the conservation and use of NUS in Sub-Saharan Africa. Research which is multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral is particularly encouraged.

Within the context of mitigation of the effects of climate change, the research may address one or more of the following issues and problems:

1. Demonstrating the economic value of NUS: Although many species are neglected by in scientific research and agricultural policy, and therefore remain underutilized, NUS can provide important contributions to farmers' livelihoods, including substantial cash income. Research on the NUS value chain can enhance farmers' participation in markets for NUS.
2. Demonstrating the nutritional value of NUS: The consumption of locally used NUS is believed to contribute positively to health and nutrition. Research is needed to determine the nutritional composition of NUS species, as well as on their role in reducing malnutrition and anaemia. Evidence for such value provision need to be systematically studied and shared.
3. Understanding diversity of NUS: Little is known about many NUS species. There are knowledge gaps regarding taxonomy; understanding of genetic origin and distribution of diversity; and the nature and status of threats and genetic erosion, etc. Molecular characterization of some NUS species could be important.
4. Degree of domestication: The domestication process of NUS is often unknown. Research is needed for example on the number and distribution of landrace varieties, characterization of these varieties, and their performance in different environments.
5. Conservation of NUS and their wild relatives: Many NUS, including medicinal plants and herbs, have an unclear conservation status. Community-based approaches to their conservation need further study.
6. Seed quality and seed systems: Informal seed systems – the predominant mode of exchange for NUS – need to be a better understood. This include research on the social and institutional dimensions of seed systems, including the 'custodians' of valuable varieties, or the study of seed systems of wild species. Research is also needed on seed physiology: germination, conservation, dormancy, etc.
7. Molecular techniques for NUS: Micro-propagation may be required for multiplication of endangered and vulnerable species and for species with recalcitrant or short-lived seeds.
8. Agronomic practices for NUS: While commodity crops have extensive agronomic recommendations, for example regarding fertilizer and pest management regimes, little such information is available for NUS. Exchange of experience between countries may be valuable for enhancing agronomic practices.
9. Post-harvest issues and food technology: The commercialization of NUS may be constrained by post-harvest issues ranging from lacking processing technology, to limited market access and lack of awareness of traits valued by customers. There are many opportunities to add value to NUS by

developing food processing technologies, for example regarding some NUS which require long cooking time and for that reason no longer are popular. Food safety also need attention. Innovative food processing, combined with creative marketing can revive consumers' interest in NUS. .

10. Policy issues: Because agricultural policies usually prioritize commodity crops, there may side-effects that negatively influence NUS production. Policy research which enable the conservation and use of NUS can help policy makers make appropriate decisions. Research can demonstrate NUS's role in food security, suggest how to encourage or integrate NUS in the national food security strategies, advise on how agriculture subsidies impact on NUS, etc.
11. Underutilized species and climate change: Under changing climatic conditions in Africa, NUS may provide farmers with promising alternatives for enhancing nutrition, food security and income, compared to commodity crops. It is thought that due to their greater genetic diversity, NUS might provide for better adaptability and resilience to stress. Research at the interface between climate change and NUS will provide local farming communities with greater information on the effectiveness of NUS in certain climate change situations.

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3. Publications & Information

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3.1 Credibility crunch

A think-piece from Oxfam [sent by Tevita Kete]

Food, poverty, and climate change: an agenda for rich-country leaders

The year 2008 is halfway to the deadline for reaching the Millennium Development Goals. Despite some progress, they will not be achieved if current trends continue. Aid promises are predicted to be missed by \$30bn, at a potential cost of 5 million lives. Starting with the G8 meeting in Japan, rich countries must use a series of high-profile summits in 2008 to make sure the Goals are met, and to tackle both climate change and the current food crisis. Economic woes must not be used as excuses: rich countries' credibility is on the line

No one has to be poor in 2008. No woman need die giving birth for want of simple medical care. No child should die of pneumonia because of a lack of medicine. No girl should have to watch her brothers leave to go to school while she stays at home. No family should see floods wash away its food. No woman should have to watch her children risk their lives drinking dirty water, or go to sleep with empty bellies.

This year, 2008, is the halfway point towards the deadline for reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), agreed by 147 nations in the year 2000. They focus on tackling poverty, hunger, gender inequality, education, health, water, sanitation, and the environment. These goals were not chosen as impossible dreams. They were chosen because they are realistic targets that, with concerted action, can and should be reached – and in fact exceeded – in order to banish extreme poverty to the history books. Remarkable progress is possible, even in the poorest countries. In Rwanda the number of children dying from malaria has been cut by two-thirds in the last two years alone. If you are born in Tanzania today, you are 25 per cent less likely to die by your first birthday than your sister born just four years ago. The Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria, which was created at the last G8 held in Japan in 2000, has to date distributed 30 million anti-malarial bednets, and is saving 3000 lives a day.

The most powerful driver of these transformations is the realisation that change is indeed possible: despair in poor countries and apathy in rich ones are the greatest obstacles. In Malawi, consistent economic growth, government subsidy for fertilisers that contributed to record harvests, mass distribution of free AIDS drugs and falling numbers of those infected, a 50 per cent salary increase for nurses, and free primary education for every child have all contributed to a palpable sense of optimism in the country. Compared with just six years ago when the country was gripped by a food crisis, this is amazing progress. There is so much further to go; some reversals and setbacks are inevitable. But the first ingredient of success is the belief that it is within reach.

It is these successes that make the wider failure of progress towards the MDGs all the more unacceptable. Rapid increases in food prices threaten to reverse what gains have been made, thus driving millions back below the poverty line. At half time, instead of coasting to victory, the world is staring at defeat. Rich countries are not the only reason for this failure. Poor-country governments can

and should do far more, and Oxfam works with activists and citizens across the developing world to demand change from their leaders.

But rich countries continue to control 60 per cent of the world economy and have generated 60 per cent of the world's accumulated carbon emissions. They are the ones who make or break trade or climate negotiations depending on what concessions they give and what demands they make on developing countries. They are the ones producing most of the arms. They are the creditors demanding that illegitimate and crippling debts are repaid: often debts incurred paying for those same arms. But with this great power comes great responsibility. They have a strong obligation to use their money and power to stop doing harm and instead to make the world a fairer, better place. When they do act, for example on debt cancellation or on provision of treatment for those living with HIV and AIDS, lives are saved.

By 2010 we need to see \$150bn in additional high-quality annual aid in order to reach the MDGs.¹ To go beyond the MDGs, to end poverty and not just halve it, rich countries must finally fulfil their promise, made in 1970, to give 0.7 per cent of their income as aid. In an unprecedented move, the leaders of all the major multilateral agencies, including the World Bank, the United Nations (UN), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the European Commission (EC) have jointly published, in May 2008, a detailed investment plan for Africa, which shows clearly the specific life-saving interventions that could be made if the aid promised at the G8 in Gleneagles were delivered.

Action by rich countries to end poverty is not just a moral imperative: a more prosperous and safer developing world is in the interests of everyone. It means more markets and trading partners. It undermines the threat of armed conflict and terrorism. It reduces the pressure for economic migration. It enables the world to act together to tackle global crises such as climate change and disease.

Sadly, despite these compelling arguments, rich-country leaders more commonly prefer to hide behind promises, polemic, and short-term self-interest.

During the next few months, a series of important opportunities present themselves in which leaders can take action to restore their crumbling credibility. As this year's G8 chair, Japan must press the rich countries to take action at their meeting in July. Beyond the G8, the emergency MDG meeting called by the UN Secretary-General for September, the Ghana Aid Summit the same month, and the Financing for Development Conference in Doha in November are all important accountability opportunities. These meetings should present action plans, backed by finance, to deliver on the MDGs. The climate change summit in Poznan in Poland in December then offers the chance of a fair deal on climate. The millions of campaigners in rich and poor countries who want action on poverty and inequality have not gone away and will make their presence felt this year, and every year, until leaders meet the challenge.

Oxfam has a six-point agenda for the G8 and other rich-country leaders for these critical meetings. They must follow this set of steps, and follow them now:

- 1 Stop burning food and start supporting poor farmers
- 2 Mend broken aid promises
- 3 Support health, education, water and sanitation for all
- 4 Climate change: stop harming and start helping
- 5 Put women and girls first
- 6 Prioritise security for sustainable development

The recent rapid increases in food prices mean untold misery for millions, with despair and anger leading to riots worldwide. The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has estimated that biofuels explain 30 per cent of the recent increase in food prices.² The IMF has calculated that 50 per cent of the increase in consumption of major food crops is attributable to the rapid increase in the use of US corn for biofuels. Unless new targets to further increase biofuel use are frozen, this will get worse and not better. The rich cannot burn food while the poor world starves. They must revisit support for biofuels that drive food prices higher. At the same time humanitarian aid and long-term investment in agriculture, including subsidised seed and fertiliser, should be rapidly increased and further supported through fair trade rules.

Aid should be going up, not down. Rich countries give just over half as much of their income as they did in 1962. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has confirmed Oxfam's prediction that rich countries could miss their 2010 promise of \$50bn in extra annual aid by as

much as \$30bn – money that could save 5 million lives. Rich-country leaders have produced nearly a trillion dollars to bail out their reckless banks, yet cannot find \$30bn in aid. Many people are tired of broken promises and implausible excuses. If Spain can increase its aid by 33 per cent in one year, then so can Japan, Germany, France, and the UK. It is simply untrue that giving 0.7 per cent of the country's income as foreign aid is not affordable or politically feasible. Aid must be radically improved in quality, too. We need to see French aid spent on basic health and education, not squandered on scholarships to the Sorbonne and other French universities. Aid must support government plans, not donor pet projects, and aid commitments must be made for years, not months.

This year is the tenth anniversary of the first major protest of Jubilee 2000 at the Birmingham G8 in 1998. Debt cancellation is the best thing the G8 has ever done for poor countries, under huge pressure from this worldwide campaign. It has led to a doubling of social spending in many countries. But the process has now slowed to a crawl and many more countries need relief. Bangladesh has had no cancellation and is still paying rich countries \$2m a day. The rules must also be changed to ensure that a new debt crisis does not emerge, and to punish irresponsible lenders who write cheques to dictators and demand payment from poor people.

Essential public services – health, education, water, sanitation – are lethal weapons in the fight against poverty and inequality. Massive progress has been possible with the free and universal provision of these basic services. To pay for this, funds must be forthcoming from rich nations: they should support government plans for free universal public services. They must stop attracting health workers away from poor countries and defending their drug companies' profits rather than affordable medicines for all.

Climate change is already hitting poor people first and worst, causing increased droughts and floods and threatening livelihoods. Although not directly included in the MDGs, 2015 is also a critical milestone in efforts to combat climate change. The brutal reality is that unless the global trend of greenhouse-gas emissions growth is reversed by 2015, our chances of avoiding unmanageable climate impacts will be very poor. This will have direct life or death consequences for the poorest, most vulnerable people around the world.

Climate is likely to dominate this year's G8 discussions, but it looks unlikely that the G8 leaders will resolve to support an ambitious post-2012 agreement under the UN. China will be painted as one of the big problems. In fact, rich-country emissions have created the problem in the first place. They have the responsibility to cut their emissions fast and deep as well as to help people in poor countries adapt to the already unavoidable impacts of climate change. At the G8, some money to help poor countries adapt will be announced by the UK, USA, and Japan, but a large part is going to be taken from existing aid budgets, and in the case of the UK will actually be loans. Poor countries face a triple injustice: they have to pay the price for rich countries' pollution, the little money to help them is being diverted from urgently needed development aid promises, and they are being asked to repay it with interest. This is completely unacceptable; rich countries must come up with at least \$50bn a year to compensate poor countries for their dirty carbon habit.

Poverty is literally man-made. Men hold most of the power in the world, and must take responsibility for the brutal poverty and insidious inequality that is the blight on the lives of so many. Prioritising equality for women and girls is a prerequisite of any progress. Ending poverty will require money and dedicated UN leadership.

Poverty, and particularly inequality between different groups, contributes to many of the world's 31 major armed conflicts. In the next five years, any of the poorest countries in the world could have a one in six chance of civil war, with women worst affected. G8 governments are some of the biggest arms dealers and the flood of unregulated arms undermines the potential of tackling poverty. Currently, spending on arms is 12 times more than spending on aid. If this were reversed, poverty and insecurity could be ended. The world needs a fully enforced Arms Trade Treaty.

The G8 and other rich nations have the power and the opportunity to make poverty history. They have the power to end the current food crisis and to tackle climate change. It is not yet too late, but it will be if rich nations don't act soon.

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3.2. HarvestPlus Nutrition Coordinator
[from Howard Bouis]

HarvestPlus is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Erick Boy-Gallego as Nutrition Coordinator. Erick will be based in Ottawa Canada, and will be housed at the Micronutrient Initiative (MI). He received his PhD and MSc degrees in Nutrition from The University of California at Davis. Erick, who is also an MD, has significant background in epidemiology, and extensive experience in applied research in perinatal and maternal nutrition. Christine Hotz will join the HarvestPlus nutrition team in Ottawa. Erick can be reached at his new CGIAR email address, e.boy@cgiar.org. Please join us in welcoming Erick and honoring the new collaboration with our friends at the MI.

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3.3 New: Journal of Natural Resources Policy Research

<<http://scientific-direct.net/c.asp?702065&080de2efb7e4e255&9>>

Journal of Natural Resources Policy Research, published by Taylor and Francis publishes original policy-oriented papers addressing a broad range of natural resource fields including water, minerals, energy, fisheries, and forestry in a synthesizing fashion, rather than as stand-alone specialty areas. The journal will also publish papers on the natural resource implications of climate change, natural disasters, and biodiversity loss, among others. The papers, ideally, will be based on both conceptual and empirical studies and will be primarily policy-focused.

The journal will be largely social-sciences-focused including such fields as economics, sociology, geography, political science, anthropology, public administration, ethics and other disciplines relevant to the crafting of efficient, equitable and sustainable natural resources policies.

We are looking for papers dealing with, but not limited to, the following topics:

1. Natural resource policy broadly defined – scope and dimensions
2. Holistic vs. sector-specific approach
3. Policy framework – components, sequencing, linkages, integration, robustness
4. Conceptual/theoretical paradigms – rationale and evolutionary perspectives
5. Country studies, case studies, case histories, survey papers
6. Natural resource policy modelling
7. Natural resource institutions – design and implementation
8. Natural resource policy crafting – ownership, allocation, planning, development, markets and pricing, conservation
9. Natural resources and political externalities; public choice and rent-seeking
10. Natural resource use and environmental quality
11. Public-private partnership issues
12. Natural resources and institutional entropy
13. Transboundary, transnational, and transgenic resources
14. Natural resource policy - efficiency, equity, and sustainability
15. Trigger issues - climate change, natural disasters, human disasters, deforestation, endangered species, invasive species, environmental pollution

Our goal is to foster productive dialog among the disparate sectors in the broad field of natural resources and among various social science perspectives leading to an improved understanding of institutional and economic dynamics and informed policy making.

We hope that you will consider Journal of Natural Resources Policy Research as a future publication to showcase your work and research.

For further information including the full Editorial Board and Instructions for Authors please visit the journal's homepage <<http://scientific-direct.net/c.asp?702065&080de2efb7e4e255&9>>.

Paper submission deadline for first issue: by 15 June 2008.

Professor Chennat Gopalakrishnan
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3.4 Turning Your Lawn into a Victory Garden Won't Save You -- Fighting the Corporations Will

Another think piece sent in by Tevita Kete

By Stan Cox, AlterNet. Posted June 23, 2008. <http://www.alternet.org/environment/86943/>

The corporate agriculture industry would like nothing better than to see us spend all of our free time in our gardens and not in political dissent.

I didn't mean to lead anyone down the garden path. Adding my small voice to those urging Americans to replace their lawns with food plants wasn't, in itself, a bad idea. But now that food shortages and high costs are in the headlines, too many people are getting the idea that the solution to America's and the world's food problems is for all of us in cities and suburbia to grow our own. It's not.

Don't get me wrong: Growing food just outside your front or back door is an extraordinarily good idea, and if it's done without soil erosion or toxic chemicals, I can think of no downside. Edible landscaping can look good, and it saves money on groceries; it's a direct provocation to the toxic lawn culture; gardening is quieter and less polluting than running a power mower or other contraption; the harvest provides a substitute for industrially grown produce raised and picked by underpaid, oversprayed workers; and tending a garden takes a lot of time, time that might otherwise be spent in a supermarket or shopping mall.

So it was in 2005 that our family volunteered our front lawn to be converted into the first in a now-expanding chain of "Edible Estates," the brainchild of Los Angeles architect/artist Fritz Haeg. We already had a backyard garden, but growing food in the front yard (which, as Haeg himself points out, is a reincarnation of a very old idea) has been a wholly different, equally positive experience.

Our perennials and annuals are thriving, we've gotten a lot of publicity, and I've been talking about the project for almost three years. Yet neither of our gardens, front or back, can stand up to the looming agricultural crisis. Good food's most well-read advocate, Michael Pollan, has written that growing a garden is worth doing even though it can make only a tiny contribution to curbing carbon-dioxide emissions. He might have added that growing food is worth it even if it does very little to revive the nation's food system.

World cropland: the pie is mostly crust

The edible-landscaping trend is catching on across the country, and with food prices rising, it has taking sadly predictable turns. A Boulder, Colo. entrepreneur, for example, has tilled up his and several of his neighbors' yards and started an erosion-prone, for-profit vegetable-farming operation. It will supplement his income, but it won't make a nick in the food crisis.

That's because the mainstays of home gardening -- vegetables and fruits -- are not the foundation of the human diet or of world agriculture. Each of those two food types occupies only about 4 percent of global agricultural land (and a smaller percentage in this country), compared with 75 percent of world cropland devoted to grains and oilseeds. Their respective portions of the human diet are similar.

Suppose that half of the land on every one-acre-or-smaller urban/suburban home lot in the entire nation were devoted to food-growing. That would amount to a little over 5 million acres (pdf) sown to food plants, covering most of the space on each lot that's not already covered by the house, a deck, a patio, or a driveway. (And in many places it couldn't be done without cutting down shade trees and planting on unsuitably steep slopes).

That theoretical 5 million acres of potential home cropland compares with about 7 million acres of America's commercial cropland currently in vegetables, fruits, and nuts, and 350 to 400 million acres of total farmland. The urban and suburban area to be brought into production would not approach the number of healthy acres of native grasses and other plants that are slated to be plowed up to make way for yet more corn, wheat, soybeans, and other grains under the newly passed federal Farm Bill.

A nationwide grow-your-own wave would send good vibes through society, ripples that could be greatly amplified by community and apartment-block gardening. But front- and backyard food, even if everyone

grew it, would not cover the country's produce needs, much less displace our huge volume of fresh-food imports.

We could, instead, plant every yard to wheat, corn, or soybeans, which would account only for a little over two percent of the US land sown to those crops. Other policies, like dispensing with grain-fed meat and fuel ethanol, would free up far more grain-belt land than that.

Not even a poke in the eye

I've played a part in the promotion of domestic food-growing, and I now I seem to hear daily from people who believe that it's the best alternative to industrial agriculture (as in, "I'll show Monsanto and Wal-Mart that I don't need their food!"). Even though most prominent home-lot food efforts, like the "100-Foot Diet Challenge," also try to draw attention to bigger issues, the wider message can get lost in the excitement. Whatever its benefits, replacing your lawn with food plants will not give Big Agribusiness the big poke in the eye that it needs, nor will it save the agricultural landscapes of the nation or world.

To do that, the big-commodity market must be not just modified but overthrown. Until then, most of that two-thirds or more of the human calorie and protein intake that comes from grains and oilseeds (directly in most of the world or among Western vegetarians, largely via animal products for others in this country) will continue to be served up by a dirty, cruel, unfair, broken system.

Essential for providing vitamins, minerals, and other compounds, a highly varied diet is important, and home gardens around the world help provide such a diet. But with a world population now approaching seven billion people and most good cropland already in use, only rice, wheat, corn, beans, and other grain crops are productive and durable enough to provide the dietary foundation of calories and protein.

Grains made up about the same portion of the ancient Greek diet as they do of ours. We've been stuck with grains for 10,000 years, and our dependence won't be broken any time soon.

The United States emulate Argentina and a handful of other countries by raising cattle that are totally grass-fed instead of grain-fed and thereby consuming less corn and soybean meal. But most of the world is utterly dependent on grains. The desperate people we saw on the evening news earlier this year, filling the streets in dozens of countries, were calling for bread or rice, not cucumbers and pomegranates.

Capitalism: It doesn't go well with food

Humanity's attachment to cereals, grain legumes, and oilseeds has acquired a much harder edge in the industrial era, but as a base for political and economic power, the staple grains have always been unsurpassed. Because they hold calories and nutrients in a dense package that can be easily stored for long periods and transported, the more fortunate members of ancient societies could accumulate surpluses. Those surpluses are recognized by the majority of scholars as necessary to the birth of market economies, which allowed the prosperous to exercise control over society's have-nots. Eventually, states used control over grains to exert political power over entire populations.

Few foods could have filled that role. Noting that before grain agriculture came along, ancient Egyptians might have gathered a surplus of various foods from nature, most of them highly perishable, economic historian Robert Allen once wrote, "If all a tax collector could get from foragers was a load of waterlilies that would wilt by next morning, what was the point of having them?" The Pharaohs managed to exert control over the area's population only after people started farming wheat and barley.

The even bigger problem with grains -- which are short-lived annual plants, grown largely in monoculture -- is that they supplanted the diverse, perennial plant ecosystems that covered the earth before the dawn of agriculture. We've been living with the resulting soil erosion and water pollution ever since.

Then, when grains became fully commodified a couple of centuries ago, things really started to go downhill. In discussing his new book *Stuffed and Starved: The Hidden Battle for the World Food System*, Raj Patel cited India as an example: "The social safety nets that existed in India under feudal society had been knocked away by the British. If people couldn't afford food, they didn't get to eat, and if they couldn't buy food, they starved. As a result of the imposition of markets in food, 13 million people across

the world died in the 19th century. They died in the golden age of liberal capitalism. Those are the origins of markets in food."

Indeed, if capitalism were a wine, it would be a wine that doesn't go well with any type of food.

Most food today is produced not as an end in itself but as a by-product of a global economy with the singular goal of turning maximum profit. That is a dysfunctional arrangement, as Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, the founder of ecological economics explained almost 40 years ago in his book *The Entropy Law and the Economic Process*: "So vital is the dependence of terrestrial life on the energy received from the sun that the cyclic rhythm in which this energy reaches each region on the earth has gradually built itself through natural selection into the reproductive pattern of almost every species, vegetal or animal ... Yet the general tenor among economists has been to deny any substantial difference between the structures of agricultural and industrial productive activities."

Industrial or commercial output can be increased by building more capacity, stepping up the consumption of inputs, taking on more workers, and pushing workers harder and for longer hours. Farming, by contrast, is inevitably bound by the calendar -- by month-to-month variation in the capacity of soil and sunlight to support the growth of plants. It depends fundamentally on the productivity and the habits of non-human biological organisms over which humans can exert control only up to a point.

That clearly isn't the ideal pattern for efficient wealth generation, so the past century has seen relentless efforts to mold agriculture into the factory model as closely as possible and, where that can't be done, to graft more easily regimented industries -- farm machinery, fertilizers, chemicals, food processing, the restaurant industry, packaging, advertising -- onto an agricultural rootstock. In the US, the dollar outputs of those dependent industries are growing at two to four times the rate of agriculture's own dollar output, putting ever-greater demands on the soil.

With a wholesale shift toward mechanization of US agriculture, 75 percent of economic output now comes from fewer than 7 percent of farms; furthermore, there has been a steep rise in the proportion of farms owned by investors living in distant cities (some of them perhaps avid urban gardeners).

Because, as Georgescu-Roegen showed, there's a fundamental difference between the farm and the factory, the well-used term "factory farming" represents more an aspiration than an accomplished fact. Nevertheless, agribusiness's attempts to defy natural rhythms and achieve industrial efficiency have been ecologically devastating. The biofuel craze, encouraged by subsidies that continue in the new Farm Bill, compounds the problem.

"We must cultivate our garden," and ...

To repair the broken system that supplies the bulk of the nation's diet will require Americans to step out of the garden and into the public arena. Beyond working to get a better Farm Bill passed five years from now, we have to work together to break the political choke-hold that agribusiness has on federal and state governments.

With land and wealth being concentrated in fewer and fewer hands (and with more prisoners than farmers in today's America) we have actually reached a point at which land reform is as necessary here as it is in any nation of Latin America or Asia. Only when we get more people back on the land, working to feed people and not Monsanto, will the system have a chance to work. Most home gardeners know that the root of the problem is political, but the agricultural establishment would like nothing better than to see us spend all of our free time in our gardens and not in political dissent.

Ironically, it's that great troublemaker Voltaire who has too often been trotted out (and too often misquoted) as an advocate of withdrawing from the tumult of society, into tending one's own property. Voltaire was indeed a gardener, and he did end his most famous novel by having Candide, after surviving so many far-flung hazards, utter those famous words to his fellow wanderer Dr. Pangloss: "We must cultivate our garden."

However, with the publication of *Candide* in 1759, Voltaire entered the most politically active part of his life, as he "went on to a series of confrontations with the consequences of human cruelty that, two hundred-odd years later, remain stirring in their courage and perseverance," in the words of Adam Gopnik.

If Voltaire could find the time for both gardening and radical political action, then all of us can do it.

Stan Cox is a plant breeder and writer in Salina, Kansas. His book, Sick Planet: Corporate Food and Medicine, was just published by Pluto Press.

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4. ICUC-related information

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5. ICUC network

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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.

- I am Dr. K. Abraham, Principal scientist and Head of the Division of Crop Improvement in the Central Tuber Crops Research Institute, India. I have been working on the genetic resources and crop improvement work of edible tuber crops like cassava, yams and taro.
- My name is Kirk Longstein and I am currently serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Malawi, Eastern Africa. The village that I am living with have expressed a concern for lack of food availability and high prices for the foods that are available. I am currently working to introduce new vegetable crops and any other healthy, easily grown food crops. I'm not interested in GMO seeds or high price agricultural inputs but cost effective and small scale, organic solutions.

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Championing underutilised plant species for food, nutrition and sustainable development