



drynet

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News from Drynet

A global initiative giving future to drylands

Drynet is a project of 14 organizations from all over the world. They work together to combat land degradation

GLOBAL NEWS

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Drynet Update

Welcome to the fourth issue of "News from Drynet", a newsletter from the Drynet project on local concerns and views on drylands. This issue focuses on the importance of international events like the CRIC (see box) and national programs like the NAPs for reaching sustainability in drylands. The question is which role can and should civil society play in these processes? The seventh session of the CRIC took place in Istanbul, Turkey from November 3rd to 14th 2008, simultaneously with the first special session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST). Members of the Drynet network were present and engaged through the Drynet information stand and two side events on the following topics: "The Myth of the Wastelands: Mobile Pastoralism in Dryland Areas - Can biofuel production offer new opportunities for pastoral peoples' livelihood?" And "Strengthening civil society partnerships for promoting sustainable land management and monitoring progress in overcoming land degradation". Besides this they also provided new publications for practical use as well as discussion such as a Drynet and Global

Mechanism co-production "Civil Society Organisations in Drylands - Practical guide for mapping, profiling and analysing community and policy level engagement", and a Drynet position paper "The Biofuel Boom and its Consequences for Drylands". All of these are now available on our website. While civil society organisations can participate openly in these events the question remains how much influence they really have on the decision-making processes. This newsletter will provide some views on this issue, trying to shed some more light on what the individual organisations feel their position is both at the national and international levels. Furthermore there will be some discussion on the way in which the NAPs have been successfully incorporated in the member countries.

By Drynet partner: Both ENDS, the Netherlands - drynet@bothends.org



Drynet members during Side Event on "Pastoralism in Dryland Areas"

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The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has different structures of governance and decision making. We will run past the most important here:

COPs The Conference of the Parties (COP) was established by the Convention as the supreme decision-making body; it comprises ratifying governments and regional economic integration organizations, such as the European Union. One of the main functions of the COP is to review reports submitted by the Parties detailing how they are carrying out their commitments; the COP makes recommendations on the basis of these reports. It also has the power to make amendments to the Convention or to adopt new annexes, such as additional regional implementation annexes. In this way, the COP can guide the Convention as global circumstances and national needs change.

To assist the COP, the Convention provides for subsidiary bodies and allows the COP to establish additional ones if necessary.

CRICs The Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) assists the COP in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention. The review process leading to the CRIC, which includes input at sub-regional and regional levels, will allow it to draw conclusions and to propose to the COP concrete recommendations on further steps in the implementation of the Convention. The review is to be conducted along thematic lines decided by the COP, with due regard to geographic dimensions.

NAPs The UNCCD Parties develop their own National Action Programmes (NAP) which are one of the key instruments in the implementation of the Convention. National Action Programmes should be developed in the framework of a participative approach involving the local communities and they spell out the practical steps and measures to be taken to combat desertification in specific ecosystems.

CST The Committee on Science and Technology (CST) is a subsidiary body of the COP; it provides the COP with information and advice on scientific and technological matters relating to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought using the most up-to-date scientific knowledge. It is multi-disciplinary, open to the participation of the Parties and composed of government representatives with relevant expertise.

Source: www.unccd.int

Interview with Mark Winslow

COORDINATOR OF THE DRYLAND SCIENCE FOR DEVELOPMENT CONSORTIUM (DSD) BY SILKE BREHM ON FRIDAY 7TH OF NOVEMBER 2008

Mark Winslow works for ICRISAT (International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-arid tropics), a non-profit agricultural research centre which tries to improve sustainable land management in the tropical dryland areas of Africa and Asia. I met Mark on Friday afternoon in the quiet CST meeting room of Cevahir conference hotel during the last week of CRIC7 in Istanbul. Outside in the corridors there was the buzzing of informal talks and the echo of ongoing official sessions. The CST (Committee of Science and Technology) was closing their session and giving their conclusions to the UNCCD, including their decision to charge the Dryland Science for Development (DSD) Consortium with the mandate for assistance in organizing the COP-9. This refers to Decision 13 of the 8th Session of the UNCCD Conference of Parties (COP) towards fulfilling the 10-year Strategic Plan, where the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) is recommended to conduct future sessions in a predominantly scientific and technical conference - style format.

SB: Why was there a need felt for change in first place on the CST level?
MW: The CST was asked by the convention to increase the flow of science into useful forms in the convention, because the convention is made up of what is called the Conference of Parties' which are representatives in the political >>

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Administration of almost all countries in the world. These political representatives want to use science to make better policies to reduce the suffering, the reduction of the productivity and the high risk of using dryland areas. So they asked us to help organize a conference that can summarize the available knowledge on drylands for policy in simple forms which can be used to make better policies. Just as the Climate Change Convention has found the measurement of carbon a very simple way to express policies, the goal of this conference is to have some simple measures for combating dryland Degradation.

SB: The Consortium has a clear mandate to involve the CSO / NGOs especially in the development of a set of indicators of desertification. How will this be ensured and how do you see Drynet or other CSO initiatives to get involved in the process? MW: What makes the UNCCD quite unique is that it recognizes the importance of local knowledge in solving this problem, because it is a problem of land use. The land-users have? experience for generations in ways they use the land. Scientists who are educated in a more classical way very often are not land-users in a traditional type of setting, so they can look at things in a certain way and miss other aspects of the environment that are important. We will look to CSO/NGOs to help us to add that additional viewpoint and perspective and help us understand how to put it in a scientific

framework. To help the scientists identify the knowledge gaps, the different priorities of land users and to identify case studies and socio economic surveys and bring that knowledge on the table and into the deliberations of the conference and the DSD activities.

For more information on DSD, please visit the website

www.drylandscience.org or contact the DSD coordinator, Dr.Mark Winslow at m.winslow@cgiar.org

Listen to the entire interview under multimedia on our website www.dry-net.org

By Drynet partner: Silke Brehm of LPP, Germany – Silke.Brehm@gmx.de



Visit of the Indian Focal Point to the Drynet info stand at the CRIC7.

International Agenda 2009

12 - 16 January 2009 - 5th EGU

Alexander von Humboldt International Conference to be held in Cape Town, South Africa. Iphakade Climate Changes and African Earth Systems Past, Present and Future.
www.humboldt5.uct.ac.za/

21 - 23 January 2009 - WAFLA

International Conference - Improving Tools against Desertification and Drought Enhanced Integrated Agroforestry and Water Management Systems for Arid and Semi-Arid Areas in Latin America . To be held at the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) headquarter in Santiago, Chile.
www.wafla.com/;
www.accionporlatierra.cl/conferencia

10 - 12 March 2009 - Climate Change: Global Risks, Challenges and Decisions UNFCCC COP-15 Lead-in Congress in Copenhagen, Denmark.
<http://climatecongress.ku.dk>

13 - 17 April 2009 - International Conference On Water, Environment And Health Sciences: The Challenges Of The Climate Change (ICWEHS) held in Cholula, Mexico. This conference will provide a forum for the interdisciplinary exchange of issues, views, experiences and needs for research in the areas of water, environment and health sciences under the influence of climate change.
<http://www.udlap.mx/ICWEHS/>

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Joint Drynet / DESIRE / enid paper: "Is the UNCCD stuck in a knowledge traffic jam?"

The paper focuses on how the UNCCD can more effectively build on a combination of the most recent, cutting edge research, and the wealth of evolving local knowledge from affected communities and CSOs. Two short excerpts as indication of the content:

"To improve the effectiveness of the UNCCD for dryland communities, the government representatives responsible for implementing the convention and its NAPs must base their interventions on relevant and up-to-date information. This includes knowledge from local communities and land users themselves (often channelled via NGOs and CSOs) on the current state of land degradation and desertification, traditional practices, local successes and obstacles. At the same time, knowledge needs to come from researchers, providing in-depth analyses of desertification processes and impacts, as well as assessments of the technical and financial feasibility of suggested solutions. It is also important to develop ways of monitoring and assessing desertification, as well as determining the impact of the UNCCD in addressing it.

This requires the integration of different types of knowledge and for appropriate pathways to be developed to allow this knowledge to flow to those charged with policy- and decision-making." " ... there is no formal mechanism that ensures local and traditional knowledge is taken into account in UNCCD processes and negotiations. In some ways, this knowledge flow is complicated because it has a longer, more arduous journey to make, all the way from the local level via its intermediaries to the national and international levels.... For local knowledge to be used effectively, the national roots of the international UNCCD process are therefore crucial."

For our suggestions for improvement, please read the full paper on www.dry-net.org

Excerpt from the Closing Statement by Civil Society Organisations participating in the CRIC7:

"We appreciate the new format of the Committee on Science and Technology, which will engage entities and representatives of the scientific community and renew its membership so as to include more scientific and technical expertise. In this regard, we note that some civil

society organizations have a scientific and technical orientation. The Consortium recently selected for the organization of the Scientific Conference must include within its group of scientific experts those of civil society who have expertise in this area.

In relation to the biophysical and socioeconomic indicators, we emphasize that work has already been undertaken in the various regions, which must be considered and adopted in the short term. We also believe that indicators of participation are needed to monitor the inclusion of CSOs in the implementation of the Convention, and that these should be reflected in national reports. In the same vein, we request that the Committee on Science and Technology should take into account the work done by civil society on issues concerning the knowledge, technology and practices in the fight against desertification and drought. Furthermore, noting the poor performance of the Thematic Program Networks (TPNs), we call upon the Parties and the Secretariat to support the revitalisation of the TPNs."

For full statement please see our website www.dry-net.org

If you like to receive this newsletter electronically or for more details on the articles published, contact us at drynet@bothends.org or check our website www.dry-net.org

REGIONAL NEWS

Enhanced govt support for organic farming sought

By: Sher Baz Khan

ISLAMABAD, April 28: Experts from eight Asian countries have demanded more government support for organic farming to ensure an environmentally responsible approach to producing high quality food and fibre at a time when the world is faced with severe food crisis. At the end of a five-day international training attended by members of the Asian Productivity Organization (APO) included Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Fiji, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, agricultural scientists here also warned that a five time increase in the import of pesticides last season had caused a considerable shortfall in cotton production this year. Held at the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), the event highlighted the trends in organic farming internationally and the way forward for the Asian region.

Dr. Kausar Abdullah Malik, Member, Planning Commission of Pakistan and former chairman of the PARC told the participants that Pakistan had increased the size of its pesticide import five times last year with the aim of increasing cotton productivity. But, the move had reverse impacts and rather decreased production by failing to control pests. He said Pakistan could grow organic cotton which had a demanding and expanding market. He said organic farming needed certification to access the international markets so certified institutions had to play their effective



role in developing organic farming in the country.

Dr Kausar said organic farming made up the largest growth sector in the agriculture industry. Although organic food remained a rich market, organic food sales totalled about \$12 billion in 2005. Despite significant growth in the organic food sector, research had to play an important role in keep pace with ongoing activities in the field of organic farming in the world, he added. He said the availability of credit support and other incentives for farmers to convert to organic production needed to be introduced to help the sector grow rapidly and to support associated businesses. During the process of the training, the participants were informed that according to a 2005-06 survey Australia contained 12.126 million hectares, the second largest area was found in China (3.466 million hectares) and the third largest area under organic land was in Argentina (2.8 million hectares). While, the world's total area under organic farming was 31.502 million hectares.

India has 114,037 hectares. Pakistan has only 20,310 hectares under organic farming. The land under organic management in percentage of the total agricultural area by country, Pakistan has only 0.07pc of total agricultural area. The number of

organic farms was only 28 in Pakistan when the survey was conducted two years ago. Dr. Mohammad Saeed, programme officer of the APO, Japan said that the Asian countries needed to establish or strengthen their existing institution in organic farming and certification by training their manpower. He appreciated the role of PARC for arranging training in Pakistan. He asked the scientists that they should disseminate information to the end-users which they got from the training course.

http://article.wn.com/view/2008/04/29/Enhanced_govt_support_for_organic_farming_sought/

PM orders release of funds for agriculture ministry

ISLAMABAD, Jan 6: Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani directed the ministry of finance on Tuesday to release budgeted funds for the ministry of agriculture for smooth running of its projects. Presiding over a meeting held to assess the performance of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture here, he said the food storage capacity should be increased by involving private sector.

He said that the agricultural sector was the backbone of national economy and required an innovative and demand-driven research and knowledge-based development system. He said the ministry should take measures to increase crop yields by introducing certified seeds and modern technology. He called for improvements in rural infrastructure and agriculture marketing and asked the ministry to induct qualified professionals in the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC). He stressed the need for better water management, supply of quality seeds, fertiliser and pesticides to accelerate agricultural growth and achieve self-sufficiency in food.

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He urged the ministry to coordinate with the regional initiative to set up seed banks, like in D-8 countries. Mr. Gilani called for improving the quality of human resource in public sector and ensuring merit-based selection. "A smaller and capable public sector could deliver more effectively than large and inefficient pool of employees." Federal Minister for Food and Agriculture Nazar Mohammad Gondal, the secretary of agriculture and chairman of PARC briefed the prime minister on the ministry's efforts to accelerate farm mechanisation and research and development, improve the efficiency of water use and promote good agriculture practices. The meeting was also attended by Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission Sardar Assef Ahmad Ali.

<http://www.dawn.com/2009/01/07/nat16.htm>

UNDP to help combat land degradation

KARACHI, July 9: Work on two pilot projects aimed at combating land degradation and desertification will be launched with the technical and financial support of the United Nations Development Programme and the Global Environmental Facility in two districts of Sindh soon. The two projects, with seven others meant for different districts of Punjab, the NWFP and Balochistan, are part of the 'Sustainable

land management' programme to be implemented in seven years at a cost of \$17.1 million coming from the government of Pakistan, the GEF and the UNDP. Sources privy to the projects said that Pakistan, like many other developing countries, faced the negative impact of climate change and extreme weather events, which extended beyond land degradation and desertification.

Deforestation, soil erosion, water logging, salinity, decreased land productivity and loss of dry land's biodiversity are some of the problems that had threaten ecosystems and essential ecosystem services for many years and will continue to do so. It was further said that the expansion of deserts and reduced land productivity would increase rural poverty with water scarcity, frequent droughts, flash floods and mismanagement of land resources contributing to the problem and as such there was a need for an effective sustainable land management.

The three parties have joined hands to overcome some barriers like the limited institutional capacity, lack of funds, limited knowledge on causes and consequences of land degradation, the source added. Now under the joint project in question, which will be implemented in two phases in seven years, the institutional capacity will be strengthened and enabling policies created to meet the challenges. Phase I extends to two years with a total cost of \$4.6 million and its successful implementation will lead to another investment of \$12.5 million with most of it coming from the UNDP and the GEF to facilitate the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the

National Action Programme to combat desertification and mitigate the impact of drought in the country.

The programme officer of the UNDP, Abdul Qadir, told Dawn that the sustainable land management project followed an integrated, cross sectoral and participatory approach, which required a long-term commitment to ensuring sustainable and far-reaching benefits. In Phase I, the focus would be on addressing policy, institutional and knowledge barriers through targeted capacity building and implementation of nine pilot projects in 10 districts of Pakistan three in Balochistan, two in Sindh, two in the NWFP and two in Punjab while Phase II would focus on upscaling project interventions to the larger landscape building on the lessons learnt and best practices tested under Phase I. Mr Qadir said the project had started in January and after some team mobilization works it would be in place in some areas of Tharparkar and Badin districts as well in a month or two. At Tharparkar work would be undertaken for the retention and harvesting of rainwater and its possible use for livestock, agriculture and domestic purposes, while at Badin the impact of seawater intrusion would be studied and ways would be found for change of land uses, the UNDP officer said.

<http://www.dawn.com/2008/07/10/local5.htm>

Ministry to implement project worth \$17.4m: Sustainable land management

ISLAMABAD, Feb 29: The environment ministry would implement a full-scale project on Sustainable Land Management to Combat Desertification in Pakistan at a cost of \$17.44 million. This was disclosed by Caretaker Federal

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Minister for Environment Syed Wajid Hussain Bukhari while talking to Director- General, International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA), here on Friday. The project would help improve ecosystem resilience and land productivity through promoting sustainable management of natural resources, mainstreaming SLM principles in overall land use planning, enhancing knowledge and awareness, protecting habitat of globally important species, maintaining hydrological cycles, mitigating effects of drought and reducing poverty from the project areas.

The project would also facilitate implementation of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), National Action Programme (NAP) to Combat Desertification and Mitigate Impacts of Drought, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and the Medium-Term Development Framework (2005-10). According to a state-ment here, the project would be implemented over a period of seven years in two phases. Phase-I (2008-09) would focus on creating an enabling environment, institutional strengthening and mainstreaming SLM principles in land use planning and implementation of nine pilot projects for promoting SLM practices for improving local livelihood.

Phase-II (2010-15) would focus on demonstration of SLM practices at larger landscape building on the lessons learnt and best practices tested under Phase-I.

The project would be implemented by dry land regions of all the four provinces Sindh, Balochistan, NWFP and Punjab.

During the meeting, the minister said the total budget for phase-I was \$4.6 million with contributions of \$2 million of Global Environment Facility (GEF), \$1.35 million of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and \$1.25 million of Government of Pakistan. The estimated cost for phase II of the project would be \$12.5 million. The main beneficiaries of the project will be the local communities. The participatory nature of the project will ensure their involvement in decision making and deriving benefits from on the ground interventions. Investments in social-infrastructure development and integrated management of land resources will help in providing sustainable livelihoods and reducing poverty, particularly increasing household incomes.

<http://www.dawn.com/2008/03/01/nat11.htm>

47 million saplings to be planted

Saturday, July 05, 2008 Muhammad Qasim [Islamabad](#) An inter-provincial and inter-ministerial meeting on [monsoon](#) tree plantation campaign 2008, decided Friday that 47.27 million saplings would be planted throughout the country during 'Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign', which would start from 2nd week of... http://article.wn.com/view/2008/07/04/47_million_saplings_to_be_planted/

Project to combat desertification launched

RAWALPINDI, June 16: As the World Day to Combat Desertification is being observed on Tuesday, the government says it has launched a full-scale project on sustainable land management (SLM) to combat desertification. The programme is being implemented for a

period of two years from 2008 to 2009 to protect and restore ecosystem and essential ecosystem services that are key to reducing poverty. Official sources told Dawn that the project was being implemented in two phases: with the first phase focused on creating an enabling environment for SLM and piloting innovation, and the second phase drawing lessons learned to deepen the policy and institutional commitment to SLM and completing demonstration projects that can later be scaled up and replicated. One of the principal natural resources that Pakistan is endowed with is arable land. About 28 per cent of country's total land area is under cultivation and is watered by one of the largest irrigation systems in the world. Despite the existence of good irrigation canal network, Pakistan still suffers from wastage of a large amount of water in the irrigation process. In addition, out of a total land area of 79.6 million hectares, only 16 million hectares are suitable for irrigated farming. Hence, majority of the people depend on arid and semi- arid areas to support their livelihoods through agro-pastoral activities. Persistent water logging, salinisation and sodicity is continuously reducing the productivity of fertile soil in the country. Official estimates show that about 38 per cent of Pakistan's irrigated land is water logged, 14 per cent is saline and the application of agricultural chemicals has increased by a factor of almost 10 per cent since 1980. Land degradation is mainly due to four major causes: water erosion, wind erosion, salinity, sodicity and water logging. Pakistan like most of the developing world is faced with the challenges of land degradation and desertification, which are causing environmental problems, including soil erosion, loss of soil fertility, flash floods,

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salinity, deforestation and associated loss of biodiversity and carbon sequestration. About 11.2 million hectares, mostly northern mountain regions, are affected by water erosion. According to an estimate, about two million hectares are affected by water logging and around six million hectares by salinity and sodicity. Wind erosion is another issue concerning land degradation. About three to five million hectares of land is affected by wind erosion in arid regions of Punjab (Cholistan), Sindh (Tharparkar) and Balochistan (Chagai desert and sand areas along the coast).

<http://www.dawn.com/2008/06/17/nat6.htm>

Pakistan highly vulnerable to drought, floods, cyclones: NA told

ISLAMABAD, Nov 17 (APP): Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Zaheeruddin Babar Awan Monday told the National Assembly that Pakistan is highly vulnerable to drought, floods and cyclones due to impact of climate change. To a question of Shakeela Khanam Rashid during the question hour session, he said Pakistan National Operational Strategy on Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) strategy has been approved. Under the CDM 10 projects on energy efficiency, waster management and industrial processes have been approved that would reduce 3.22 million tons of greenhouse gas emission per year during their operation besides bringing

other environment, economic and sustainable development benefits to Pakistan, he added. He said to combat the climate change, Pakistan signed the United Nations Framework convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in June 1994, and acceded to the Kyoto Protocol in 1997.

In addition, to this, he said, a high level committee on climate change has been established under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister to review policies and monitor progress on Climate Change initiatives in the country. He further said that Ministry of Environment and Task force in the planning Commission were also actively working to address the challenges of climate change.

In supplementary questions Akram Mashi Gul and Riaz Pirzada said that deforestation in all major cities have also increased the environment related issues. Replying to which Minister for Parliamentary Affairs said he agreed with the members and he would convey the concern of the House to the concerned Ministry and department.

In a written reply to Minister for Environment Hameedullah Jan Afridi said that the federal and provincial government have taken number of steps to control pollution. He said seven fixed continuous air monitoring stations and three mobile stations have been set up in the country, as well as five mobile laboratories have been provided to federal and provincial environmental protection agencies (EPAs) for ambient air quality and industrial monitoring. He informed the

House during the monitoring of industrial units 351 cases referred to respective environment protection tribunals by Federal and provincial EPAs.

He further said the government is promoting use of alternative fuels like CNG for environment protection, adding that as many as 1.7 million vehicles have converted to CNG up to 2007-08. The other steps to control pollution include an action plan for elimination of non-degradable plastic bags, studies of Rivers for identifying pollution sources and installation of treatment plants and monitoring of vehicles and industries.

He said there is no system for continues monitoring of environment pollution, however, monitoring stations have been set up in five major cities of Pakistan under Grand in Aid from government of Japan.

On the basis of such initiatives the growth of pollution has been retarded if not reduced, he added.

http://www.app.com.pk/en_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=59420&Itemid=2

<http://carbon-based-ghg.blogspot.com/2008/11/pakistan-highly-vulnerable-to-drought.html>