



drynet

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News from Drynet

A global initiative giving future to drylands

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

GLOBAL NEWS

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Drynet Update

Welcome to the seventh issue of "News from Drynet", a newsletter from the Drynet network on global concerns for drylands from local perspectives. This issue is committed to analysing our achievements over the last three years and our plans for the future. As a thematic highlight we want to introduce the topic of livestock keeping and mobile pastoralists in the drylands of the world.

As has been mentioned in previous issues of this newsletter Drynet was initially set up as a three year project mainly supported by the European Union and the Global Mechanism. With this official project phase of the Drynet network now drawing to an end, the members are presently involved in assessing the results, achievements and impacts of their work over the past three years. During this process of evaluation the benefits and strengths of the network for the individual partners as well as for the communities and the global arena were perceived as being so positive that a continuation of the Drynet network and its activities became very desirable.

In order to jointly map all of our achievements and come to a clear

understanding on what the follow-up of these should be, Drynet organised its Third Annual Meeting at the beginning of November in Rome, Italy. The meeting was divided in two main parts, an internal meeting to strategise on the path ahead and a two-day external meeting to which we invited key stakeholders involved in dryland issues and possible strategic partners for future cooperation. The external meeting was held at the IFAD building and a number of their staff was able to join us and give valuable input. Further crucial discussions were aided by the presence of amongst others, colleagues from the Global Mechanism, the FAO, the European Commission, Swiss and French country delegates the International Land Coalition (ILC) and DesertNet. Drynet presented its work of the past years and mapped out the three main areas of focus in the coming years. Drynet firstly wants to present itself as a focal point and knowledge hub for local and

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The Drynet team and some of its strategic partners during the Third Annual Meeting in November 2009, Rome, Italy.

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Drynet Update

continued

>> traditional knowledge related to drylands and land degradation, meaning to act as a nexus between local communities, policy makers and the scientific community. This could help local knowledge receive the attention that it deserves, open channels for information flows all ways, and ensure that the scientific advances are applied where they are most needed. Secondly Drynet wants to continue to strengthen the national stakeholder platforms it has established in the past few years in order to create stable and reliable partners for national as well as international dialogue between communities and politicians, amongst others. And this will feed into the last focus area namely trying to

further increase local communities and CSOs input at the international arena. The present situation proves that it is more necessary than ever to continue to bring local voices to that level and much more work needs to be done in order to achieve truly participatory processes.

The interactive meeting proved very valuable for our plans for the future and strong commitments were made to collaborate on our future endeavours, financially as well as in material support and in the forming of important alliances and strategic cooperation.

Drynet, together with some of these partners, will actively look for additional partnerships and allies in the coming months.

While all the members and in particular the Steering Committee is still very busy working out the details of what the next

phase of our Drynet work will look like we are now confident to say that our work and combined effort will continue. Drynet's focus remains to combat the global effects of desertification and our commitment to better the lives of those effected by climate change, drought and land degradation is stronger and more determined than ever. Thank you for your continual attention and participation over the last three years. We as a network look forward to future cooperation with you and your organisations.

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



Pastoralist in India.

Bio-cultural Community Protocols: A tool for strengthening livestock keeping communities

Especially in drylands, livestock keepers have stewarded animal genetic resources for food and agriculture for millennia and developed breeds which are optimally adapted to the rigorous demands of their eco-systems. These animals are able to cope with periodic droughts and are also an extremely valuable asset in adapting to climate change – which the high yielding breeds developed by scientists are not. The role of indigenous livestock keepers and their traditional knowledge in conserving breeds is recognized by the

Global Plan of Action on Animal Genetic Resources and has been elaborated upon in a recent FAO publication (FAO, 2009). Furthermore, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) also commits signatory countries to support in-situ conservation and to respect and preserve the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities. Despite these international agreements, the in-situ conservation of pastoralists and other communities rarely receives the support it deserves

and most conservation efforts focus on ex-situ approaches – in the form of deep frozen semen or on government farms. Equally of concern, livestock keepers are rarely even aware of their rights under the UN-CBD and other international and national legal frameworks. This is where Bio-cultural Community Protocols (BCPs) come in as a very important tool for communities to become aware of and invoke their rights. By establishing a BCP, a community puts on record its traditional knowledge and the genetic resources

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>> that it has been stewarding. It also reflects on its options for the future and is informed about its existing rights in a facilitated process which results in a printed document that summarizes the role of the community in biodiversity conservation and its rights. While the BCPs was developed in the context of the discussion on Access and Benefit-Sharing under the CBD, they provide a legal tool for implementing Paragraph 8j of the CBD on in-situ conservation. Facilitated by Drynet partner Lokhit Pashu-Palak Sansthan (LPPS) and the League for Pastoral Peoples and Endogenous Livestock Development (LPP) as well as the South African NGO Natural Justice, the Raika of Rajasthan were the first pastoralists to develop such a BCP, but others are already following suit. This will change the equation between grassroots communities and outside development agencies.

Further information:

- FAO. 2009. Livestock keepers – Guardians of biodiversity. Animal Production and Health Paper 167. Rome.
http://www.pastoralpeoples.org/docs/livestock_keepers_guardians.pdf
- Natural Justice and UNEP. 2009. Biocultural Protocols. A Community Approach to Ensuring the Integrity of Environmental Law and Policy.
<http://www.unep.org/communityprotocols/PDF/communityprotocols.pdf>
- Raika Biocultural Protocol.
<http://www.abs.biodiv-chm.de/fileadmin/ABS/documents/2009-Raika%20Community%20Protocol%20final.pdf>

By Drynet partner Ilse Köhler-Rollefson, LPP, Germany

Excerpt from: No simple solution to livestock and climate change

Simply reducing livestock farming in developing countries will neither cut emissions nor benefit the poor, says livestock expert Carlos Seré. For many people the terms 'greenhouse gas' and 'climate change' conjure up images of smokestacks billowing noxious clouds, gridlocked traffic, the cracked bottom of a dried-up lakebed, or a polar bear clinging to a melting ice floe. Rarely do you see images of farmers ploughing fields, planting seeds or feeding animals. Indeed, until recently, agriculture – particularly in developing countries – has been largely absent from climate change discussions. But farming is a significant contributor to climate change, and also a victim. Agricultural activities, including forest clearing, fertilising soils and transporting produce, and indeed livestock farming, account for about a third of global greenhouse gas emissions. Meanwhile farmers, particularly in developing countries, are threatened by climatic changes such as shifting rainfall patterns and more extreme and unpredictable weather.

Livestock certainly deserves the attention of climate change experts. Emissions from animals account for just over half of all agricultural emissions, or about 18 per cent of total emissions.

But as negotiators prepare for Copenhagen, the agenda of some lobbyists appears to be driven by a long-

standing anti-meat bias that promotes simple solutions to complex problems.

There is broad consensus that highly intensive livestock production in rich countries can be medically and environmentally unhealthy as well as inhumane, and should be scaled back. But those who portray livestock as the main culprit in global warming typically fail to mention the 'meat divide' that separates industrial and agricultural economies.

Livestock emissions depend on how animals are raised and fed. Grain-fed, factory-farmed cattle in industrialised countries emit much higher levels of greenhouse gases than the grass-fed, family-farmed cattle in developing countries.

Overproducing and overconsuming meat, milk and eggs have become a health hazard in the North, while the South suffers from chronic malnutrition – in part due to underproduction and underconsumption of these foods. Most people who keep cattle in developing countries are either small farmers who feed their animals grass and other common forage, with seasonal supplements of stalks and other harvested crop wastes, or herders who periodically move their stock in search of new sources of grass and water. Both these groups have very few alternatives for making a living beyond crop and livestock farming and both leave a relatively small environmental footprint. For example, all of Africa's cattle and other ruminants contribute just three per cent of global livestock methane emissions. And there is scope to cut these emissions by improving the diets of hungry animals, as poor

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>> nutrition decreases their value for milk and meat and encourages poor people to keep more animals, instead of less. But many experts now agree that the biggest concern about livestock production in developing countries is not how much farm animals are emitting but to what extent a hotter and more extreme tropical environment will diminish livestock productivity. Reducing productivity by even a small amount will threaten supplies of milk, meat and eggs to hungry communities that need these nourishing foods the most.

For many people, including more than one billion people living in absolute poverty and chronic hunger, the solution is not to rid the world of livestock but rather to find ways of farming animals sustainably.

Many livestock scientists, including those at my own institute in Africa, are looking to develop a 'third way' of livestock production, lying somewhere between factory and family farming – one that promises pathways out of poverty without depleting our natural resources, affecting our climate or threatening our public health.

Carlos Seré is director of the International Livestock Research Institute, Nairobi, Kenya

The full article was published on November 5th 2009 in SciDev.Net.

<http://www.scidev.net/en/sub-saharan-africa/opinions/no-simple-solution-to-livestock-and-climate-change.html>

International Agenda 2010

01 - 04 February 2010 - *1st ICARDA conference "Food security and Climate Change in Dry Lands" in Amman, Jordan.*
www.icarda.cgiar.org/Announcement/2009/IntlConfnc_FoodSecurity/

21 - 27 February 2010 - *Fourth International Conference on Community Based Adaptation in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.* The forthcoming conference aims to share and consolidate the latest developments in CBA planning and practice in different sectors and countries in Africa. It will disseminate these lessons learnt at the workshop and through workshop proceedings. Ultimately the aim is to share knowledge and experiences to help those most vulnerable to climate change.
<http://community.eldis.org/.59b70e86/CBA%20Conference%20Announcement.pdf>

28 - 31 March 2010 - *Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD) Enhancing Development Impact from Research: Building on Demand in Montpellier, France.*

GCARD 2010 will be in two parts. The first part will be a summit meeting of invited senior policy makers from governments, international agencies and key stakeholder organisations. These will examine the need and scale of investment in agricultural research and associated institutions required to increase the impact of new knowledge among the poor. The second part, the main session, will involve a cross-section of stakeholders from all sectors

involved in agricultural research for development. These will include farmers, consumers, civil society organisations, service providers, input suppliers and market representatives. Those directly concerned with research, and subsequent agricultural inputs in the public, private and international sectors, and the funding bodies that support research and advisory processes, will also take part in the main session.

http://www.egfar.org/egfar/website/gcard/2010-conferenceFoodSecurityAndClimateChangeInDryAreas_2009.htm

16 - 20 August 2010 - *Second International Conference on Climate, Sustainability and Development in Semi-Arid Regions (ICID II) in Fortaleza, Brazil.* With the goal of promoting secure and sustainable development in the semi-arid regions of the world, ICID 2010 aims to bring together public policy makers, scientists, and members of civil society. Organisers of the event hope to identify and focus action on challenges and opportunities for a better future in the world's arid and semi-arid regions. The conference will generate, publish, and present recommendations to guide global, regional, national and local analysis and policies aimed at reducing vulnerability and improving the lives of the people of dry lands around the world.

<http://ictsd.org/i/events/59501/>

8 - 11 November 2010 - *Third International Conference on Drylands, Desserts and Desertification 8 in Sede Boqer Campus, Israel.*

This meeting will address the restoration of degraded drylands.

<http://cmsprod.bgu.ac.il/Eng/Units/bidr/desertification2008/>

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Local hearings on climate change held in Cape Town

OVERVIEW

In the build-up to the UNFCCC COP15 in Copenhagen in December 2009, there has been a lot of talk about targets and scenarios and future commitments. People discuss what might happen 'when climate change comes' and worry about the kind of world our grandchildren will inherit – and rightly so. But the truth is that climate change is happening here and now. While the international climate negotiations flounder on the unwillingness of big vested interests to make any meaningful reductions in emissions, and quarrels abound about the wording and emphasis of pieces of text, communities around the world are already feeling the impacts of changes in temperature, rainfall and seasons. And these changes are making the margins in which many people eke out their livelihoods ever narrower.

To address this fact, and to carry and amplify the voices of those already affected by climate change to the international negotiations, Oxfam has been holding climate change hearings all over the world. The format of the hearings - associated with legal trials and the pursuit of justice – serves to emphasise the fact that those who are affected most devastatingly

by climate change are least responsible for it. By inviting people to share testimonies of their personal experiences in front of audiences of the public, scientists and well-respected moral leaders, the hearings have helped to give climate change a human face, and to highlight it as a social justice issue.

THE TESTIMONIES...

In local hearings on climate change, food and water, hosted by EMG in Cape Town on the 6th of October, this is what fishers and farmers from the Western Cape in South Africa had to say:

SUBSISTENCE FISHERS

The sea and the weather are changing. Ernest Titus and Sara Niemand, both subsistence fishers, tell us how they used to be able to predict fish runs based on the weather. Now fish are simply not there when they are supposed to be, or only stay in an area for a few days when before they would stay for weeks. Warm water fish are being found in previously

cold-water areas, while the higher temperatures make the flesh of some of the catch inedible. Stronger sea currents and storms make it difficult to go to sea resulting in fewer chances to catch fish. Freak storms seem to be occurring with greater frequency, threatening homes along the shoreline.

All these changes are being experienced as additional pressures by the most marginalized people in the fishing industry, people already buckling under reduced fishing quotas while, in their eyes, commercial fishing ventures pillage the sea.

SMALL-SCALE FARMERS

Farmers are also feeling the pressures of climatic change. Sidney le Fleur is a honeybush farmer who farms in the near Plettenberg Bay. This region is on the transition between the winter and summer rainfall areas. Sidney tells us how the seasonality and intensity of rainfall have shifted over the past five years or so and the impact it has had on his crop. Traditionally, most of the >>



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Local hearings on climate change held in Cape Town

continued

>> rain used to fall steadily during the month of August. Then, about five years ago, for the first time in his memory, the rains shifted to November.

A month's worth of rain fell in a few days, washing away houses, parking lots and a caravan park. People suffered job losses because their place of work had been destroyed. This rainfall pattern persisted for three seasons. Then, just as he was getting used to these heavy rains in summer, a drought hit the area. Reservoirs dried up and by December water restrictions were in place in the town of Plettenberg Bay.

Average daytime temperatures have also increased over the past few years, and winds are progressively getting stronger, blowing away precious topsoil.

Sidney now has to hedge his bets, with parts of the farm fitted with expensive drip irrigation systems and farming practices that are designed to enable the soil and crops to withstand higher intensity rainfalls. He also has to buy in mulch to counter his loss in topsoil. This has had significant negative impacts on the overall productivity and cost of farming honeybush tea. However, he has been one of the lucky ones. With domestic water restrictions



A freak storm damages property in Buffelsjag, August 2008. – © Sara Niemand

many other small-holder farmers are unable to irrigate their crops, and their livelihoods have suffered.

In the face of the many hardships faced by small-scale farmers, there are some that are pro-actively preparing for climate change. Ragel Hesselman, a small-scale rooibos tea farmer from the Northern Cape explained how organic and fair trade certification has helped her and other members of the Heiveld Co-operative to grow and prosper. Their tea is sold in shops all over Europe and America. However their remoteness, lack of infrastructure and agricultural extension support makes it difficult to farm in times of drought. She explains how the farmers have begun to collect rainfall and temperature data. With the help of local NGOs, the farmers gather every 3 months to share strategies and tips, and to learn about climate change. However, this process is not merely data, knowledge and learning driven: it also addresses a range of human needs in a context that generates enthusiasm and strengthens the bonds of mutual

support. This creates the synergies that are needed to rise to extraordinary challenges and advance sustainable land management.

Anthropogenic (or “people-driven”) climatic change will continue to impact disproportionately on the most vulnerable, and we need new ideas and more appropriate sorts of support to enable them to adapt their practices to this changing world. Much as technologies are sometimes helpful, they do not provide the solutions on their own, and can cause new problems. People are at the heart of adaptation processes, and it is their insights and abilities that will determine their ability to adapt.

To read the full proceedings go to: <http://www.emg.org.za/documents/Climate%20Change%20Hearings%20Ctn%20Proceedings%202009%20Nov.pdf>

By Karen Goldberg and Taryn Pereira, EMG

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Benefits of cropping in an arid communal livestock farming system in South Africa

The practice of agro-pastoralism in drylands, where cropping and pastoralism are simultaneously carried out, is often perceived as destructive land use, as it results in sedentary livestock herds, which in turn can lead to overgrazing of the daily routes followed by these herds. Some critics also regard agro-pastoralism as economically non-viable, but this is open to debate.

Cropping remains an important component of many pastoral systems around the world. Croplands act as key resource areas for livestock during dry periods when forage is scarce or depleted, and pastoralists often grow grains or cereals for their own consumption, selling surplus for additional income.

A recent study in the Northern Cape has revealed that cropping can be an excellent sustainable land management tool. In the Leliefontein Communal Area, cropping results in greater herd mobility, which is an ecologically rational strategy and is the key component in the livestock production system of the area. In the uplands areas where cropping still occurs, herds are moved seasonally to prevent damage to crops as well as to rest some parts of the rangeland. In contrast, in villages where cropping is no longer practiced, some herds have remained at the same overnight enclosure for more than 15 years, resulting in severely overgrazed land in the immediate surroundings.

Approximately 12% of communal grazing land in Leliefontein is allocated for cropping. However, since 1996 there has been a decline in cropping, and currently only about 2.5% is used to grow crops. Agro-pastoralists actively practicing in the area say reasons for this decline include the high cost of seed, lack of competent labour and farming implements, highly variable rainfall, feral donkeys and unattended livestock that eat their crops.

For more information contact Igshaan Samuels on isamuels@uwc.ac.za.

By Igshaan Samuels (ARC - Range and Forage Unit) and Karen Goldberg (EMG)

Rediscovering old ways of shepherding

Farmers and wildlife organizations do not always see eye to eye when it comes to managing predators on farms. Predators cause a lot of damage in herds and flocks. But there may be a way to solve the problem without killing a single animal, and reaping a range of other environmental, economic and social benefits.

Cobus Ferreira of the Department of Agriculture is aiming to launch a project to bring back some of the old shepherding practices that have been abandoned in modern times because of cost cutting and the belief that predators can simply be exterminated in jackal-proofed grazing camps, thus providing a long term solution. More and more farmers realise that predators remain a problem despite all efforts to exterminate them, and that cheaper and more effective approaches are available.

This project aims to create jobs and renew the knowledge and skills of herders, while also satisfying the needs of farmers, conservation authorities and wildlife groups. Shepherds will be trained in a range of skills and will be with herds twenty-four hours a day, working in shifts. This will repel predators, and cause them to focus their hunting on natural prey such as dassies, hares, antelope and baboons. It is important to keep the populations of >>



Croppers in Leliefontein communal area still use donkeys for ploughing.
– © Igshaan Samuels

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Rediscovering old ways of shepherding

continued

>> all of these animals in balance to prevent them from damaging grazing and other resources, and the natural predators are ideally suited to this task. Conserving predators will also help solve other problems that are caused by killing of these animals and thus upsetting their natural population control mechanisms. For example, when a dominant male jackal is killed females are stimulated to breed, and younger jackals, which are less discriminating in their feeding habits, will come in to take the territory of the older male, resulting in stock losses.

In a well managed system culling of predators becomes unnecessary, and lambs will not be lost to predators. This will save farmers a lot of money: the average loss of lambs to predators on many farms is 30% per year.

Shepherds will also be able to take tourists with them and give talks and information on wildlife, stock, plants and more. They will have the chance to experience nature in a unique way, walking with the sheep and sleeping under the stars like shepherds have done for millennia.

This project also holds many research possibilities, particularly as shepherds have intimate knowledge not only of the grazing habits of livestock, but also of the

veld plants. A wise shepherd can husband the biodiversity of the veld by preventing overgrazing of the more desirable plants and ensuring that less palatable species are also grazed and thus kept in check.

For more information, contact Cobus Ferreira at CobusF@elsenburg.com or 082-805-8783

By Cobus Ferreira (Department of Agriculture) and Noel Oettlé (EMG)



© Cobus Ferreira

New Adaptation Network launched

On 4 November 2009 the first general meeting of the South Africa's Adaptation Network was held at Kirstenbosch. Thirty-two adaptation practitioners from around South Africa attended the meeting.

The network addresses a widely felt need for a platform where those involved in adaptation work can share experiences and practical approaches, and explore the relative value of theoretical frameworks and methodologies that could add value to national and international policy processes.

The network aims to create a supportive, collaborative and coordinated platform for sharing resources, knowledge and ideas, growing partnerships, lobbying and advocacy, awareness raising and education, with the ultimate aim of promoting activities that build the capacity of communities to innovate and adapt.

The network will be co-hosted by three organisations for the first year. Project 90 by 2030 will host the network website, the Environmental Monitoring Group will handle lobbying and advocacy matters, and Indigo development & change would coordinate on methodological issues. Immediate activities include network engagement at the UNFCC COP 15 in Copenhagen and fundraising.

The network is inclusive and is open to individuals and organisations from NGOs, government departments, business, research and media organisations based in South Africa and the southern African region.

For more information contact Elin Lorimer, The Adaptation Network Administrator at elin@iburst.co.za.

By Bettina Koelle (Indigo development & change) & Noel Oettlé (EMG)



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REGIONAL NEWS

Off the Shelf

Running Dry? Climate change in drylands and how to cope with it 2009

Sörensen, Levke; Trux, Anneke;

Duchrow, Anselm; and

Bodemeyer, Reinhard

Published by Oekom Verlag

Website: <http://www.oekom.de/buecher/buchprogramm/nachhaltigkeitsforschung/archiv/buch/running-dry.html>

ISBN: 978-3-86581-184-4

Drylands cover more than one third of the world's terrestrial area. Land degradation in these regions is a driver of climate change. Conversely, dryland ecosystems and populations are among those most affected by the adverse effects of such change. Yet the linkages between climate change and dryland degradation have so far scarcely featured in climate policy debate. This book provides comprehensive overview of the state of research on the complex issues surrounding climate change and drylands. It will provide a compendium for all scientists, development practitioners and policymakers with an interest in the major global environmental challenges: desertification and land degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change.



© Igshaan Samuels

Adapting to the Wild Side: Climate Friendly Rooibos: A new DVD produced by Plexus Films for EMG 2009

This film is about how small-scale farmers in the Suid Bokkeveld are adapting their farming practices to accommodate the more extreme weather events that are likely to come their way with the changing climate. Husbanding naturally adapted wild rooibos is providing a promising technical solution to the physical problem of changing climate. It reminds the viewer that successful adaptation is about people and not about technologies. The film reflects how the sustainable harvesting of naturally adapted ecotypes of wild rooibos, and climate friendly production of cultivated rooibos have enhanced the resilience of small-scale farmers to global warming and contributed to the conservation of the unique biodiversity of the area. This is a feel-good film about local action in the global context. It is available on request from Sandrae Hartle at EMG (sandrae@emg.org.za) for R100 per DVD.

Climate change: Impact on agriculture and costs of adaptation 2009

Authors: Nelson, Gerald C.; Rosegrant, Mark W.; Koo, Jawoo; Robertson, Richard; Sulser, Timothy; Zhu, Tingju; Ringler, Claudia; Msangi, Siwa; Palazzo, Amanda; Batka, Miroslav; Magalhaes, Marilia; Valmonte-Santos, Rowena; Ewing, Mandy; and Lee, David.

Published by IFPRI

Website: <http://www.ifpri.org/sites/default/files/publications/pr21.pdf>

This Food Policy Report presents research results that quantify the climate-change impacts on agriculture, assesses the consequences for food security, and estimates the investments that would offset the negative consequences for human well-being. This analysis brings together, detailed modeling of crop growth under climate change with insights from an extremely detailed global agriculture model, using two climate scenarios to simulate future climate.

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The World Summit on Food Security took place from 16-18 November 2009 at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) headquarters in Rome, Italy. The Summit brought together over 4,700 delegates from 180 countries, including 60 Heads of State and Government as well as representatives of governments, UN agencies, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, and the media. Delegates met throughout the Summit both for a High-Level Segment and for a series of four round tables, which addressed the following topics: minimizing the negative impact of the food, economic and financial crises on world food security; implementation of the reform of global governance of food security; climate change adaptation and mitigation: challenges for agriculture and food security; and measures to enhance global food security, including rural development, smallholder farmers and trade considerations. The outcomes of the Summit include a Report of the World Summit on Food Security and a Declaration of the World Summit on Food Security. The Declaration outlines strategic objectives, commitments and actions, and establishes the Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security.

For more information go to: <http://www.iisd.ca/download/pdf/sd/ymbvol150num7e.pdf>

The Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification has posted the report of the Conference of the Parties on its Ninth Session (COP 9), which convened in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 21 September – 2 October 2009 (<http://www.unccd.int/cop/officialdocs/cop9/pdf/18eng.pdf>). A document with the decisions taken at COP 9 has also been posted (<http://www.unccd.int/cop/officialdocs/cop9/pdf/18add1eng.pdf>), along with the slides from a presentation in which Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja summarized the COP 9 outcomes, including the outputs from the Round Tables of ministers and high-ranking officials and of Members of Parliament (<http://www.unccd.int/cop/cop9/docs/Final%20COP%209%20Outcomes%20Revised.pdf>).

In a damning and ground breaking ruling, South Africa's GM body, the Executive Council (EC), has rejected attempts by the Agriculture Research Council (ARC) to bring GM potatoes to the South African market. The EC cited no less than 11 biosafety and socio economic and agronomic concerns for rejecting ARC's commercial release application. These support the objections raised by the African Centre for Biosafety (ACB) that GM potatoes pose unacceptable risks to human health, the environment and the farming community. The ARC has touted the GM potato, engineered to resist tuber moths, as a new agricultural technology that will benefit smallholder and commercial farmers. According to Haidee Swanby of the ACB, "the precautionary decision taken by the EC concluded that ARC's toxicology studies were

inadequate, scientifically poorly designed and fundamentally flawed. It was unconvinced that the GM potato would benefit small holder farmers, who are faced with more fundamental production problems such as access to water and seed, and found that the Potato Tuber Moth is a low priority for most farmers." The ARC has appealed the government's decision. The appeal decision is expected by the end of January 2010.

For more information, go to: <http://www.agriworldsa.com/article-archive/technology/south-african-govt-rejects-gm-potato?searchterm=GM+pota> <http://www.scidev.net/en/news/gm-potato-gets-roasting-in-south-africa-.html>

To effectively address global climate change, policy solutions must support a transition toward more sustainable agriculture systems that recognize the critical role agriculture plays in the world. The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) has just released a series of issue briefs which tackles climate challenges for agriculture. "We cannot truly address climate change without getting it right on agriculture," said IATP President Jim Harkness. "Agriculture is a contributor to climate change, but just as importantly it profoundly affects land use around the world, and has the potential to be part of the solution. Smart climate policy for agriculture can help address hunger, support rural livelihoods, improve water quality and biodiversity, and strengthen our energy security... We are at a unique moment in history that compels us to face several crises

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>> at the same time," said Harkness. "In addition to global warming, there are now over one billion people around the world who are hungry. Our financial meltdown has led to growing unemployment, particularly in rural communities. A shift toward low- input, sustainable agriculture systems is a crucial part of building a greener, more stable economy and addressing each of these crises."

The climate series covers a wide range of topics, including:

- **Agriculture and Climate** - The Critical Connection, which gives an overview of the science of agriculture and climate change.
- **Putting Agriculture on the Global Climate Agenda**, which sets benchmarks for including agriculture within global climate negotiations.
- **Eye of the Storm: Integrated Solutions to the Climate, Agriculture and Water Crises**, which explains water's role in the climate and agriculture crises.

- **Climate Inequity**, which traces the historical inequities that have contributed to climate change, and proposes a more equitable climate policy.

For more information, go to: <http://www.iatp.org/climate/index.php?q=climateseries>

Events

- **December 15, 2009, PLAAS, Cape Town, South Africa. Masters, Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Studies in Poverty, Land & Agrarian Studies.**

The Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies at the University of the Western Cape invites applications for its Masters, Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Studies in Poverty, Land & Agrarian Studies. The application deadline is 15 December 2009.

For more information, go to <http://www.ngopulse.org/event/plaas-masters-doctoral-and-post-doctoral-studies-poverty-land-agrarian-studies>

- **January 15, 2010, Germany. International Climate Protection Fellowships.**

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation is granting up to twenty International Climate Protection Fellowships annually funded under the Federal Environment Ministry's (BMU) International Climate Protection Initiative. The fellowships target prospective leaders from non-European threshold and developing countries who are engaged in the field of climate protection and resource conservation in academia, business and administration in their countries. The fellowship will enable the recipients to conduct a research-related project of their own choice with hosts in Germany whom they are free to choose themselves. In addition to applicants who have been trained in the natural and engineering sciences, candidates who have been engaged in legal, economic and societal issues relating to climate change are encouraged to apply for this programme. Deadline for application: 15 January 2010.

For more information: <http://www.humboldt-foundation.de/web/ICF.html>

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