



drynet

www.dry-net.org

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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

Congratulations! You are reading the first issue of the Drynet-newsletter: "News from Drynet". Drynet is an EU-funded project of 14 organisations from all over the world that aims to strengthen civil society networks, giving them the knowledge and visibility to influence dryland development policies.

Drynet started in March 2007 in Fortaleza, Brazil, where all 14 Drynet-partners met to share ideas and expectations. During the meeting in Brazil the additional value of Drynet became clear: its diversity of partners, their environments, and their approaches towards combating land degradation. For example, the drynet partners from Iran and Pakistan were surprised to see Brazilian drylands lush and green after the rainy season, while at home no rain had fallen in a long time. Through its diversity Drynet promotes multiple approaches in the combat to land degradation.

Since Fortaleza, the partners have been identifying key actors, activities and donors in their countries. These overviews provide the basis for strengthening local activities and networks as well as laying foundations for enhanced Civil Soci-

ety Organisations' (CSOs) influence on policy development and priority setting at national and international levels. In time our website, www.dry-net.org will show the outcomes of this process.

We intend to publish a Drynet newsletters 3 times a year, but please visit www.dry-net.org for additional news, articles, regional activities and success stories. We are also interested in hearing about your experiences, as sharing means learning! We welcome your comments and contributions. Please email drynet@bothends.org.

By Drynet partners: Danielle de Man and Marie José van der Werff ten Bosch of Both ENDS, the Netherlands



Drynet partners visiting the Brazilian drylands.

GLOBAL NEWS

What is... Jatropha?

A BLIND ALLEY OR AN OIL PLANT OF UNKNOWN QUALITIES?

Jatropha curcas is a multipurpose non-edible plant that has proven to be drought resistant. In particular, its seeds have raised considerable attention as a source of oil for biodiesel production. In the past Jatropha had been promoted to make rural dryland areas self sufficient by providing fuels for cooking, lighting and motive power. Currently, however, this enthusiasm has yielded mainly to criticism because of the considerable production costs involved. Nevertheless, Jatropha has some unique features: it can grow on soils that have previously been considered unsuitable for crop cultivation.

Check out the links:
nsiev.de/jatropha-en
www.diligent-tanzania.com/

Research undertaken by professor C. Namasivayam of the Bharathiar University in India and others in March 2007, shows another previously unknown potential for this multipurpose plant: the husk from Jatropha has been tested in filtration research with waste from biodiesel industries. The husk contains a form of activated carbon (JHC) that enhances the feasibility of removing toxic anions, dyes, heavy metals and organic compounds from water.

By Drynet partner: Silke Brehm of LPP, Germany

Drynet Meeting Minutes

DRYNET BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER DURING COP8

In September 2007 Drynet organised an unconventional side-event during the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in Madrid, Spain. The event was called "Developing capacities in changing times: NGOs and land users in combating desertification and coping with climate change". The unique approach from Drynet included: actively involving a wide array of stakeholders to discuss what actions geared towards combatting desertification and adapting to climate change at local level actually result in success, and in what ways each of the stakeholders could support these processes and projects. The approach brought actors together in a relaxed environment, and enabled them to freely discuss some of the most important aspects of desertification and poverty in dryland areas. They talked about the importance of local experiences, traditional knowledge, scientific advances and innovative means of replicating such experiences. .

The full report and presentations of the side-event can be read at www.dry-net.org

By Drynet partners: Mark Camburn of Probioma, Bolivia and Danielle de Man of Both ENDS, the Netherlands

International Agenda 2008

5-16 May 2008 - 16th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), United Nations headquarters, New York, USA. Among several thematic issues CDS-16 will focus on Land, Drought and Desertification. www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/review.htm

19-30 May 2008 - 9th meeting of the UN Conference of the Parties (COP9), Bonn, Germany One nature. One world. Our future. Under this motto, the issues for consideration at COP9 will be agricultural biodiversity, global strategy for plant conservation, forest biodiversity, among other related issues. www.cbd.int/cop9/

12-16 May 2008 - PLANET DIVERSITY- World Congress on the future of food and agriculture, Bonn, Germany "Planet Diversity"; a global movement for the common cause of defending diversity against destructive and threatening tendencies in agriculture, rural development and food production. www.planet-diversity.org/

GLOBAL NEWS

Drynet Interview

LOOK FOR WIN-WIN SOLUTIONS TO COPE WITH CLIMATE CHANGE

Dr. Mannava V.K. Sivakumar, Chief of the Agricultural Meteorology Division of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) spoke to Namitha Dipak during COP8 of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) held at Madrid in September 2007.

In his interview Dr Sivakumar highlighted that the focus during COP8 was on “early warning systems” based on good spatial meteorological information. Such

forecasts are potentially very useful to the common person: “The value of such information is that the farmer will be able to make decisions.” However, he stressed the importance of training farmers in how to use and interpret this information and added that agricultural extension services and NGOs networks have an important role to play in this transfer of knowledge:

“The benefits of science must come to society, otherwise science has no meaning.”

He further spoke about how such forecasts are being used at a local level.



Dr. Mannava V.K. Sivakumar

In some Scandinavian countries these early warning systems are being used to identify “win-win situations”. They are preparing themselves in advance, informing communities about the likely changes and how they should start shifting their cropping patterns in a way that will benefit them.

By Drynet partner: Namitha Dipak of LPPS, India

DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

- Every month, one farm animal breed becomes extinct as locally adapted livestock is replaced by high performance breeds.
- Local breeds have many advantages: they make use of locally available resources, exploit dry areas where crops can not be grown and are more efficient in food production.
- Drylands have produced a high number of well-known breeds, which are the result of the efforts and knowledge of pastoralists.
- “Livestock Keepers Rights” advocated by the African region and many NGOs, was mooted by developed countries.
- The role of indigenous and local communities, especially pastoralists is acknowledged in Strategic Priority Action No 6_Interlaken Declaration on Animal Genetic Resources.
- The day-to-day efforts of pastoralists to keep and develop animals under drought conditions and thereby sustain crucial gene pools remain entirely unrewarded.

Extracted from (Countries acknowledge richness of drylands in animal genetic resources), by Drynet partner Ilse Kolher-Rollefson of LPP, Germany. Read the full article on our website: www.dry-net.org

COLLECTED REGIONAL NEWS

News from all over
the world collected
from Drynet's
Regional Newsletters

Would you like to read the complete versions of the next three articles, please check the regional newsletters of SCOPE, LPPS and EMG on our website: www.dry-net.org, go to the publications section

News from Pakistan:

DEALING WITH DESERTIFICATION CHALLENGES

Dr. Amjad Tahir Virk is presently working on the "Sustainable Land Management Project" in Pakistan. As a National Project Coordinator, Dr. Virk answered some questions for SCOPE, Drynet Partner from Pakistan.

What are the Major Desertification Challenges faced by Pakistan?

Pakistan is predominantly a dryland country. Pakistan's rapidly increasing population depends on drylands to support its livelihood, mainly through agro-pastoral activities. However, like in many other developing countries, drylands in Pakistan are severely affected by land degradation and desertification due to unsustainable land management practices and increasing demand of natural resources causing enormous environmental challenges. The situation is further aggravated by scarcity of water, frequent droughts and mismanagement of land resources, contributing to the expansion of deserts, reduced productivity and consequently increases in rural poverty.

How does Pakistan tackle these challenges?

In order to address the challenges of land degradation and desertification and remove barriers to Sustainable Land Management (SLM), the Ministry of Environment, Government of Pakistan (GoP) has taken an initiative and designed a full-scale project on "Sustainable Land Management to Combat Desertification in Pakistan" to be funded jointly by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), UNDP and GoP. The project will help in improving 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.

Major outcomes of the full-scale project include: 1) Creating an enabling Environment for mainstreaming SLM practices, 2) Building capacities for Sustainable Land Management, 3) Mainstreaming SLM into land use planning, 4) Participatory implementation of feasibility studies (pilot projects) for testing SLM practices, and 5) Documentation of lessons learnt and best practices.

How will SLM contribute to combating desertification in Pakistan?

The SLM is designed in way that it will facilitate implementation of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the National Action Programme (NAP) to combat desertification and mitigate impacts of drought.

A major component of the project is the participatory implementation of pilot projects targeting various land degradation problems and poverty reduction strategies in the rural landscape. It involves the development and implementation of innovative approaches to SLM through on-the-ground investments at 10 different sites throughout Pakistan. The desertification control measures will include testing and selection of drought resistant crop varieties, adoption of appropriate improved livestock production systems, soil and water conservation measures, dry-afforestation, and developing cost-effective agronomic practices.

By Drynet partner: SCOPE, Pakistan

COLLECTED REGIONAL NEWS

News from India:

INDIAN DRYLAND EXPERTS PROJECT THEIR KNOWLEDGE IN EUROPE

A group of Raika – one of the most prominent pastoralist groups of Rajasthan, India – shared their traditional knowledge in managing livestock in dry areas to an international audience in three European countries in the late 2007. The delegation was headed by Hanwant Singh, director of Drynet partner: Lokhit Pashu-Palak Sansthan (LPPS) and accompanied by Tola Ram Bhil, a musician and bard.

The purpose of the tour, arranged by the League for Pastoral Peoples and Endogenous Development (Drynet partner LPP), was to raise awareness about the pressures on the pastoralists way of life and the crucial role of pastoralists in managing livestock biodiversity. Check out the group's Journal Trip:

1st stop - Germany. Headquarters of LPP, small village of Wembach; learned that the local shepherd is employed in nature conservation, employing his sheep to maintain biodiversity rich patches of land in a government –sponsored programme.

2nd stop - Switzerland. Participation in the First International Conference on Animal Genetic Resources and in the Animal Diversity Forum, a parallel NGO

event co-organised by LIFE-Network for community-based management of animal genetic resources and other NGOs.



1

3rd stop - Spain. Attending to a Global Gathering of Pastoralists organised by the Spanish shepherd association. Celebration of the re-establishment of the right of shepherds to drive their herds through the centre of Madrid.



2

4th stop - Spain. Organised a side-event at COP8 meeting of the UNCCD, on the "Role of Pastoralists in Conserving Biodiversity", showing the film "Keepers of Genes. India's Pastoralists and their Breeds".

The Raika were excellent ambassadors for their home country and they brought back many lasting impressions. The most useful learning was how highly valued pastoralism is in Europe as a tool for nature conservation and a source of speciality products.

Check our website to get more details about Raika's tour around Europe.

By Drynet partner: Namitha Dipak of LPPS, India

LPPS and LPP would like to acknowledge the support of the Christensen Fund, which enabled the Raika to go on the tour.

1 The hills were alive with the sound of music... Raika from Rajasthan on a study tour in the Swiss Alpine meadows during the First International Conference on Animal Genetic Resources.

2 The Raika and over two hundred pastoralists from different countries participated in the Global Gathering of Pastoralists through the streets of Spain, celebrating the re-establishment of the right of shepherds to drive their herds through the centre of Madrid.

COLLECTED REGIONAL NEWS

News from South Africa:

NATIONAL AFRICAN FARMERS UNION POLICY CONGRESS

In November 2007, about 300 delegates met to participate in the NAFU SA (National African Farmers Union of South Africa) national policy congress held in Pretoria, in order to develop policy positions. Drynet SA was there to meet NAFU members and gain insight of issues currently most relevant to black farmers.

On the first day speakers presented on key issues of relevance to black farmers, including access to land, land tenure and the slow pace of land reform. Other relevant themes debated included sustainable agricultural resources (land and water), climate change and disaster management, gender equity (including women and youth), and biofuels.

Current water issues focused on access and distribution, while sustainable use of water received little attention. Discussion on gender drew attention to the enormous struggle that women have in accessing land. A broad overview was provided of the current Biofuels debate in South Africa. The emphasis was on small-scale biofuels activities and their potential to meet the fuel needs of farmers themselves, rather than focusing primarily on the commercialization aspect of Biofuels.



Delegates from NAFU and the ARC sign the Memorandum of Agreement

On the final day an MoU was signed between NAFU SA and the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) with the intention of bring agricultural research and the needs of black farmers closer together.

For more information, please check: www.nafu.co.za/index.html

By Drynet partner: Karen Goldberg of EMG, South Africa

The following issue of the Drynet newsletter will be based on a variety of thematic topics. If you have any suggestions for themes that you would like to see covered, then please send your ideas to: drynet@bothends.org or contact a Drynet partner in your region.