



drynet

www.dry-net.org

No. 3

September 2008

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

CONTENT

GLOBAL NEWS

Drynet Update **1**

Global Food Crisis **2**

International Agenda 2008 **3**

Agrofuels **4**

REGIONAL NEWS

Dear friends! **5**

Resource pack "Traditional knowledge on the land-use management in Central Asian countries" has been published. **5**

Community Mobilization in Central Asia: Promoting Community Based Sustainable Land Management and Capacity Building **6**

CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES INITIATIVE FOR LAND MANAGEMENT (CACILM) **8**

PUBLISHED BY



The Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia



This project is funded by the European Union

Drynet Update

Welcome to the third issue of "News from Drynet", a newsletter from the Drynet project on local concerns and views on drylands. This issue focuses on the current food crisis and its implications for food security in dryland areas. It will also touch upon the interrelated issue of bio- or agrofuels. Drynet partners indicated that the recent hikes in world food prices tend to especially affect people who live in drylands where food security is even at best times problematic.

These concerns were raised at the Midterm Meeting of the Drynet project which took place from 30th of June to 2nd of July 2008 in Cape Town, South Africa. The meeting was held in high spirits and with a very positive and energetic atmosphere which seemed to greatly stimulate all partners to continue in the path of corporation and

boost their interest in a joint effort towards combating drought and desertification.

What transpired during the meeting was that the partners are getting a firm grip on local and national stakeholders, political and development processes, and the implementation status of UNCCD action plans and other relevant development plans in their countries. We have much more insight than at the beginning of the project into the role which civil society organisations can play in developing and supporting relevant policies for sustainable livelihoods in drylands. We also made the first steps to further improve participatory processes. The next step will be to increase capacities of local organisations to ensure the implementation of necessary changes.

By Drynet partner: Both ENDS, the Netherlands



The Drynet team in South Africa

GLOBAL NEWS

Global Food Crisis

The threat to **food security** currently looms over much of the developing world. Food prices have doubled in the last 3 years. As always, it is the poor who will bear the brunt of this crisis and drylands are characterised by disproportionately high poverty levels. About half of the 854 million people suffering from hunger worldwide live on marginal, dry or degraded land. Policy-makers appear oblivious to these facts when they tout the development potential of biofuel crops like jatropha and their capacity to grow on marginal land - often the only land left to the poor.

The recent sharp hike in food prices is rooted in the **misguided policies** of international regimes and the mutually reinforcing effect of multiple factors. The major factors being cited are speculation in grains, biofuels, drought leading to failed harvests in major cereal producing regions, the increased demand for fodder in emerging economies, and rising oil prices. An unfair trade regime - that tolerates protectionism by the wealthy while pushing liberalization on the poor - is another significant factor, one whose impact is often underestimated.

Biofuels, apart from competing for resources with food crops, amplify the volatility and rise in food prices by linking them with oil prices. **Speculation** in deregulated world markets has greatly magnified the contributions

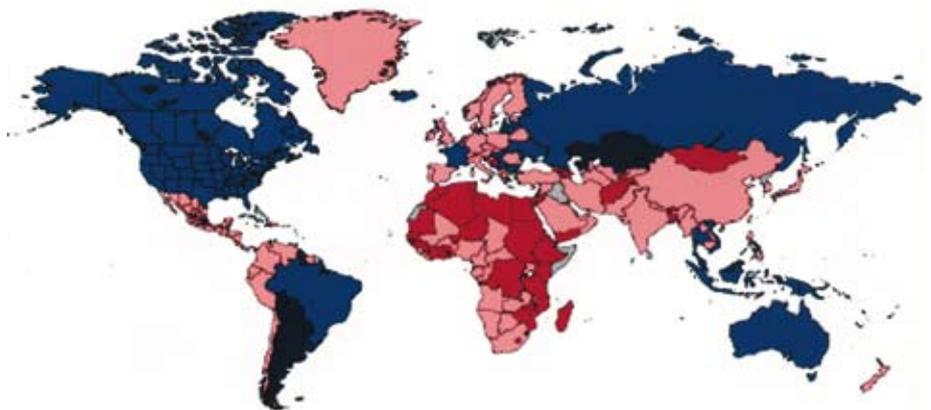
of drought and the biofuel boom in depleting buffer food reserves.

Unfair trade has also substantially undermined food security, often in combination with other factors. The dumping of surplus corn on Mexico as a consequence of US farm subsidies eroded millions of Mexican farmers' livelihoods. Later, this corn was diverted to feed the USA's own biofuel industry, thus unleashing a food crisis in Mexico. Moreover, the abandoning of corn cultivation by Mexican farmers as a result of US dumping led to a substantial loss in corn biodiversity. Such syndromes are common to many developing countries that were transformed from net food exporters to importers by the trade regime.

Cash crops have also been crucial for food security by providing farmers

income for buying food. The cotton and groundnuts sectors in the Sahel were severely affected by unfair trade, leading to the loss of millions of livelihoods, land **abandonment** and **urban migration**. Land abandonment compounded by drought has caused further soil erosion and degradation in the Sahel. The ensuing growth of urban populations is an added threat to food security.

At the grassroots level, people have no choice but to struggle against this line-up of unfavourable circumstances. Many innovative **sustainable agriculture** schemes have partially compensated for the vagaries of international regimes by strengthening local food security. They need our support, and more than ever before. Urgent and concerted action can still turn the tide. At the national level,>>



Source: Worldbank

2007 - 2008 impact of projected food price increases on trade balances

- Large losers (trade balance worsening > 1% 2005 GDP)
- Moderate losers (trade balance worsening < 1% 2005 GDP)
- Moderate gainers (trade balance improving < 1% 2005 GDP)
- Large gainers (trade balance improving > 1% 2005 GDP)
- No data

Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/7284196.stm

GLOBAL NEWS

>> state support and **land and market access for small-scale farmers** as well as appropriate technology for sustainable agriculture are of paramount importance. Northern governments need to withdraw their ambitious targets for biofuel use that drive large-scale bio-fuel production in the South, threaten food security and marginalise the poor. International organisations need to prioritise the production and **equitable distribution** of food, the regulation of world food markets, climate change

adaptation in poor countries, mitigation in rich ones, and - the adoption of - long-term food security and poverty alleviation (rather than 'free' trade) as goals of the trade regime. International Financial Institutions must reverse their liberalization strategies that have led to the marginalisation of the small farmer. Food aid is not - and has never been - the answer. The food production rights and **land rights** of the *mkulima*, the *campesino*, the *kisan*, urgently need to be secured.

By Drynet partner: Sona Prakash, Both ENDS, the Netherland

International Agenda 2008

3-14 November 2008 - CRIC 7 and CST 9, Istanbul, Turkey. The 7th session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (to Combat Desertification) (CRIC) will convene in conjunction with the 9th session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST).

www.unccd.int

5-7 November 2008 - ClimAdapt in Göttingen, Germany by AGRECOL, the Association for Agri-Culture & Ecology. An Open Space Event on innovative resources in sustainable agriculture.

www.agrecol.de/climadapt

14-17 December 2008 - Conference on Drylands, Deserts and Desertification. Second conference at the Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Sede Boqer Campus, Israel. The conference will focus on: the drivers of dryland degradation; the sociological, economical and biophysical processes and feedbacks that generate, maintain or strengthen the degraded states; and the management policies and tools for conserving desirable states and for recovery from undesirable states in order to maintain a sustainable system.

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

INTRODUCING THREE OF THE SUCCESS STORIES WHICH CAN BE READ ON OUR WEBSITE:

Participatory afforestation for carbon sequestration in Drylands -Birjand, Iran

The project has been designed to demonstrate that desertified rangelands can be cost-effectively reclaimed by, and for the benefit of, local people and that there is significant potential to sequester carbon in plants and soil in these areas for overall global benefit. The project uses participatory approaches to mobilize stakeholder communities and empower them to do rehabilitation work on their own. ...

Put up defences and reforestation - Thiambène Till, Senegal

The programme aims to raise awareness among key players in the field of rural and urban environmental protection in Senegal by exchanging information, education and communication in order to bring about a change in behaviour and an understanding of the need for effective management. ...

Enforcement of Law and Soil Protection and Land Improvement by TEMA

For the first time in Turkish history, a law on conservation of soil and land management is issued by the efforts of an NGO; which is the "The Law on Soil Protection and Land Improvement". Drynet partner TEMA Foundation together with its volunteers from all parts of the society actively lobbied for the approval of this law by the parliament. ...

GLOBAL NEWS

Agrofuels: opportunity or threat?

The energy crisis, product of overuse by developed countries and high hydrocarbon prices originating in the speculation by the petrol industry, has generated a worrisome alliance between seed companies related to genetic manipulation, agro-chemical producers and the automobile industry. This alliance seeks to generate alternative energy sources and apparently contribute to reducing the environmental effects of climate change.

Agrofuels are a source of energy which is based on the mono-cultivation of products such as soy, sugar cane and corn, while biofuels are sources of renewable energy of biological origin such as firewood, charcoal, manure, biogas, bio-hydrogen and agricultural waste. This leads us to the conclusions about the interest which exists amongst the agrofuel producers to favour the term bio over the term agro. This way they want to evade the questions which are directed against this alternative proposal since it implies grave social, environmental and economical impacts which could possibly lead to social conflicts due to food scarcity, loss of nature, contamination of soils and waters, and territorial imbalances.

In Latin America ten countries produce agrofuels, they are the agro-exporters. The paradox is that five of these also



Deforestation for soy production in Brazil, Picture by Jan Gilhuis, Solidaridad

present high levels of malnutrition, a fact which reflects the imbalances in the internal food market. This shows us the conflict which exists between the production of foods and the production of agrofuels which offer higher profitability. In this scenario the lower wage sectors of society are the most vulnerable since they can not pay the rising price for foods.

The argument goes that the crops designated for agrofuel production are developed in degraded areas which no longer yield to intensive agriculture, this is to say that they recuperate degraded soils with certain crops which are especially adapted. What is not said is that these crops, if they develop, bring about the expansion of the agricultural border, eliminate the existing biodiversity, displace pastures designated for livestock cultivation and other crops designated for national consumption, degrade the soil more rapidly through the use of fertilizers and pesticides, and make way for the displace-

ment of the local population to other regions.

Finally it should be mentioned that the objective of the production of agrofuels is the control over the systems of food and energy production, resulting in more rural poverty, destruction of biodiversity and hunger.

By Drynet partner: Miguel Angel Crespo, Director PROBIOMA, Bolivia

.....
 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

Dear friends!

Welcome to the third issue of the Drynet newsletter. We would like to inform with you about some progress achieved through this short period of time. We held a regional seminar dedicated to development of tools that encourage wider involvement of the civil society in implementation of UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in Almaty. People responsible for UNCCD implementation, project managers, and representatives of international organizations and NGOs from all Central Asian states participated in this event.

This issue will tell you about the resource pack "Traditional knowledge on the land-use management in Central Asian countries", outcomes of the UNDP/Global Mechanism project "Community Mobilization in Central Asia: Promoting Community Based Sustainable Land Management and Capacity Building", and the land management initiative by Central Asian countries.

By Drynet partner: Emil Gareyev of CAREC, Central Asia

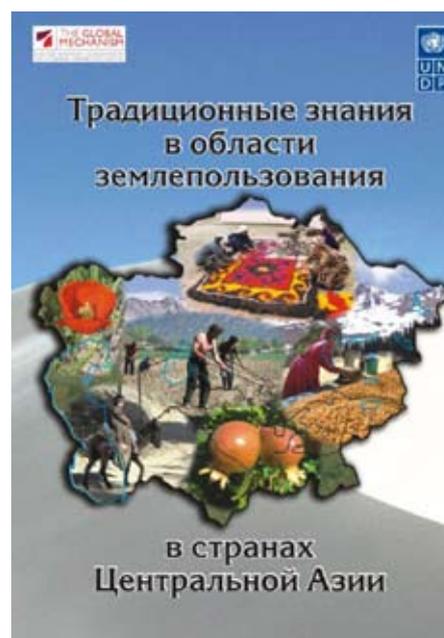


Resource pack "Traditional knowledge on the land-use management in Central Asian countries" has been published.

Electronic version of a bulletin titled "Traditional land management knowledge in Central Asian countries" is now available on the web-portal of the informational electronic network on sharing experience and engagement in environment protection and sustainable development policies in Central Asia – CARNet (www.caresd.net), as well as on our "Drynet" website (www.drynet.org).

The bulletin has been published as part of the UNDP/Global Mechanism project "Community Mobilization in Central Asia: Promoting Community Based Sustainable Land Management and Capacity Building".

This resource pack has been prepared on basis of surveys of five Central Asian states (Kazakhstan,



Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), which were also produced within the framework of this project with the participation of non->>

REGIONAL NEWS

>>governmental organizations and experts involved in land management issues.

The resource pack presents traditional land and water resources management methods, as well as available soil and water saving techniques, presently used by farmers in the plant growing and animal breeding industries. Authors expect that presented information would encourage restoration of a balance between people and nature through application of century-long traditional environmental management practices.

This resource pack is designed for a wide audience of readers, agricultural managers and workers, environmental specialists, students, employees of ministries, state agencies and non-governmental organizations, engaged in combating desertification.



Community Mobilization in Central Asia: Promoting Community Based Sustainable Land Management and Capacity Building

International community had long ago recognized desertification as a major economic, social and environmental problem, which is affecting many countries in all regions of the world. Following acknowledgement of a need in taking actions, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) had been drafted and signed in 1994. It came into force in 1996. As of today, 191 states and the European Union are parties to this Convention. By now many successful projects and initiatives are already being implemented in all parts of the world.

A joint UNDP and Global Mechanism project "Community Mobilization in Central Asia: Promoting Community Based Sustainable Land Management and Capacity Building", covering five Central Asian countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, had been implemented from mid 2005 to 2007.

The purpose of this project was to foster and develop capacities of community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations and state agencies in the Central Asia sub-region in order to improve ways of combating desertification and draught, and to promote alternative sustainable livelihood capabilities.

The project had the following objectives:

- Mobilization and training of local communities to carry out sustainable natural resources management initiatives and implement alternative livelihoods as part of CACILM;
- Involvement of UNCCD RIOD network and other stakeholders to enhance their capacities in cooperation with local communities;
- Establishment of a platform for wider dissemination and introduction of traditional knowledge and technologies.

The following outcomes had been achieved within this project:

- Capacities of 23 local communities in 5 countries had been developed to enable participation in collective designing, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reviewing of projects at the local level;
- 23 projects fitting into the CACILM framework had been developed and implemented. Concepts and results of these projects are presented at <http://www.caresd.>>>

REGIONAL NEWS

>>net/site.html?en=0&id=10815. Capacities of the RIOD network and other participants in providing better services, which meet the needs of local communities, had been strengthened;

- A bulletin titled "Traditional land management knowledge in Central Asian countries", as well as other materials promoting distribution of information on sustainable livelihood, had been developed, published and disseminated;
- Exchange and introduction of traditional sustainable livelihood approaches by local communities had been organized, and local-level cooperation through exchange of experience among farmers and stock-breeders had been improved.

Thus, goals and objectives of the project had been accomplished.

While the project had been carried out, the gender aspect was also taken into consideration. This is especially

important for rural areas of Central Asian states. Women had been involved in all activities: from participation in seminars to implementation of pilot projects.

Knowledge and expertise gained during implementation of this project had been used in development of larger projects within the CACILM framework.

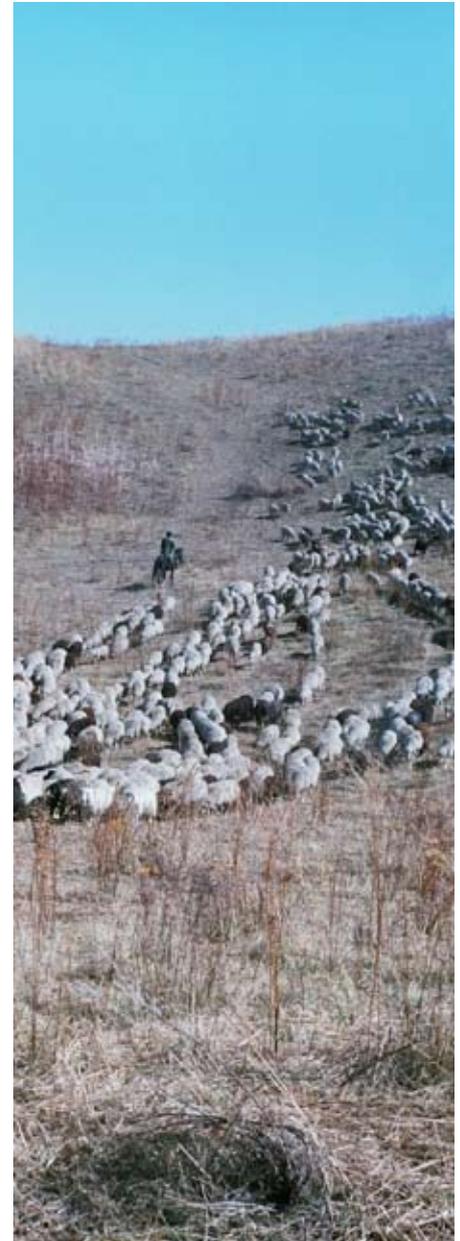
Key partners:

- UNCCD Central Asia coordinators
- UNDP Regional Center for Europe and CIS
- Global Mechanism
- UNDP Country Offices
- RIOD network
- NGOs involved in combating desertification

By: Olga Romanova

Coordinator of UNDP-GM project "Community Mobilization in Central Asia: Promoting Community Based Sustainable Land Management and Capacity Building".

E-mail: olga.romanova@undp.org; romanova.olga@gmail.com



REGIONAL NEWS

CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES INITIATIVE FOR LAND MANAGEMENT (CACILM)

The objective for the partnership between the region's five countries and the donors is to stop degradation of land, recuperate its fertility, and improve economic and social status of the population.

Soil salination and degradation of rangelands, deforestation and increased desertification have been becoming more and more apparent by the beginning of XXI century. In 2003 Central Asian countries came forward with the Initiative to manage the land in order to secure its rehabilitation and productive capacity improvement.

This Initiative had been supported by various donor and international organizations, including the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Asian Development Bank (ADB), German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Global Mechanism of the Convention to Combat Desertification and Draught and its Secretariat (Global Mechanism), Canadian International Development Agency for assistance to Central Asian countries (CIDA), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), and others.

The platform for cooperation had been developed during the meeting of all of the partnership's members in 2003 in Tashkent. The term for implementation of the Initiative is ten years. Participants of the meeting outlined major priorities of the Regional and National Programs, which had been developed in detail by the Asian Development Bank.

The Regional Program is comprised of



four components: research for sustainable land management, development of the land management information system, capacity building and dissemination of information. The first component is being implemented since 2007, the second one – starting from 2008.

“Overall, the donors endorsed eight national projects in the region's countries”, says Kanysh Nurymgereyev, the Deputy Head of the CACILM Multi-country Secretariat, “The ongoing projects include the “Mountain pastures management in Suisamyr Valley” in Kyrgyzstan, efforts to combat degradation of land are being taken in the South-Western part of Tajikistan, capacities and investments for integrated and sustainable land management have been developed in Turkmenistan. Upon completion of projects, the countries will adopt long-term strategies to continue their work and to introduce best practices. In the nearest future “Sustainable pastures management” project will be launched in Kazakhstan.

CACILM is the first multi-country and multi-donor partnership program, which attracts coordinated investments in the land management improvement in five Central Asian countries. Total volume of the Program's funding is 1.4 billion US dollars for 2006-2015. Now CACILM is in its early stage. Member countries are developing new proposals based on the priorities approved by the donors.

By Drynet partner: Nataliya Shulepina of CAREC, Uzbekistan

For more information about DRYNET project in Central Asia please contact
Emil Gareyev, DRYNET Project Manager, CAREC,
40, Orbita-1, Almaty,
Republic of Kazakhstan,
tel.: +7 (727) 2785110, 2785022,
fax: 2705337,
e-mail: egareyev@carec.kz