



NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

# newsletter

WATER RESOURCES

## World Water Day 2011 - 22 March

### Water for Cities: Responding to urban challenges

WORLD WATER DAY has been celebrated on 22 March each year since 1993. The purpose of the day is to focus international attention on the importance of freshwater and the need for sustainable management of freshwater resources.

The theme of this year's World Water Day is "Water for the cities: Responding to urban challenges". Today, 3.3 billion people worldwide live in cities, and that number is destined to grow as urban migration continues. This rapid urbanization creates enormous strains on already existing urban water systems and infrastructure. The situation is even more severe in slum areas, particularly in developing countries, where most residents lack adequate drinking water and sanitation facilities.

According to Pasquale Steduto, Senior Principal Officer of FAO's Water Unit, rapid urban growth necessitates new solutions to ensuring water availability. "As urban populations grow and concerns about water resources become more pressing, we are taking a closer look at how water use in the cities can then be reused in agriculture, forestry or aquaculture, with potential benefits for all. With the right management, this reuse of water provides a year-round supply of water together with nutrients and organic matter to support crop production providing safe food, income and employment to cities. In addition, water reuse can lessen the pollution load on downstream watercourses. We need to adjust our thinking to ensure that wastewater not become wasted water, but rather a resource."

During this year's event, FAO will illustrate its work in water reuse, demonstrating



how water from the cities can be treated and then used in agriculture. "One of the projects we'll be highlighting," said Mr. Steduto, "is an ongoing project in Dakar, Senegal. We worked with the city of Dakar to devise methods that would transform treated wastewater into water resources that would benefit local farmers. Thanks to this project, treated wastewater is now utilized in two irrigation schemes in Pikine and Paate d'Oie. The local farmers are all trained by the project to ensure adherence to safe production practices to protect farmers' and consumers' health."

To learn more:

[World Water Day site](#)

[FAO Water site](#)

[Food for the Cities: Waste water and sanitation](#)

[The wealth of waste: The economics of wastewater use in agriculture](#)

NATURAL RESOURCES

The new Natural Resources and Environment Newsletter



WELCOME TO THIS ISSUE of the Natural Resources and Environment Newsletter.

This month, we will be marking the annual World Water Day celebration on 22 March. This year's theme is Water for the cities: Responding to urban challenges. In this issue, we look at some of the challenges posed to water resources by rapid migration and we consider one possible solution for improving the use of these resources.

In this issue, we are pleased to welcome a new Executive Secretary to the Commission for Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture and we also invite you to participate in a moderated e-consultation on Sustainability Assessment of the Food Chain, running through 25 March. The input gathered from this e-consultation will feed into the preparatory process for the Rio+20 Conference planned for next year.

To learn more:

Natural Resources Management  
and Environment Department  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the  
United Nations

[www.fao.org/nr](http://www.fao.org/nr)

GENETIC RESOURCES

# Commission for Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture welcomes new Secretary

THE NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT welcomes Ms. Linda Collette, who became the new Executive Secretary of the Commission for Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture on 1 January 2011.

Ms. Collette, a native of Canada, brings to this position her extensive experience working with issues related to environment, biodiversity and genetic resources in developed and developing countries. Ms. Collette worked in FAO on issues related to managing biodiversity and ecosystem services including in sustainable crop production intensification. We spoke with Ms. Collette about her new role.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN PRIORITIES FOR THE COMMISSION? Cognizant that genetic resources for food and agriculture are a common concern of all countries, in that all countries depend on genetic resources for food and agriculture that originated elsewhere, the Commission strives to halt the loss of genetic resources for food and agriculture, and to ensure world food security and sustainable development by promoting their conservation, sustainable use, including exchange, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their use.



The Commission, with its 172 member countries, is an intergovernmental forum that plays a critical role in the development, strengthening and implementation of policies and programmes at national, regional and international levels to ensure the conservation and sustainable utilization of biological diversity and genetic resources for food and agriculture and the equitable sharing of benefits derived from their use. At its meetings, governments discuss and negotiate matters specifically related to biological diversity for food and agriculture. Priorities of the Commission have been agreed with the adoption of a Multi-Year Programme of Work (MYPOW). It includes a State of the World on Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture in 2017.

## WHAT ROLE DOES THE SECRETARIAT PLAY IN

SUPPORTING THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION? We facilitate the discussions of the government by providing secretariat functions such as the preparation and/or coordination of documents for discussion by countries representatives at the meeting.

THE THIRTEENTH REGULAR SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE WILL TAKE PLACE 18-22 JULY 2011. WHAT DO YOU EXPECT TO BE THE MAIN OUTCOMES? The Commission will discuss the updated Global Plan of Action on Plant Genetic Resources, climate change and genetic resources for food and agriculture as well as policies and arrangements for access and benefit-sharing for genetic resources for food and agriculture. It will examine key issues for The State of the World's Aquatic Genetic Resources and follow up on the preparation of The State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources. It will also adopt technical guidelines to assist countries in the implementation of Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources and we are also confident that after the meeting FAO will be able to move ahead with a First call for proposals for the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for Animal Genetic Resources.

To learn more:

[Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture web sit](#)

NATURAL RESOURCES



## Join the e-consultation on sustainability issues

THE PREPARATORY PROCESS is underway for the Rio+20 Conference to be held next year. As part of the process, a moderated electronic stakeholders' consultation on "Sustainability Assessment of the Food Chain" is currently underway and will run through 25 March 2011.

The aim of the e-consultation is to seek views and share knowledge on a sustainability framework that includes core sustainability issues and a common set of performance indicators, based on the food chain sector practices.

Your contributions will inform this process and feed into the drafting of voluntary international guidelines for food producers and retailers. We encourage wide participation. To join the discussions, just visit our website, and log-on to make your views known.

To learn more:

[FAO@Rio+20 web site](#)