



NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

newsletter

WATER RESOURCES

World Water Week Stockholm, Sweden, 21-27 August 2011



DURING THE LAST WEEK OF AUGUST, the Swedish capital of Stockholm plays host to World Water Week, an annual event that attracts experts from various sectors – scientific, academic, policy, civil society and international development – in promoting the agenda of water, environment and poverty reduction.

For the past twenty years, Stockholm has hosted this important event highlighting key international water issues. Each year's event is organized around a theme. The theme for 2011 is "Water in an Urbanising World". FAO is active in this area of work, particularly with irrigation for urban and peri-urban agriculture and recently implemented projects in water reuse.

FAO's Land and Water Division has long taken an active role in the annual Stockholm event. According to Pasquale Steduto, Principal Officer of the Land and Water Division, "We are excited to see a significant shift in the international debate on water issues, with the link between water and food security emerging as a key priority area. We have been working for years to position agriculture, one of the major consumers of water resources, as a central component in all discussions related to water issues, so we are particularly pleased to witness that the international water community is now concentrating greater attention on the

crucial role of agriculture."

The relationships between water and food security will be the theme of next year's World Water Day, to be held on 22 March 2012 and entitled 'Water and Global Food Security'. FAO, alongside UN-Water, will be anticipating the theme of next year's World Water Day and World Water Week 2012 with a side event at this year's events in Stockholm. Mr. Alexander Müller, Assistant Director-General of the Natural Resources Management and Environment Department will be the keynote speaker.

"The workshop, which will be held 24 August, will be entitled 'World Water Day 2012 – Water and food security: A call for solutions'. Water resources today face many challenges, including population growth, urbanization, changing diets, development pressure on land and water – including biofuel production – and the challenges of climate change. The workshop we are convening will bring together a panel of experts to examine these challenges and propose possible solutions. We anticipate that the panel discussion and interaction with participants will generate key messages and innovative solutions, which we hope to pursue in our activities leading up to World Water Day 2012."



To learn more:

[World Water Week](#)
[FAO Water web site](#)
[UN-Water web site](#)

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Natural Resources and Environment Newsletter



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

In this issue, we look at a new publication entitled "Payments for ecosystem services and food security". This document was produced as part of preparatory process for FAO's participation in the Rio+20 event to be held in 2012.

We also look ahead to World Water Week to be held 21-27 August in Stockholm, Sweden, where FAO will participate in a seminar anticipating the theme of 2012's World Water Day – Water and Food Security.

Finally, with the Thirteenth Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture held at FAO Headquarters in July, we introduce some of the key areas where preserving biodiversity is essential to achieving food security.

To learn more:

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

www.fao.org/nr

NATURAL RESOURCES

Payments for ecosystem services and food security

THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT – more commonly known as the Earth Summit – was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 1992 and resulted in important environmental conventions on climate change and biological diversity and the United Nations action plan, Agenda 21. As we near the twenty year anniversary, preparations are underway for the Rio+20 Conference to be held in June 2012.

The Rio +20 Conference will be an important opportunity for the United Nations and its member countries to reaffirm their commitment to sustainable development. In this context, FAO is playing an active role in preparing for Rio+20 events, particularly regarding one of the conference's main themes – promoting the green economy for achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication. One interesting economic instrument being explored within the context of the green economy is the use of Payments for Ecosystem Services. A new FAO publication, *Payments for Ecosystem Services and Food Security*, explores the use of Payments for Ecosystems Services as a tool to provide financing and incentives for farmers to preserve the environment and stem environmental degradation.



According to Nadia Scialabba, Senior Natural Resources Officer and FAO focal point for Rio+20 preparation, "One of the most exciting changes that we are seeing today with Payments for Ecosystems Services in agriculture is the innovative approach of looking beyond individual sectors. We are moving away from narrowly-defined policies for individual sectors and working towards 'bundling' various ecosystem services to be able to tackle interlinked natural resource challenges - climate, biodiversity, soil, water resources - within a single comprehensive ecosystem approach."

"We are excited about this new publication," said Ms. Scialabba, "because it provides concrete examples, in the form of twelve case studies from around the world, of situations that have successfully adopted Payments for Ecosystem Services. We have much to learn from these experiences and we hope to build upon them and to capitalize on the lessons learned in these projects."

Case studies in the publication outline various Payment for Ecosystem Services activities in Kenya, the Ukraine, Tanzania, Indonesia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, India, Nepal, Uganda and the Kagera basin in eastern Africa.

To learn more:

[Payments for Ecosystem Services and Food Security](#)
[FAO@Rio+20 web site](#)

GENETIC RESOURCES



In the spotlight... Safeguarding biodiversity

THE THIRTEENTH REGULAR SESSION of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture was held at FAO Headquarters 16-22 July 2011. Many issues were on the agenda, including approval of the Multi-year Programme of Work.

In light of so many challenges threatening global food security, greater attention is being concentrated on the need to preserve biological diversity for food and agriculture. We take a look at some of the key areas where safeguarding biodiversity will be critical for the food security needs of future generations.

To learn more:

[In the spotlight...
Safeguarding biodiversity
Commission on Genetic Resources for
Food and Agriculture](#)