

**Beijing Declaration on  
Globally Important Agricultural Heritage  
Systems (GIAHS)**

**A Ten-Point Charter to promote the dynamic conservation of Globally  
Important Agricultural Heritage Systems**

**Crab Island, China  
9-11 June 2011**



## **Beijing Declaration: a Ten-point Charter to promote the dynamic conservation of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)**

In collaboration with the Institute of Geographical Sciences and Natural Resources Research of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and other partners, FAO organized an International Forum in Crab Island, Beijing, from 9 to 11 June 2011. The main objective of the Forum was to exchange knowledge and experiences on the significance of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems from different countries, and to take stock of the lessons learned.

FAO's **Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)**, is an international partnership initiative that aims to identify and recognize unique traditional agricultural systems together with their agricultural biodiversity, culture and knowledge systems, and ways in which they can contribute to guarantee security of food and livelihoods throughout the world. The dynamic conservation of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems is an innovative strategy which aims to empower small holder farmers, indigenous peoples and local communities, thus enhancing local and global benefits derived from such systems for the benefit of humankind. Therefore, the GIAHS program intends to include more systems and sites, covering a greater number of farming communities, in order to scale up innovative ways for adapting agriculture to climate change, while at the same time deriving economic benefits from the conservation of agricultural biodiversity, allowing nature and people to prosper together.

### **The GIAHS Charter**

1. The participants in the Forum recognize that the GIAHS Initiative supports countries in achieving their international commitments in the field of conservation and sustainable use of agricultural biodiversity and genetic resources, with the objective of reaching the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, implementing the Nagoya Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, and providing lessons to ensure food production under scenarios of climate change, energy scarcity and financial crisis.
2. The participants in the Forum recognize the importance of the GIAHS Initiative for the Rio +20 Summit as a relevant tool for the dynamic conservation of agricultural biodiversity and the protection of the traditional knowledge of local communities, which embodies many principles and techniques essential for the design and implementation of a more sustainable and resilient agriculture.
3. The participants in the Forum recognize the important role of local communities in maintaining GIAHS sites, participating in the decision-making process as well as deriving benefits arising from the services provided by the indigenous agricultural ecosystems.
4. The participants in the Forum recognize the need to collaborate to design, develop and deliver the means for local communities to benefit, as stewards of GIAHS sites, from mechanisms such as payment for environmental services, rewards from ecotourism, and marketing and certification of unique organic products.

5. The participants in the Forum recognize the need for national governments, in collaboration with the international agencies, to support the implementation of initiatives which protect Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems.
6. The participants in the Forum, representing globally important heritage sites from Africa, Asia and Latin America, join in conveying their appreciation to the Global Coordination Office at FAO, and will work together in sharing information on the progress in these sites, and raising awareness of the importance of traditional agriculture locally, nationally and globally.
7. The participants in the Forum will work to support sustainable development of GIAHS through promotion of on-the-ground projects and activities, enhance capacities for maintaining, rebuilding and revitalizing agriculture, promote leadership, ownership, stewardship, and entrepreneurship across policy makers, academic and research organizations, local communities, small enterprises, and other corporate entities.
8. The participants in the Forum will continue to work in the field of GIAHS as an ever-evolving holistic initiative for the dynamic conservation of the planet's unique agricultural heritage and the promotion of harmony between humanity and the environment, especially in the context of the fragility of our agro-biodiversity, and the challenges of poverty, climate change, urbanization and globalization facing rural communities.
9. The participants in the Forum are committed to supporting the active and informed participation of indigenous and local communities in decision-making at national and international levels in each member country in relation to biodiversity management.
10. The participants in the Forum are committed to supporting ways to conserve, expand and sustain GIAHS, fostering a dialogue between small farming and scientific communities that will result in the conservation of the agricultural legacy, providing ecological, social and economic benefits for local farmers and communities and for the whole planet.