GLOBALLY IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE SYSTEMS

the GIAHS Initiative: From Concept to Implementation

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What are GIAHS? Remarkable land use systems and landscapes, which are rich in biological diversity evolving from the dynamic co-adaptation of a rural community/population with its environment and its needs and aspirations for sustainable development (FAO 2002).
GIAHS: Heritage for the future

**Definition:**
Remarkable Land Use Systems and landscapes which are rich in biological diversity evolving from the ingenious and dynamic adaptation of a community/population to its environment and their needs and aspirations for sustainable development (FAO, 2002)

GIAHS defines agriculture broadly, including:

- cropping systems
- pastoral transhumant and nomadic systems
- home gardens and agro-forestry systems
- fishing, hunting and gathering systems
- combinations and variations thereof
Outstanding Characteristics:

- Agricultural Biodiversity (domesticated to wild)
- Landscapes
- Traditional knowledge and management systems
- Co-adapted forms of social organisation and cultures (values, gender patterns, customary law, etc.)
- Holistic and adaptive management
- Time tested and resilient

Goods and Services:

- Food and livelihood security
- Environmental services
- Support cultural diversity
- Quality of life

Local and well beyond their borders
Biodiversity can be seen as a “life insurance policy for life itself” - Something specially needed in this time of fast-paced global change.  

Kofi Annan
Tradition and culture has always been an integral part of rice based livelihood systems.

In China

the Goddess Guan Yin took pity on humans and gave her milk and blood to create white and red rice.

Goddess Pavarti, the daughter of the mountains, was the first to grow rice.

Rice is associated with prosperity and with the Hindu Goddess of Wealth, Lakshmi.

People perform rituals to honor Dewi Sri. As goddess and guardian of rice and the rice harvest,

In India

In the Himalaya

In Vietnam

In Indonesia and Bali.

In Japan

It is said that the Sun Goddess Amatereshu-Omi-Kami grew rice in the fields of heaven, giving the first harvest to Prince Ninigi. He was told to take it to "The Land of Eight Great Islands," Japan.

For the Rungo people, the shadows on the moon are created by the Rice Goddess stacking up her freshly harvested rice in the shade of a Bo tree.

Large tapestries of rice cakes are made as offerings to Hindu temples.
THEY ARE UNDER THREAT BECAUSE OF:

- Inappropriate policy, legal and incentive environments,
- Industrialization of agriculture and neglect of diversified systems and local knowledge,
- Low priority given to in situ conservation,
- Low community involvement in decision making,
- Population pressure and cultural change.
The overall goal of the GIAHS initiative is:

to “protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements” [cf. CBD: Article 8(j)], specifically within agricultural systems
HOW?

- **At Global level**
  by identification, selection and recognition of GIAHS

- **At National level**
  by capacity building in policy, regulatory and incentive mechanisms to safeguard these outstanding systems and use them as sustainability benchmark systems

- **At Local Level**
  by empowerment of local communities and technical assistance for sustainable resource management, promoting traditional knowledge and enhancing viability of these systems
5 pilot systems as basis for a long term program including up to 100 systems.
GIAHS IS BASED ON THE FIVE ASSETS OF RURAL SYSTEMS

Natural Capital:
- nature’s goods and services
- (waste assimilation, pollination, storm protection, water supply, leisure, wildlife)

Social Capital:
- cohesiveness of people and societies - trust, reciprocity, rules and norms, networks and institutions

Human Capital:
- the status of individuals - health, skills, knowledge

Physical Capital:
- infrastructure

Financial Capital:
- money, savings
GIAHS ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Implementing Agency
UNDP-GEF

International Steering Committee
Function: Policy and strategic guidance

Executing Agency
FAO

Technical Advisory Committee
Function: Guarantee scientific quality and provide expertise

Project Secretariat
Function: Project Management/operation and technical support

Pilot Systems
National Focal Points and Multi Stakeholder Mechanisms

Oasis of the Maghreb
Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia

Chiloe Agriculture
Chile

Andean Agriculture
Peru

Rice-fish
China

Ifugao Terraces
Philippines
Multi-stakeholder Processes in Pilot Systems

- National Focal Point and project facilitator

- National Government Ministries

- Local and Regional Government

- International Organisations country offices

- NGOs/CSOs and private sector

- Education, Extension and Research institutions

- Farming Community Focus on poor

- GIAHS-Secretariat & UNDP/FAO regional offices
Partners

- GOVERNMENTS, INDIGENOUS NETWORKS, NGOS AND PRIVATE SECTOR
- FAO, UNDP, GEF, UNESCO, UNEP, IFAD, ICCROM
- IUCN, IPGRI and ISNAR & other CGIAR, UNU/PLEC, GTZ, COMPAS; ILEIA; IAC

www.fao.org/sd/giahs
GIAHS is not about the past
but GIAHS is about the future
Objectives of the Forum

- Discuss and agree on the principals and scientific underpinning of GIAHS Concept
- Discuss and agree on eligibility and international processes of GIAHS Classification
- Discuss and agree on the modalities of the implementation of Pilot Systems and associated systems
- Discuss and agree on the financing and further partnership building of GIAHS
Forum Organization and Future Work

- Plenary sessions in the morning and discussions in groups afternoon
- Institutional and personal commitments as GIAHS community member
- GIAHS membership at international and national levels
Thank you