



Regional Orientation Workshop on Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) for Asia and the Pacific

12-13 November 2013, Bangkok, Thailand

Background Note and Provisional Agenda

Today, a major challenge facing humanity is how to achieve a sustainable agriculture that provides enough food and ecosystem services for present and future generations in an era of climate change and accelerated environmental degradation. In continuously looking to survive and coping through centuries with extreme weather events and climatic variability, farmers living in the world have developed and/or inherited their own farming practices managed in ingenious ways, allowing smallholders to meet their subsistence needs in the midst of environmental variability without depending much on modern agricultural technologies. The stubborn persistence of millions of hectares under traditional farming is living proof of a successful indigenous agricultural strategy and constitutes a tribute to the “creativity” of small farmers throughout the developing world. Today, well into the first decade of the 21st century, there are in the world millions of smallholders, family farmers and indigenous peoples practicing resource-conserving farming which is testament to the remarkable resiliency of these agroecosystems in the face of continuous environmental and economic change, while contributing substantially to conservation of biodiversity, household food security and traditional cultural heritage. Many of these agro-ecosystems are unique in their attributes and maintain a specific landscape in rural areas.

Since 2002 FAO implements a global initiative on dynamic conservation and adaptive management of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage systems (GIAHS) aiming to identify and ensure global recognition of the importance of these unique traditional agricultural systems for food security and sustainable development.

The Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)¹ is an international partnership initiative that aims to identify, support and safeguard Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems and their livelihoods, agricultural and associated biodiversity, landscapes, knowledge systems and cultures around the world. The GIAHS Partnership recognizes the crucial importance of the well-being of family farming communities in an integrated approach while directing activities towards sustainable agriculture and rural development.

¹ For more information, www.giahs.org

The GIAHS Initiative explicitly recognises that change in "traditional" political, social and economic processes is inevitable; they cannot be frozen or re-created. Consequently, it adopts the "adaptive management" approach to explore and develop novel political, social and economic processes that strengthen the existing management systems, and which generate the same biodiversity outcomes – that is, maintain the same races, species and agroecosystems. Thus, the processes may be different and contain new and modern elements, but the way they interact with the biophysical world will maintain the values of these agroecosystems.

Over the past decade, the GIAHS Initiative has been piloting an innovative model of engaging communities, local and national governments in the adaptive management of agricultural heritage and conservation of system's goods and services. It has served as a learning laboratory for identifying new ways to sustain nature's bounty, the health of ecosystems, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and genetic resources for food and agriculture, protection of traditional knowledge systems, culture, and more importantly, building a bridge for the sustainable future. The GIAHS Initiative promotes activities aimed at: (i) assisting in formulation and implementation of national policies aimed at preserving these agricultural heritages systems and the biodiversity, traditional knowledge and natural resources management systems; (ii) empowering local communities and indigenous peoples to sustain their livelihood that is based on these systems and explore options for improvement of these systems without jeopardizing their ecosystem resiliency, goods and services; and (iii) recognizing the links between "agri-cultural" diversity and cultural diversity and the achievements of local community members and indigenous peoples. In parallel to the *in situ* activities, the GIAHS initiative is looking for a stronger recognition, at the highest level of the policy making agenda, of the contribution made by traditional agricultural systems to the conservation of the biological and cultural diversity of the planet.

Ultimately, it will help the small farmers, indigenous communities and rural peoples living in and around GIAHS to establish strengthened socio-political systems (governance) and economic processes (markets and employment opportunities) that help them address the challenges of today's world (with all its modern pressures) and let them to take advantage of the opportunities of modern living, while at the same time maintaining the traditional agro-ecosystems and interlinked cultures they have.

Currently, there are a total number of 26 GIAHS sites which were approved by FAO till now (as of July 2013) including those in Africa, Latin America and Asia. In Asia and the Pacific region, the participating countries are limited to China India, Japan and the Philippines. Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Iran, etc. are in the process of formulating GIAHS proposals. More recently there are potential sites identified in various countries in the region including Thailand for the teak forest resources conservation.

In May 2013, an [international forum on GIAHS](#) was held in Noto, Ishikawa, Japan where participants from around the world have shared their knowledge on the fundamental values of agricultural patrimony as well as shared their experiences on managing and revitalizing

local economies through GIAHS dynamic conservation. The Forum was highlighted by the presence of the FAO Director General and several High Level officials from existing GIAHS sites and key international organizations. The GIAHS Forum featured, among others, the adoption of the [Noto Communique](#).

The Noto Communique recommends (i) the progressive designation of further GIAHS sites to promote the conservation of agricultural heritage and its contributions towards global food security and economic development; (ii) promotion of on-the-ground projects and activities, particularly in developing countries; (iii) the existing GIAHS support the recognition of candidatures of GIAHS areas in less developed countries; and (iv) promote the twinning of GIAHS sites between developed and developing countries.

Within this context, a two-day Regional Workshop on Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems for Asia and the Pacific shall be organized. Countries in the region with existing GIAHS shall be invited to share their knowledge, experiences and achievements. The Regional Workshop is aimed to enhance understanding and promote awareness of the fundamental values, essential goods and services harboured in agricultural in globally important agricultural heritage systems.

Objectives of the Regional Workshop

- To promote awareness of GIAHS, and its impacts and benefits
- To share experiences and knowledge on dynamic conservation of GIAHS
- To build up the capacity of countries in the region in identifying potential GIAHS sites and formulating quality GIAHS proposals for recognition
- To promote a network of stakeholders including recipient Governments, development partners, donors, UN agencies, CSOs, private sectors, etc. towards creating a strong public interest and support to the initiative, and mobilize resources

Expected Outputs

- Enhanced understanding and awareness on GIAHS Initiative
- GIAHS knowledge, experiences and lessons learned are shared with the member countries and partners in the region
- Capacity of countries in identifying and formulating GIAHS proposal is enhanced
- A regional network on GIAHS and twinning programme is conceptualized and way forward is discussed and agreed

Expected participants (total about 40-50 participants)

One or two senior Government official(s) each from potential and interested countries in the region (15-20 countries), representatives from GIAHS implementing countries (4 countries to share experiences), senior officials from FAO, WAHF, etc.

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME AGENDA

12 November 2013

Morning

8:00 – 9:00	Registration
9:00 -9:15	<p>Welcome and Opening Remarks Mr Hiroyuki Konuma, Assistant Director General, Asia and the Pacific (RAP) Mr Chalit Damrongsak, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC), Thailand</p>
9:15 – 9:30	<p>Overview and Purpose of the Workshop Mr Yuji Niino, Land Management Officer, RAP</p>
<p>Session 1: GIAHS Familiarisation</p>	<p>This session will discuss the origin, nature, concept of agricultural heritage, criteria for selection, and implementation framework of the GIAHS Initiative. This session will also discuss a step by step selection of systems or sites. GIAHS will be discussed as a model for resilient agriculture in similar ecosystems and for sustainable agriculture and rural development. This session will also include discussion on demonstration and exploration, including GIAHS activities that responds to international development agenda of medium term and long term (e.g. Aichi targets, IYFF, ITPGRFA, NBSAPs, Regional Rice Initiative, etc.), and ultimately, to achieve balance between conservation, adaptation and sustainable socio-economic development.</p>
9:30 -10:00	<p>Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS): origin, nature, criteria and conceptual framework Mr Masahito Enomoto, Deputy Director, AGP</p>
10:00 – 10:30	<p>The Implementation Framework of GIAHS and GIAHS <i>Noto Communique</i>, synergies and inter-linkages of GIAHS within various development strategies and agenda Dr Parviz Koohafkan</p>
10:30 -11:00	Coffee/tea break
<p>Session 2: Expansion of sites, Mainstreaming of GIAHS Concept and Marketing of GIAHS essential goods and services.</p>	<p>This session will share the lessons based on the past and on-going GIAHS activities, and capitalize on what has been learned to date from the existing country achievements and examples to build recommendations and way forward to further the: (i) expansion and/or out scaling of sites; and (ii) mainstreaming of GIAHS concept at national and local level policies, and (iii) marketing goods and services e.g. promote sustainability and conservation by increasing the premium of GIAHS products and services</p>

	through branding and labelling and empowering small scale farmers and local communities through recognition of their agricultural heritage
11:00 – 12:30	Country experiences in implementing dynamic conservation of GIAHS: Vision and Perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China • Japan

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch Break

Afternoon

Continue Session 2: 14:00 – 15:30	Country experiences in implementing dynamic conservation of GIAHS: Vision and Perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philippines • India • Examples from other region (thru video or ppt, tbd)
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee/tea break
16:00 – 17:00	Payments for environmental services harboured in GIAHS: examples and experiences Dr Parviz Koohafkan Marketing of GIAHS products and GIAHS label for Tourism Sector Dr Parviz Koohafkan
17:00 – 17:30	Discussion and Wrap-up Chaired by Mr Konuma
18.30-21.00	Welcome dinner at Plaza Athenee Hotel (venue will be announced later)

13 November 2013

Morning

Session 3: Discuss the criteria and methodological procedures and guidelines of application process for recognition.	This session will explore and discuss the criteria for enlisting systems as GIAHS and application processes and guidelines for preparing a GIAHS proposal for recognitions. It will also explore the establishment of the regional partnership and twinning programme between and among sites.
9:00 – 10:00	Criteria for enlisting systems as GIAHS and application processes

	and guidelines for preparing a GIAHS proposal for recognitions Ms Mary Jane Ramos de la Cruz, GIAHS Technical Officer
10:00 – 10:30	Coffee/tea break
Session 4: Country presentations by potential GIAHS countries on the ideas on proposals	This session will allow potential new GIAHS participating countries to present their GIAHS ideas/proposals for consultation.
10:30 – 12:30	Presentation of proposals/ideas by potential new GIAHS participating countries, followed by suggestions/comments

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch Break

Afternoon

Session 5: Concluding and closing	This session will discuss how to proceed and recommendations for regional networking.
14:00 – 15:00	Way Forward and Recommendations including regional networking Round table discussion chaired by Mr Hiroyuki Konuma
15:00 – 15:30	Closing Ceremony / Group Photo Session