

Session 3

Building Innovative Partnerships and Resources Mobilisation



This session aimed at analyzing partnerships around GIAHS and opportunities for new alliances. It reviewed the interest and commitments of different institutions and stakeholders for GIAHS objectives and component activities. The possibilities of partnership building and the modalities of resource mobilization in support of the GIAHS at international and national levels were also discussed. Mr. Jean Philippe Audinet, Director Policy Division, IFAD chaired the session.

GEF Small Grant Programme

Nick Remple, UNDP/GEF/SGP Global Manager (Programmes)

Global Environmental Facility Small Grants Programme (GEF-SGP) is a corporate programme of the GEF managed by UNDP. Initiated in 1992, it now covers 105 countries with 7,300 projects – averaging \$20,000 (\$50,000 is the maximum). Its resources up to 2007 are totalling over \$200 million in GEF funding and approximately an equal amount in co-financing. The GEF premise is that community-based organizations (CBOs) and NGOs can produce global environmental benefits through small initiatives that address local environmental management, livelihoods and local empowerment. These benefits can be achieved through direct impacts, up-scaling and/or replication of successful initiatives, mainstreaming, dissemination of lessons and good practice, and policy change.

The GEF-SGP decision-making is highly decentralized. Projects are selected by National Steering Committees (NSC) in the framework of their Country Programme Strategy and then reviewed and approved by SGP Global. The local governance is ensured by a multi-stakeholder participation in the NSC and by a National Coordinator (NC). The GEF-SGP Country Programme Strategy (CPS) sets out a framework of objectives, indicators to assess impacts and lessons learnt, guidelines for generating/documenting knowledge and for partnership arrangements. All country programmes are required to have geographic and/or thematic focus which facilitate synergies among projects and funding sources mobilization. The procedures allow for a rapid and flexible project delivery at national level. Turning to the GEF-SGP involvement in agro-biodiversity, Dr. Remple said that, within a 3000 project portfolio in the field of biodiversity in 2004, at least 800 were labeled as dealing with agro-biodiversity, with strong emphasis on certification and marketing of agro-biodiversity products. A number of workshops and other parallel activities were conducted concurrently in these fields. As to the future, a current review of lessons learnt should lead to more selective and focused projects with emphasis on landscape approach, marketing/certification and micro-credit, as appropriate.

As regards further SGP–GIAHS partnership, there was wide scope for joint programming and financing at national level with GIAHS inputs to the CPS, GIAHS participation in NSC membership and GIAHS providing training for NSCs and NCs. The SGP data base, monitoring and reporting system offered

other opportunities of cooperation with GIAHS. Joint activities could also be contemplated, both at national and global levels, in the field of knowledge generation, documentation and communication. Further GIAHS–SGP cooperation at global level should continue in promoting common strategic goals, in developing partnerships and mobilizing resources.



The Christensen Fund

*Wolde Gossa Tadesse, Programme Officer, The African Rift Valley (Ethiopia)
The Christensen Fund, Palo Alto, CA, USA*

The Christensen Fund (TCF) is a private institution promoting the maintenance of worldwide diversity- both cultural and biological - through small grants and other activities. It recognizes that the richness and beauty of bio-cultural diversity result from the continuing co-evolution and adaptation between the natural landscape, ways of life and cultural endeavors of local populations. The TCF shares the view that bio-cultural diversity is essential to ecological and social stability but is nowadays subject to multiple threats leading to its degradation and erosion. In some areas, however, local cultures and their landscapes have shown considerable resilience.

TCF supports selectively the stewardship of the cultural and ecological heritages in these areas by developing partnerships between local people and dedicated outsiders and combining their skills and knowledge to create the confidence, capacities and rights that ensure lasting impact. The TCF is governed by a board of trustees with a culturally diverse membership and experience in conservation, the arts, education, community activism, indigenous/traditional knowledge, finance and philanthropy. The board sets out the Fund's investment and grant policy. Recognizing the close link of the GIAHS initiative and of the TCF's objectives and approaches, Dr. Tadesse expressed the interest of the TCF in co-operating with the implementation of GIAHS initiative.



GIAHS and Traditional Agricultural Community

Maharaj Muthoo, Secretary General, Roman Forum, Rome, Italy

In a vibrant appeal in support of the GIAHS, Dr. Muthoo said that it should harness the energies of traditional agri-cultural communities and indigenous people into a material force for holistic development. GIAHS is a worthy partner for effectively safeguarding the fate of the local communities, their livelihoods, food security and biodiversity. Governments must provide an enabling environment for the GIAHS for the sake of the planet's well-being – now and in the future. What is required is a partnership among communities, governments, civil society and the private sector. Promoting such collaborative partnership and providing model examples is part of the GIAHS mission. We must find ways to think and act together, said Dr. Muthoo, inspired by the shared understanding of humanity in the world, given the beauty and beastliness of its diversity. GIAHS can provide an ingenious model to reverse the threat of compartmentalized and unilateral thinking and acting. Biodiversity, living heritage systems and traditional knowledge have been a big loser because of this compartmentalization. Synergies should therefore be developed among ideas and values, among regions and nations, among organizations and institutions, across the boundaries of governments, the market, citizens and civil society.

The expected outcome should be concerted action at international, regional, national and local levels through a partnership for local community development, ecosystems and agro-biodiversity. Dr. Muthoo recommended that the GIAHS involve a wider range of stakeholders including the private sector (firms, federations, employer associations and business groups), the CSOs, the media, philanthropic foundations and other funding institutions. He pointed out the role of NGOs in supporting small and medium-sized enterprises and cooperatives having characteristics closer to civil society, such as for village women micro-finance and tele-connectivity. He also stressed that GIAHS was in line with a number of international concerns and endeavours such as those related to globalization and governance, the MDGs, natural resources and the environment, and food security. Dr. Muthoo invited the GIAHS Forum to develop a comprehensive strategic framework for effective collaborative partnerships; to become a center of excellence with core competency in selected focus areas of GIAHS; and to be closely associated with the donor community mobilizing wider

sources of financing (reasonable annual targets should be of the order of 10 increasing to 30 million dollars, he said). In closing, he recommended that the GIAHS Forum should be recognized as a world forum where statesmen, policy makers, CEOs and scientists together with local communities address the dangers and hopes for the future global system of sustainable agriculture, optimal land-use and dynamic conservation without the constraints of formal intergovernmental negotiation.



NGO/IPGRI/WI Programme on the Oases of the Maghreb

Noureddine Nasr, IPGRI (now called Bioversity International), Regional Coordinator, Tunisia

Mr. Nasr started his presentation by emphasizing the importance of the oases in the Maghreb: covering 184,000 ha; with a population of 5 million, mostly poor, people; very old, intensive, productive and diversified land and water use systems, often subject to multiple threats and degradations. Different types of oases were recognized in the fringes of the Sahara desert, including those of the wadis, those in sand dune depressions, the oases in the mountain valleys and the coastal oases. Oases usually display three levels of vegetation: the date palms, the orchards and the annual crops (cereals, fodder and vegetable crops). Over centuries, these systems accumulated a rich experience in land and water management and in the husbandry of local crops and livestock. The oases are threatened by plant diseases and pests, sand dune encroachment, water and soil salinization, waterlogging in places and groundwater depletion elsewhere, fragmentation of land holdings, and out-migration of young people leading to gradual depopulation and abandonment. Genetic erosion and loss of local knowledge proceed concurrently.

From 2001 to 2005, the IPGRI/UNDP/GEF project on date palm promoted the rehabilitation of oases with a view to preserving their bio-diversity. It involved a number of local stakeholders, governments, NGOs, bilateral and multilateral donors as well as a number of international programmes. Several pilot sites were established in the vicinity of local universities, oases agriculture research centres, development services, and NGOs. In the three Maghreb countries, there is an increased awareness of the importance and value of the oases and a growing interest in their rehabilitation.

Several natural reserves, rehabilitation projects and development programmes were launched. Further to a GIAHS workshop in Gafsa, in November 2005, a five-year action plan was established with multiple partnership and networking arrangements. In June 2006, a second workshop was convened in El Oued, Algeria, to raise partner awareness and provide training. Several varieties of date palm were already identified with specific environment and management requirements, different qualities and uses. Further agreements and projects are under negotiation to broaden the scope of the programme and address oases rehabilitation more comprehensively.



UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Chairperson, UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Ms. Tauli-Corpuz explained that the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is a new consultative body created by the UN General Assembly to give focussed attention to the indigenous people problems and mobilize action in their support. It is made of experts of indigenous origin, knowledgeable in the diverse disciplines relevant to indigenous issues. Its members have joined in several teams addressing a series of selected topics and reporting to the UN GA via the Forum.

The Forum has launched a plan of action within the framework of an International Decade in support of the indigenous people and in association with a UN Interagency Working Group. The plan should promote action on a number of key problems of the indigenous people such as economic and social development, human rights, environment and land use. A draft UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People is now under negotiation with mixed results, some major countries opposing the present text while other supports it. Ms. Tauli-Corpuz stressed that the GIAHS approach is in full agreement with the principles and action promoted by the UN Forum and pledged to raise awareness and support of its membership about the GIAHS programme and its activities.

