



drynet

www.dry-net.org

No. 1

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News from Drynet

A global initiative giving future to drylands

Drynet is a project of 14 organisations from all over the world. They work together to combat land degradation

GLOBAL NEWS

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Drynet Update

Congratulations! You are reading the first issue of the Drynet-newsletter: "News from Drynet". Besides this newsletter, which will appear at least 8 times during the 3 year-long project period (2007-2009), you can follow the progress of Drynet closely on the website www.dry-net.org. On this website Drynet success stories will be documented, as well as news items, articles, regional agenda's... You can already review several stories, for example a centuries-old system of private pastureland management in India and about polyculture practices in Brazilian drylands. But most important: Drynet is also very interested in your success stories, as sharing means learning!

Therefore Drynet looks forward to reading about your experiences.

Drynet started in March of this year with a kick-off meeting in Fortaleza, Brazil, where all 14 Drynet-partners met to share ideas about the project. The first thing one could notice was the enormous variety of partners coming from so many different regions. One nice example was the astonishment of partners from Iran and Pakistan when visiting the Brazilian drylands, which looked lush and green after the rainy season, while in Asia no drop of rain had fallen for a long time! This example illustrates the additional value of Drynet - as combating desertification

Drynet partners visiting the Brazilian drylands.



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>> and land degradation does not have one solution, but requires multiple approaches from different perspectives.

One of the ongoing activities at this moment concerns "mapping". Drynet-partners are mapping Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) on a national level, creating a clear overview of the different local organisations working on dryland issues. This overview will provide the basis to both strengthen networks and to build capacities. In addition, the so-called "Financing Partners", consisting of the donor community and coordination, will also be "mapped". If your organisation is working on issues, concerning drylands, you and Drynet can be an added value for each other. So please do not hesitate to get in contact with us!

Over the next few months Drynet will, on the basis of the mapping results, organise national seminars on a country or regional level, as well as conduct needs assessments and trainings. This will help achieve the ultimate goal of providing Civil Society Organisations with the appropriate knowledge and visibility to influence dryland development policies and to aim at making Civil Society a respected counterpart for governments.

Thus, there is a lot of work ahead, but by working together with organisations such as yours along with other stakeholders involved, we can achieve a great deal in the fight against desertification! We hope this first newsletter will inspire you. By sharing

minutes of important meetings; giving insights into the ideas of the World Meteorological Organisation; focusing on a drought resistant crop and a article on "drylands rich in animal genetic resources", we think we will.

We welcome all your comments; questions or remarks on this first issue. You can send them to:
drynet@bothends.org

By Drynet partner: Danielle de Man, Both ENDS, the Netherlands

International Agenda 2007

12-16 Nov. 2007 - Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council Meeting and NGO Consultation, Washington DC, USA
www.thegef.org

28-29 Nov. 2007 - UN Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) Regional Implementation Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean, Santiago, Chile
www.un.org/esa/sustdev

3-14 Dec. 2007 - United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties 13th session and Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, Bali, Indonesia
www.unfccc.int

What is... Jatropha?

JATROPHA CURCAS: A BLIND ALLEY OR AN OIL PLANT OF UNKNOWN QUALITIES?

Jatropha curcas is a multipurpose non-edible plant that has proven to be drought resistant. In particular, its seeds have raised considerable attention as a source of oil for biodiesel production. In the past *Jatropha* had been promoted to make rural dryland areas self sufficient by providing fuels for cooking, lighting and motive power. Currently, however, this enthusiasm has yielded mainly to criticism because of the considerable production costs involved. Nevertheless, *Jatropha* has some unique features: it can grow on soils that have previously been considered unsuitable for crop cultivation.

Check out the links:
nsiev.de/jatropha-en
www.diligent-tanzania.com/

Research work undertaken by professor C. Namasivayam of the Bharathiar University in India¹ and others in March 2007, shows another hitherto unknown potential for this multipurpose plant: the husk from *Jatropha*, has been tested in filtration research with waste from biodiesel industries. The husk that contains a form of activated carbon (JHC) enhances the feasibility of removal of toxic anions, dyes, heavy metals and organic compounds from water.

¹ Correspondence to: Professor C. Namasivayam, Environmental Chemistry Division, Department of Environmental Sciences, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore 641046, India

By Drynet partner: Silke Brehm of LPP, Germany

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Drynet Meeting Minutes

DRYNET BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER DURING COP8

Could you imagine a small organisation from Burkina Faso discussing with a Finnish Government Representative? Not so easy indeed! But Drynet did it, thanks to its unconventional side-event organised during the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in Madrid, Spain. The event was called "Developing capacities in changing times: NGOs and land users in combating desertification and coping with climate change".

The Drynet approach was unique: we invited and actively involved a wide array of stakeholders including national delegates, international donor agencies, scientists and civil society organisations, representing countries from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Europe in a discussion. Two key questions were discussed: "what are the elements of successful actions to combat desertification and adapt to climate change at local level" and "in what ways can each of us support processes and projects that have a good chance of success".

After two opening presentations by Drynet-partners, ENDA Tiers Monde and Scope, highlighting their innovative initiatives carried out at grassroots level in respectively Senegal and Pakistan,

representatives from the European Union, and the Global Mechanism¹ - which both actively finance activities in the fight against desertification and land degradation - underlined the crucial role of civil society organisations in identifying, documenting, and replicating such local initiatives so as to broaden their impact.

The discussion became very lively and interesting when the participants were randomly divided in groups of five to six people and openly shared their opinions and ideas. They talked together about the importance of local experiences, traditional knowledge, scientific advances and innovative means of replicating such experiences as well as the role of each stakeholder in the process.

The results of this side-event could without any doubt prove useful for both policy-makers and local actors, providing new ideas and approaches for sustainable development in dryland regions. It also helps to create a common understanding of what should be done in the combat against desertification. But the greatest contribution of this event was the refreshing approach that brought actors together in a relaxed and friendly environment, and enabled them to freely discuss some of the most important aspects of desertification and poverty in dryland areas.

This multistakeholder dialogue is only a preview of what Drynet is designed to achieve: bring people together who would normally not easily get in contact with each other and strengthen the collaboration between all actors to combat desertification. In the future Drynet will work hard to make this

happen on a larger scale by strengthening Civil Society Networks and give them the right knowledge and visibility to influence dryland development policies and become important partners in developing those policies.

The full report of the side-event, the presentations and answers to the two questions discussed can be read at www.dry-net.org, news section.

¹ Global Mechanism is financing Drynet and actively working together with Drynet partners on common activities

By Drynet partners: Mark Camburn of Probioma, Bolivia and Danielle de Man of Both ENDS, the Netherlands

International Agenda 2008

28-29 Jan. 2008 - UN Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) Regional Implementation Meeting for Europe and North America, Geneva, Switzerland www.unece.org/env/SustainableDevelopment

5-16 May 2008 - 16th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, United Nations headquarters, New York, USA www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd

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Drynet Interview

LOOK FOR WIN-WIN SOLUTIONS TO COPE WITH CLIMATE CHANGE

Dr. Mannava V.K. Sivakumar, Chief of the Agricultural Meteorology Division of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) spoke to Namitha Dipak during COP8 of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) held at Madrid in September 2007.

How can we make drought monitoring more effective?

It is important to have good spatial information...so for that you need to have a good network of meteorological stations.

One of the buzz phrases during this COP appears to be "early warning systems". How challenging is it to implement in a diverse geographical area like India?

Today we have very good tools to make forecasts at our disposal, as opposed to about 30-40 years ago. Of course, these are not perfect forecasts, that is the reason they are given in terms of probability. A forecast will mention what is the probability that the rainy season, for instance in 2008, will be normal, above normal or below normal.



Dr. Mannava V.K. Sivakumar

What does that mean for the common person?

If I say that the rain in 2008 will be 30% below normal, what we then do is take the normal patterns in northern, eastern, western and southern India, and the information from the seasonal forecast and then downscale it. The value of such information is that the farmer will be able to make decisions.

That means that the farmers have to be trained to cope with this information?

Exactly. That is why when such forecasts are available, it is very important to bring in agricultural extension services. And also NGOs, like your Drynet network as well. The benefits of science must come to society, otherwise science has no meaning.

Could you give us an example of local efforts that are helping to mitigate the effects of climate change?

There are some examples emerging now from some of the Scandinavian countries. Scandinavian countries are more proactive than reactive to what are the likely impacts of climate change. They are looking at win-win situations. And that's what we in India should also be looking at. A 2-3 degree increase in temperature - when translated to a local level - could mean something higher than 2-3 degrees. This 2-3 degree range is a global average. That is why some countries are taking very serious steps. They are already informing communities about the likely changes and how they should start shifting their cropping patterns.

By Drynet partner: Namitha Dipak of LPPS, India

Curious to read more about Dr. Mannava V.K. Sivakumar's view on climate change, land degradation and drylands? The full text of the interview is available on our website.

GLOBAL NEWS

Global Article

COUNTRIES ACKNOWLEDGE RICHNESS OF DRYLANDS IN ANIMAL GENETIC RESOURCES

Every month, one farm animal breed becomes extinct as locally adapted livestock is replaced by high performance breeds. But local breeds have many advantages: they make use of locally available resources and exploit dry and other marginal areas where crops can not be grown, and are a much more efficient means of food production.

To raise awareness about the importance of livestock diversity and to agree on a common approach to managing it in a sustainable manner, 109 governments met in Interlaken, Switzerland, from 1-7 September at the First International Technical Conference on Animal Genetic Resources where they issued the "Interlaken Declaration on Animal Genetic Resources", and elaborated a Global Plan of Action (GPA).

The GPA makes special references to drylands. Studies have shown that drylands have produced a disproportionately high number of well known breeds which are basically the result of the efforts and the indigenous knowledge of pastoralists.

The African region and many NGOs had been advocating for "Livestock Keepers Rights", a bundle of rights that would strengthen the role of pastoralists and

farming communities in managing animal genetic resources. Unfortunately this was mooted by developed countries.

Nevertheless, the role of indigenous and local communities, especially pastoralists is acknowledged in Strategic Priority Action No 6 which recognises that the "adaptive animal genetic resource management strategies of these communities continue to have economic, cultural and social significance and to be highly relevant to food security in many rural subsistence societies, particularly though not exclusively in dry lands and mountainous regions" and suggest various ways to support indigenous and local communities.

Scientific programmes to increase drought resistance of organisms are funded with millions of dollars. Yet the day-to-day efforts of pastoralists to keep and develop animals under drought conditions and thereby sustain crucial gene pools – that will prove priceless during climate change - remain entirely unrewarded. It will be the tasks of NGOs to continue advocating for compensation for these important environmental services.

The Livestock Keepers Rights initiative was supported by The Christensen Fund, Misereor, Swedbio, HIVOS-NOVIB OXFAM Biodiversity Fund and others".

EED, FAO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, GTZ, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit GmbH, Hivos-Oxfam Novib Biodiversity Fund, Misereor e.V., Rockefeller Foundation, Swedbio, Swissaid, The Christensen Fund and others.

For further information, please check:

www.lifeinitiative.net

www.lpps.org

www.pastoralpeoples.org

www.fao.org

**By Drynet partner: Ilse Köhler-
Rollefson of LPP, Germany**

The following issues of the Drynet newsletter will be based on a variety of thematic topics. If you have any suggestions for themes that you would like to see covered, then please send your ideas to: drynet@bothends.org or contact a Drynet partner in your region.



REGIONAL NEWS

Traditional dryland experts project their knowledge

A group of Raika pastoralists from drought-prone Rajasthan share experiences on managing livestock with pastoralists in Europe...

The ability of nomadic pastoralists to make use of drylands in a sustainable and "natural" manner is well supported by ecological studies: their system of keeping animals on the move allows them to utilize seasonally available resources and protects vegetation from overgrazing. Not surprisingly, in drought-prone Rajasthan, mobile livestock keeping has traditionally been the predominant land-use strategy, although present government policies are not kind to this way of life.

Recently a group of Raika – one of the most prominent pastoralist groups of Rajasthan - had the chance to project their traditional knowledge in managing livestock in dry areas to an international audience in three European countries. Composed of Rama Ram,

The Raika and over two hundred pastoralists from different countries participated in the Global Gathering of Pastoralists through the streets of Spain, celebrating the re-establishment of the right of shepherds to drive their herds through the centre of Madrid.



The hills were alive with the sound of music...Raika from Rajasthan on a study tour in the Swiss Alpine meadows during the First International Conference on Animal Genetic Resources.

Dailibai, and Mangi Lal Raika, all from Pali District in Rajasthan, the delegation was headed by Hanwant Singh, director of the NGO Lokhit Pashu-Palak Sansthan (LPPS) and accompanied by Tola Ram Bhil, a musician and bard from Jodhpur. The mission created quite a buzz wherever they went. The purpose of the tour that had been arranged by the League for Pastoral Peoples and Endogenous Development (LPP) was to raise awareness about the pressures on the pastoralist way of life and the crucial role of pastoralists in managing livestock biodiversity.

The first stop on the tour was at the headquarters of LPP which is located in the small village of Wembach in Germany. Here the group

was surprised to learn that the local shepherd was actually employed in nature conservation, employing his sheep to maintain biodiversity rich patches of land in a government sponsored programme. The Raika also visited a goat dairy and an organic farm, besides enthraling local media with their trademark red turbans and the spell-binding music by Tola Ram relating how the first camels were brought to Rajasthan about 700 years ago.

The next destination was Switzerland where the delegation participated in the First International Conference on Animal

Genetic Resources (see p 6) and joined other pastoralists in the Animal Diversity Forum, a parallel NGO event that was co-organised by the LIFE-Network for community-based management of animal genetic resources and other NGOs. An excursion took them high up into the Alpine meadows where they exchanged experiences with a young female goat herder who spends the summers in total isolation in the mountain pastures, processing the goat milk into cheese.

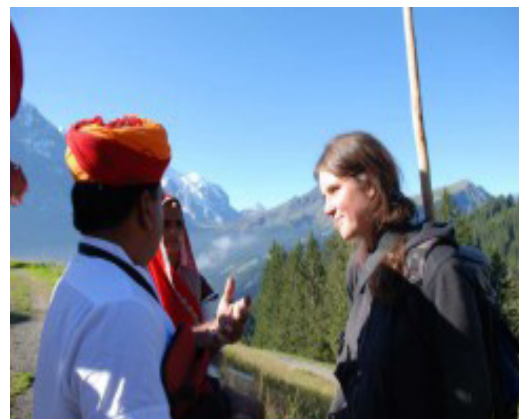
The Raika were on a mission to raise awareness about the pressures on the pastoralist way of life and the crucial role of pastoralists in managing livestock biodiversity.

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The final leg of the trip was to Spain to attend a Global Gathering of Pastoralists organised by the Spanish shepherd association, in cooperation with Jesus Garzon and Fernando Garcia. In Spain too, there is recognition of the value of pastoralism for biodiversity conservation, and the century old system of transhumance between the coastal lowlands and the central plateau has been revived. Thanks to Jesus Garzon, the traditional passageways for the sheep that are hundreds of feet wide - are once again being used. The right of shepherds to drive their herds through the centre of Madrid has also been re-established

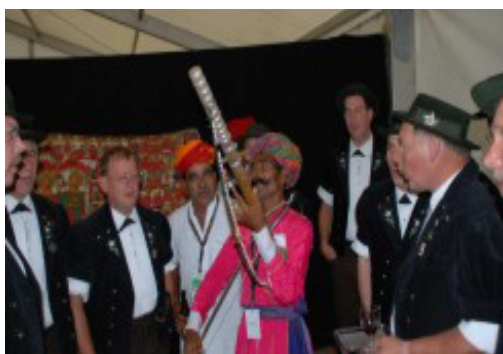
and is occasion for a big annual festival. This year, the Spanish sheep herds were joined by the over two hundred pastoralists in their rally through the center of Madrid which ended on the Plaza Mayor in front of the city administration. Dozens of journalists were waiting to get quotes and sound bites from the pastoralists.

The Raika rounded off their eventful trip with a side-event at the COP 8 meeting of the UN-CCD where they organised a side-event on "The Role of Pastoralists in Conserving



The Director of LPPS, H.S. Rathore, in conversation with an Alpine shepherdess on the mountain trail.

Tola Ram Bhil enthralled Alpine yodellers with his music and narration of the legend of how the first camels were brought to Rajasthan about 700 years ago. A rich tapestry depicting the legend is seen in the background.



The Raika were impressed with how pastoralism in Europe is valued as a tool for nature conservation and a source of specialty products

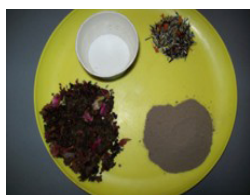
Biodiversity", showing the Film "Keepers of Genes. India's Pastoralists and their Breeds".

The Raika were not only excellent ambassadors for their home country, but brought back many lasting impressions. According to Rama Ram, the most useful learning was how highly valued pastoralism is in Europe as a tool for nature conservation and a source of specialty products.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

LPPS and LPP would like to acknowledge the support of the Christensen Fund which enabled the Raika to go on the tour.

DIY SECTION: Seed balls



Seed balls are used in natural farming as a means to revegetate land. They are made of compost, clay soil and seeds in equal proportions combined with enough water to form balls of about 2-3 inches in diameter. These balls are dried and then dispersed when required on wastelands, disused plots and other areas. The seeds are protected from birds, and germinate when it rains, using the nutrients from the compost. Care should be taken to use seeds that are native to the region and not harmful introductions.



Dispersing seed balls is apparently an ancient technique, which was adopted by Masanobu Fukuoka, the pioneer of natural farming. Also called seed bombs, they are used by "guerilla gardeners" to revegetate plots, sometimes as a tool of protest. It really is child's play to rustle up these balls and use them to disperse seeds. A great idea for involving the public too, going by the website of the Million Seed Balls campaign launched in Bangalore, India.

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Off the shelf

BOOKS, FILMS AND OTHER MEDIA

At the Conference of Parties (COP8) of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) held at Madrid, Spain, in September 2007, LPPS representative to DRYNET, Namitha Dipak, visited the exhibition stands and picked up several of the publications. Here is a note on two of them.

• WOMEN PASTORALISTS

Preserving traditional knowledge Facing modern challenges

2007

*Published by UNCCD in cooperation with International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
ISBN 978-92-95043-20-6*

The publication is available in English, French and Spanish, from the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Hermann-Elhers-Strasse 10, 53113 Bonn, Germany.

Email : secretariat@unccd.int

Website : <http://www.unccd.int>

This slim collection consists of sixteen stories, each describing the role of wo-

men pastoralists from countries in Africa, Asia, South America and Europe. Experiences from Africa predominate, with five stories from Kenya itself. The stories cover a range of themes and writing styles: from reminiscences of a pastoralist's childhood, to activism, to focusing on the range of responsibilities that women have, and sometimes just a simple exposition of their daily activities.

• TEN AFRICAN EXPERIENCES

Implementing the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Africa

2006

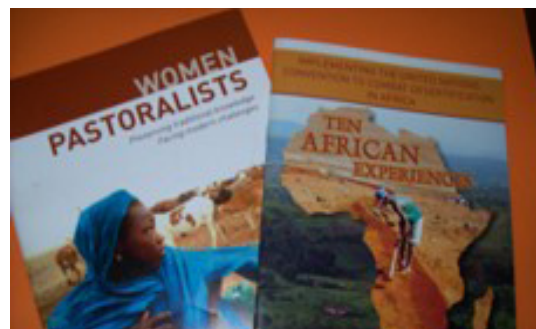
Published by Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, Bonn, Germany.

ISBN 92-95043-12-X

The publication is available in French and Spanish, from the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Martin-Luther-King Str. 8, 53175 Bonn, Germany.

Email : secretariat@unccd.int

Website : <http://www.unccd.int>



African countries have been hit hard by desertification and drought, and their experiences are valuable for the rest of the world. A brief background section precedes six chapters dealing with different aspects of implementation of the UNCCD, with country examples. These include Participatory Processes involving Civil Society, NGOs and CBOs; Institutional and Legislative Frameworks or Arrangement; and Drought and Desertification Monitoring and Assessment. The countries featured are Ghana, Zimbabwe, Burundi, Kenya, Niger, Morocco, Swaziland, Cape Verde, Djibouti, and Tunisia.

News

•The Prime Minister of India, Dr.

Manmohan Singh addressed the 2nd Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction on November 7, 2007, and drew attention to global warming and climate change, saying that the actions of one nation can affect many other nations. Dr. Singh also highlighted the need for improved coordination between various agencies of the Government, as well as greater awareness among civil society with regard to prevention, mitigation and preparedness.

•The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, headed by Dr. R.K.

Pachauri, was awarded the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize jointly with Al Gore, for their "efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change."

•According to a government press release, the Government of India recently launched a weather-based agricultural insurance scheme on a pilot basis.

Events

November 28-30 2007 at New Delhi, India: **1st World Aqua Congress**, New

Delhi. World Aqua Foundation, <http://www.worldaquacongress.org>

November 26-28 2007 at Ahmedabad, India: **Fourth International Conference on Environmental Education: Environmental Education towards a Sustainable Future - Partners for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development**. UNESCO and Government of India are the co-sponsors of this Conference, which will be hosted by the Centre for Environment Education. The event will mark the fourth international conference in the journey of EE since Tbilisi.

December 18-21, 2007 at Roorkee, India. **International Conference on Water, Environment, Energy and Society**. <http://www.nal.usda.gov/wqic/meetings.shtml>