

Editorial

Dear readers,

It is a busy time for the project as the finish line looms closer and closer with each passing day. Partners have been working hard finalizing remaining project outputs and the latest batch of donor reports. The last few countries are on track to have their National Information Systems finalized in the next few months and we look forward to all these information systems linking to the new look Global Portal. A major effort is underway to finalize the Manual of *in situ* conservation of crop wild relatives. Partners and the global office are working hard on inputs which Professor Vernon Heywood is compiling into a second draft. Vernon was at Bioversity during July to review the first draft with the global project unit. This second draft will provide the basis for a writing workshop in October, which will be followed by the next project steering committee meeting. FAO have kindly contributed US\$10,000 to the manual which is most welcome. During the period since the last Newsletter, opportunity was taken to showcase the project at the recent Governing Body meeting of the ITPGRFA. In addition, national partners in Madagascar held a successful Yams Symposium which was co-funded by the CWR Project. Forthcoming events include the project participating in the upcoming CGRFA and TDWG meetings. Partners are also planning national events to showcase project outputs and achievements which will hopefully go some way to sourcing resources and support for the continuation of CWR activities beyond the project. Finally, I would like to thank the partners for all their hard work over the past few months and their contributions to this Newsletter.

D. Hunter/Bioversity

CWR Global Portal Update

CWR Portal gets makeover

Efforts to move the CWR Global Portal to the new content management system are well underway. Regular meetings have been held between the Global Project Coordination Unit (GPCU) and Bioversity's IT staff to define specifications related to content creation, authoring, structure and management of the Portal. The idea is to render the Portal more user-friendly and more relevant to users searching for up-to-date information on initiatives and experts working in the *in situ* conservation of CWR, as well as promoting information sharing among the wider conservation community.

Progress is also being made in linking the Portal to the five National Information Systems (NIS) that project partners have successfully set up. This will most likely be achieved using TapirLink, as recommended during the past ISC meeting.

The updated CWR Global Portal, including the content management system and new features, will be unveiled at the forthcoming FAO Commission meeting in October and the next Biodiversity Information Standards (TDWG) meeting in November 2009.

In the limelight

The CWR Global Portal hit the spotlight as it was presented at a side event at the 3rd Governing Body Meeting of the International Treaty for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) held in Tunisia earlier this year. The side event included a brief overview of the CWR Project as well as presentations by FAO staff members on their roles in the project and implementation by partners in Armenia and Madagascar.



The presentations provided an overview of the process of *in situ* conservation at the national level, with a focus on the project's global products, including the CWR Global Portal. It was emphasized that the Governing Body should give consideration to products such as the CWR Global Portal and how they might be integrated into Article 17 of the ITPGRFA: The Global Information System on PGRFA.

CWR Global News

In Situ Conservation Manual

The first draft of the *In Situ* Manual was finalised by Professor Vernon Heywood, following close consultations with Danny Hunter and Ehsan Dulloo of Bioversity International. The revised draft has now been shared with National Project Coordinators, who have been asked to contribute information on best practices, but also on the challenges that countries faced when trying to establish national *in situ* conservation initiatives targeting CWR. Experiences will include political, institutional, cultural, social as well as technical issues, giving the Manual its real flavour and making it truly relevant for future practitioners interested in the conservation of these important species. All inputs will be consolidated into a final draft at a Writeshop to be held in Italy, from 5-9 October 2009.

CWR Global Portal Update

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Beyond the Project

As the CWR project draws to an end, there is a need to adjust the original, time-bound data-sharing agreements linking NIS with the Global Portal, so that they can be extended beyond the scope of the project. A revised, open-ended data-sharing agreement, drafted with the assistance of a Bioversity legal adviser, has been shared with partner countries. The GPCU is exploring the option of a 'Creative Commons' approach as a long-term option for handling information exchange.

CWR Global News

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CWR profile raised at international meeting

The profiles of the Crop Wild Relative Project and of its two global products – the Global Portal and the Manual for the in situ conservation of CWR – were raised at a side event organised by Bioversity during the Third Governing Body meeting of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), held in Tunis from 1-5 June 2009. As well as providing an overview of the in situ conservation process at the national level, the presentation focused mainly on how these tools could assist other countries in developing and implementing their own CWR in situ conservation strategies, given that CWR are seriously under threat and under-conserved. At the same time, it was suggested that they could assist the Governing Body in developing the Global Information System on PGRFA mentioned in art. 17 of the Treaty, thus providing significant support and capacity to the Conservation and use of PGRFA (art. 5 and 6), but also to many cross-cutting issues of importance to the Treaty itself.

During the meeting, interesting questions were also raised regarding the future of CWR conservation, given the likely variations in species distribution and conservation status of many plants resulting from changes in global climate. Food for thought was provided,



among others, by Peruvian researcher and founder of the Potato Park (www.parquedela-papa.org) Alejandro Argumedo from the NGO ANDES. The Park promotes agrobiodiversity among local communities outside protected areas and engages in participatory plant breeding programmes involving CWR. Interestingly enough, Peruvian farmers already plan their plantings based on the distribution of wild potato species and, as a result of climate change, have been planting further up the mountain slopes, purposefully taking wild relatives with them to promote cross-breeding.

New Global Strategy for Plant Conservation

Updates to the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation (GSPC) were discussed at the Liaison Group Meeting of the GSPC, held in Dublin, earlier this year (26-28 May 2009). Efforts to review and extend the objectives of the Strategy beyond its deadline of 2010 were largely led by Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), in collaboration with a host of international and national plant conservation agencies, including the CWR Project (Bioversity International). A draft of the updated GSPC 2011-2020 is now online at www.cbd.int/gspc/gspcpreview/ and available for peer review until 1 October 2009. Targets 7 and 8 of the Strategy, which consists of 16 outcome-oriented targets, are of particular interest to practitioners interested in the in situ conservation of CWR.

2009 Project Reports

The 2008 Half-Yearly Report covering the period Jan-June 2009 has been submitted to UNEP/GEF. Upon approval, it will be distributed to all ISC members.

National Information Systems

Work continues on the development and refinement of national information systems. Arrangements for national partner information-sharing policy agreements beyond the duration of the project have been drafted and are awaiting finalisation in some countries.

Armenia

Armenia's national information system is now online. The database has been completed and covers all 104 taxa included in the project. Improvements continue to be made as GIS-based mapping functionalities, data on the local and global distribution, threats, conservation status and uses of CWR are added to the system.



Bolivia

Improvements continue on Bolivia's online national information system, as national partners FAN analyse and revise the system's functioning and coordinate with Bioversity to refine its linkages to the Global Portal.



The institutional databases hosted on the NIS are being constantly updated and additional information on *Solanum* and *Arachis* has been added by CIFP and PROINPA Cochabamba. Further refinements

include the revision of species distribution maps; the integration of Conservation Assessment Tools to determine the AOO and EOO for Red List assessments; the customization and integration of the Google Maps application into the national portal.

Madagascar

The Beta version of the Access database has now been released and integrated with data on 154 CWR species transferred from the original database.



The uploading, migration and integration of the CWR MS Access database to the GBIF network for Madagascar Biodiversity data portal (REBIOMA) have now been tested and discussions with Bioversity are continuing regarding the linkage of the REBIOMA data portal to the CWR Global Portal. Online access to Madagascar's CWR data will depend on the availability of the CWR data server.

Sri Lanka

Preliminary spatial data were produced along with a refined management plan. A map interface was integrated within the database to display locations in Sri Lanka and answer spatial and attribute queries with basic map display functionalities. The development of a Summary statistics viewer for vegetation classification, based on



genus, species and taxa, was completed. A coordinate conversion tool, converting data collection location details into longitude/latitude format compatible with the Sri Lankan national grid, was also developed.

Uzbekistan

New information and functionalities are gradually being added to the Uzbekistan national information system, which is expected to be online early in the second half of 2009. Latest features include: access to ecogeographical data and enhanced map functionalities.



The NIS will also provide information on the biology, threats and adaptive capacity of each species, as well as methodological resources for the recognition, studying and monitoring of targeted CWR species.

Now accepting contributions
for our next issue.
Please send them to the
CWR Research Assistant at:
t.borelli@cgiar.org

Country Update

Bolivia

Red List Book captures CWR under threat

A giant step forward has been made in assessing the global status of crop wild relatives' populations, as attested by the imminent release of the CWR Red List Book of Bolivia.



Passion fruit flower
B. Zapata Ferrufino

Based on information collected between 2006 and 2009 by trained national partners to the Bolivian component of the UNEP/GEF project on crop wild relatives, a total of 152 species from 38 families were evaluated using IUCN Red Listing criteria. 7 of these were listed as being Critically Endangered (CR), 22 Endangered (EN), 16 Vulnerable (VU) and 20 Near Threatened (20). The Red List Book is the result of a concerted effort between national and international experts who have brought to the table their knowledge and expertise for the benefit of CWR conservation.

For more information, please contact:
Dr. Beatriz Zapata Ferrufino
Email: beazafe@megalink.com

Madagascar

Madagascar takes part in DIVERSITAS

Two postgraduate students from the University of Antananarivo have been invited to give poster presentations at the prestigious DIVERSITAS Open Science Conference, to be held in Cape Town, South Africa, between 13-16 October 2009.

Posters will focus respectively on the conservation and sustainable use of wild yams, and on the in situ conservation of wild coffee species in Madagascar. The theme for the Conference, now in its second edition, is "Biodiversity and society: understanding connections, adapting to change".

For more information, please visit the website www.diversitas-osc.org.



New lease of life for Yams in Madagascar

A working group devoted to research and awareness-raising of yams in Madagascar – Groupe d'Investigation et Valorisation de l'Ignome du Madagascar (GEVIM) - was established during the *International Symposium on Malagasy Yams* held in Toliara, Madagascar from 29-31 July, 2009. Bringing together scientists, conservation workers, local communities, governmental and non-governmental organizations and environmental policy-makers, the group sets out to improve knowledge on Malagasy yams, to develop and disseminate best practices and lessons learned on

the conservation of this important root crop and promote its benefits for health and nutrition. Long-term objectives and strategies for the effective yam conservation were further discussed at a meeting held in the Faculty of Sciences at the University of Antananarivo from 25-30 August 2009; among them the launch of *Yam Day*.

For further details, please contact:
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National Project Coordinator –
Madagascar
President of GEVIM
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Sri Lanka

Wild rice relatives receive protection

A protected area for wild rice was recently established in Sri Lanka to protect five wild rice species (*Oryza nivara*, *O. rufipogon*, *O. granulata*, *O. eichingeri* and *O. rhizomatis*). Essential to its success was the adoption of a participatory, multi-stakeholder approach for the gazetting and drafting of the management plan for the area. The measure is intended as an exemplary first step towards the establishment of a Protected



Oryza nivara
R.S.S Ratnayake

Area Network for the conservation of CWR, in a country where 672 species of wild relatives have so far been documented (of which 122 endemic). By encompassing different ecological regions with broader heterogeneity, it is hoped that the Network will help protect wild species that currently grow outside protected areas and are increasingly subjected to high anthropogenic pressure.

For further details, please contact:
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Uzbekistan

CWR on display in Botanical Gardens

An *Allium* demonstration plot has been set up in the Botanical Gardens in Tashkent to raise awareness on the importance of conserving Crop Wild Relatives and their inherent genetic diversity. Visits to the Botanical Gardens, which currently attract over 25,000 visitors a year, have been mainstreamed into the national curricula of many schools and Universities



Allium demonstration plot
G. Reimova

in Uzbekistan, particularly those focusing on biological and agricultural sciences. Summer courses are also organized to enable students to get hands-on experience in agrobiodiversity conservation. Dr. Djataev, national project coordinator of the CWR Project, is satisfied that this might be a constructive way of reaching out to the wider public, particularly to the younger generations.

Benefit-sharing workshop

“Granting citizens the long-term lease of State Forest Property could help conserve crop wild relatives

in some districts of Uzbekistan” stated Dr. N. Khushmatov, addressing participants at the workshop on *Benefit Sharing of Crop Wild Relative Use* held on 28 July 2009 in Tashkent. Dr. Khushmatov, who has been studying the conservation status of crop wild relatives in the districts of Tashkent and Surkhandarya for over three years, believes that their conservation outside protected areas depends largely on improving the livelihoods of local communities. Increasing land ownership and awareness of the nutritional and medicinal properties of these species could greatly assist the fight for crop wild relatives’ conservation. Further recommendations to ensure these species are adequately conserved came from Prof. Skripnikov of the Ecological Rights Department of the Tashkent Institute of Law, who identified gaps in Uzbekistan’s current legislation aimed at the conservation and sustainable use of CWR.

For further details, please contact:
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Beyond the Project

In this section, we would like to include activities outside of the project, but relating to Crop Wild Relatives activities. This month, we would like to mention:

State of the World Report

The draft version of the “Second Report on the State of the World’s Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture” (SoW-2) has been finalized and is available for download at <http://www.fao.org/agriculture/crops/core-themes/theme/seeds-pgr/itwg/4th/en/>. The CWR Project actively contributed to the revision of the document, particularly chapters 1 and 2, in which important updates on the status of crop wild relatives are given and the value of conserving CWR is clearly stated. From 15

to 17 July the draft SoW-2 will be presented to the Intergovernmental Technical Working Group on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITWG-PG4) of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA) on its fourth session. The SoW-2 is a high quality concise document based on 106 country reports focussing on the most significant gaps and needs since the publication of the first report (SoW-1), and provides a sound basis for updating the rolling Global Plan of Action.

GLOBAL LINKS

Crop Wild Relative
Global Portal

www.cropwildrelatives.org

Crop Wild Relatives Project
homepage:

[www.biodiversityinternational.org/
scientific_information/themes/
crop_wild_relatives/overview/](http://www.biodiversityinternational.org/scientific_information/themes/crop_wild_relatives/overview/)

CWR SharePoint

[http://forum2.biodiversity.cgiar.org/
CWRinfosystem](http://forum2.biodiversity.cgiar.org/CWRinfosystem)

Crop Wild Relatives
Discussion Group

[http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/
group/CropWildRelativesGroup/](http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/CropWildRelativesGroup/)

Crop Wild Relative Specialist
Group:

www.cwrsg.org

Crop Wild Relative Wiki

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/
Crop_wild_relative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crop_wild_relative)

PARTNER LINKS

Armenia

www.cwr.am

Bolivia

www.cwrbolivia.gov.bo

Madagascar

www.pnae.mg/cwr

Sri Lanka

[www.agridept.gov.lk/other_pages.
php?heading=CWR](http://www.agridept.gov.lk/other_pages.php?heading=CWR)

Uzbekistan

www.cwr.uz

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS



Bundesanstalt für
Landwirtschaft und Ernährung



End Notes

Events

- * **Plant conservation for the next decade: a celebration of Kew's 250th Anniversary**
12-16 October 2009, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, UK. For additional info please visit:
<http://www.kew.org/science/anniversary-conference/>
- * **DIVERSITAS Open Science Conference**
13-16 October 2009, Cape Town, South Africa. For additional info please visit:
<http://www.diversitas-osc.org>
- * **12th Regular Session of the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (CGRFA)**
19-23 October 2009, Rome, Italy. For additional info please visit:
<http://www.fao.org/nr/cgrfa/cgrfa-meetings/cgrfa-comm/twelfth-reg/en/>
- * **TWDG 2009 - E-knowledge on Biodiversity and Agriculture**
9-13 Nov 2009, Montpellier, France. For additional info please visit: www.tdwg.org
- * **Conservation and sustainable development of plant biodiversity**
12 November 2009, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Publications

- **The CWR Red List Book of Bolivia**
Libro Rojo de Parientes Silvestres de Bolivia
Contains threat assessments of 152 CWR species in Bolivia, following IUCN Red Listing Criteria. For additional information please contact Beatriz Zapata Ferrufino beazafe@megalink.com
- **Managing Protected Areas. A global guide.**
By Michael Lockwood (ed.). Earthscan Publications Ltd.
IUCN has kindly donated copies of the book to CWR Project partners
- **The World's Protected Areas: Status, value and prospects in the 21st Century**
by Stuart Chape et al. University of California Press. Produced by IUCN-WCMC, the book provides a comprehensive assessment of the global distribution and conservation status of national parks and reserves, giving expert advice on how to establish a protected area. A copy of the book was kindly donated to the CWR project by IUCN-WCMC.

