

non-wood

news

EDITORIAL

The editorial for this issue has been written by Dr Wulf Killmann, Director of the Forest Products and Industries Division.

More and more information is being made available in the media on all aspects of non-wood forest products. Scientific journals, newspapers, e-zines and Web sites cover their economic value, marketing instruments used, traditional knowledge of their use, the variety of product uses, and biodiversity issues in general. It is, consequently, becoming a real – but exciting – challenge to select the most pertinent news and views from the variety of NWFP articles from all across the globe in order to give you, our readers, a clear idea of trends and research from the world of NWFPs.

We believe that this increasing global attention is reflecting the growing relevance of both the social and economic importance of NWFPs, as can be seen, for example, from their use in economically important global markets such as the cosmetics and pharmaceutical industries; their value and role in sustainable forest management; and their essential contribution to the lives of forest-dependent communities as sources of food security and health care.

In this issue of *Non-Wood News* we have covered a broad spectrum of these facets: from their use in securing livelihood opportunities (e.g. economic benefits from bamboo projects and sale of camu camu) to the role of specific products in everyday lives (e.g. *Artemisia annua* and its use in the fight against malaria; chicle in the chewing gum industry) and the potential risks to traditional knowledge and benefit-sharing through biopiracy. We have also highlighted how NWFPs are helping women – and consequently the well-being of their children – to benefit through various livelihood-building small-scale initiatives in Latin America (pine products in Honduras), Africa (shea butter in Burkina Faso), Asia (weaving bamboo in the Lao People's Democratic Republic) and the Near East (medicinal plants in Israel). We have also highlighted the 2009 International Year of Natural Fibres, an area where NWFPs can have an important input, particularly at the local level. The two special features in this issue provide coverage of NWFP use and markets in the Amazonian subregion, and a brief on whether NWFPs can help countries to achieve their MDGs.

Starting with this issue, *Non-Wood News* is including a new feature: a guest article. This will be written/authored by a senior scientist and an acknowledged expert in his/her field. The first guest author is Dr Cherukat Chandrasekharan – the founder of both FAO's NWFP Programme and *Non-Wood News* – whose article on participatory enterprise models for NWFP development seeks to open a debate on this important subject. We look forward to receiving your comments on his article.



NON-WOOD NEWS

is compiled and coordinated by Tina Etherington, Forest Products Service of the FAO Forest Products and Industries Division. For this issue, editing support was provided by Sandra Rivero; language editing by Roberta Mitchell and Deliana Fanego; design, graphics and desktop publishing by Claudia Tonini.

Non-Wood News is open to contributions by readers. Contributions are welcomed in English, French and Spanish and may be edited to fit the appropriate size and focus of the bulletin.

If you have any material that could be included in the next issue of *Non-Wood News* for the benefit of other readers, kindly send it, before 15 October 2007, to:

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Non-Wood News 15 is also full of your contributions – we would like to thank the many contributors who have provided insights into NWFPs from countries as diverse as India, Scotland, Cameroon and Saint Lucia. We would also like to thank the many authors who have permitted us to use extracts from their work (on subjects such as medicinal mushrooms, collectible insects and NWFPs of the Pacific Islands), as well as all the readers who have contacted us with comments and suggestions.

There have been a number of personnel changes affecting our NWFP Programme in the last six months. Mr Hikojiro Katsuhisa has returned to his home country after three years as Chief of our Forest Products Service. We have also said “arrivederci” to Sven Walter, who worked with the NWFP Programme here in Rome, before taking on the role of Technical Adviser of a regional NWFP project based in Cameroon and who has now taken up a new position at the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). On the other hand, we have seen the return of our NWFP Officer, Paul Vantomme, after a two-year secondment to ITTO in Japan.

Finally, it is our hope that you will find reflected in this issue of *Non-Wood News* the sheer variety of NWFPs, the new ideas in the field of NWFP research and the enthusiasm in identifying suitable ways to improve people’s lives through the help of NWFPs.



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Non-wood forest products (NWFPs) are goods of biological origin other than wood, derived from forests, other wooded land and trees outside forests. Non-timber forest products (NTFPs), another term frequently used to cover this vast array of animal and plant products, also includes small wood and fuelwood. However, these two terms are used synonymously throughout this bulletin. Other terms, such as “minor”, “secondary” or “speciality” forest products, are sometimes used to keep original names and/or titles.