

## Follow up / Notes of the Forum

---

### *Review of the GIAHS concept, policy and priorities*

The adoption of a “dynamic conservation approach of bio-agri-cultural diversity” has a number of implications. The scope of the GIAHS is significantly broadened beyond agro-biodiversity conservation. A dynamic conservation cannot be achieved without addressing the poverty issues. The self-determination of priorities by the communities may result in a lack of focus of the initiative and multiple demands.

The steering committee of the GIAHS should therefore review the definition and criteria for GIAHS and develop the framework of policies, guiding principles and overall priorities, within which the communities will determine their specific priorities.

The major issue to be decided is whether the GIAHS initiative continues to focus on agriculture and bio-diversity essentially, or becomes a socio-economic development / environment protection programme. Establishing “indicators” and a tentative listing of the concrete results / impacts expected from the GIAHS initiative with a target year, say in year 2012 may help in defining realistically the future scope and priorities of the programme. The use of the 5 capitals method, FAO’s Sustainable Livelihood Approaches, DAC criteria and the DPSIR model in defining priorities should also be clarified.

### *The legal framework*

Further work on a legal framework may raise the political awareness on the GIAHS in the governing bodies of FAO, CBD, WHC-UNESCO and others. If the work of the CGRFA is any guide, it may also take a lot of staff time and divert energies from fieldwork and from achieving impact and concrete results. The legal work may start with desk studies of the existing frameworks, on the notion of heritage, the inception/designation criteria and modalities.

The proposed agenda item and other legal issues for the FAO Council that GIAHS should undertake are already identified and listed. The timetable for this activity is critical, it should start gradually. However,

it may be considered premature to involve intergovernmental bodies in legal discussions on a framework covering 5 systems (in 7 countries) only.

Case studies on national legislation in the GIAHS host countries may be a more useful starting point in parallel with more general desk studies.

### *The management structure of the GIAHS*

An elaborate multi-level structure and a set of management principles (protocol) were proposed at the Forum. At the same time, it was recognized that the management of the programme faces a number of inherent difficulties of governance due to its multi-sectoral nature, the conflicts between customary and state institutions and those between a closer steering of the projects and the desirable self-determination of the communities. For the moment, flexibility and ad-hoc arrangements are desirable.

The priority should be placed on establishing organisational/institutional arrangements at the community level (the weakest and most critical level). The steering capacities at global level should also be strengthened. At national level, the proposed structure is likely to duplicate that of the GEF and possibly others. The proliferation of national steering and technical committees, focal points and coordinators for diverse programmes should be avoided. The multi-level structure management and a set of management protocols may delay the implementation of the important ground activities of GIAHS dynamic conservation. The intervention of too many external actors on the GIAHS sites might be uncontrollable, particularly so if the scope of the GIAHS is broadened (see item 1 above).

### *The associated research activities within GIAHS*

The risk of a proliferation of “visitors” in the GIAHS systems and sites is particularly high in the field of research and should be controlled. Priorities should be set in a research agenda with focus on agro-biodiversity and agricultural practices and traditional knowledge systems. The objectives and modalities of

agro-bio-diversity *in situ* protection should be set out on a stronger scientific basis. It is important to survey the so-called “traditional varieties” and record their uses, environmental requirements.

It is equally essential to investigate the long-term viability of their *in-situ* conservation, their phenotypic and genetic make-up and variability. Their *ex-situ* conservation should be ensured in parallel, otherwise their *in situ* conservation may well prove to be an exercise in futility. Research institutes including CGIAR’s should help in this. Field of research within GIAHS systems and its multi-component nature are too many. Priority should be placed on soil and water management, pest and disease control and post-harvest technologies. Ecosystem studies, anthropological studies, and research on the “black-box” nature of the socio-ecological systems, though desirable and interesting for the long-term management of the GIAHS may take a lower priority, unless local research facilities and the GIAHS site conditions are particularly favourable.

### Socio-economic viability of GIAHS

Further to the identification of the constraints and problems of each system/site (a set of activities must be launched in each system/site to fight poverty and food insecurity and ensure the GIAHS long-term socio-economic viability).

These may include organic farming, “diversity-rich” products, cottage industries and handicrafts, eco-tourism and related GIAHS communities’ capacity building activities, as the local community may choose and decide with the help advisory services and external support. Selected infrastructure, marketing, credit, health facilities (including also micro-credit and telecommunications) may be carefully developed concurrently.

### GIAHS support network development

Several ad-hoc cooperative networks will be developed in connection with the above activities. Network “moderators” should be appointed to ensure that networking activities are monitored and do not get out of hand.

In addition, a communication support programme should be initiated to raise awareness and general public support. Communication material should be developed particularly to enlist further cooperation and support from the policy-makers, donors,

private sector, NGOs, tourism organisations, etc. A careful balance should be achieved between the need for further support and help, and that of preserving the integrity and the self-determination of the local GIAHS communities.

