

Welcome to FAO's NWFP-Digest-L, a free e-mail journal that covers all aspects of non-wood forest products. A special thank you to all those who have shared information.

Back issues of the Digest may be found on FAO's NWFP home page:

www.fao.org/forestry/site/12980/en

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PRODUCTS

1. **Agarwood: patent for cultivated agarwood**

Source: United States Patent 6,848,211

The invention provides agarwood from cultivated trees, and methods of generating agarwood in cultivated trees.

Agarwood is a highly prized incense that is extremely rare. It has at least a 3000-year history in the Middle East, China and Japan. There are also references to agarwood in the literature of India and France, and even in the Old Testament of the Bible.

Agarwood remains today the world's most expensive incense. The value of agarwood shipped out of Singapore alone each year has been estimated to exceed \$1.2 billion.

For full details of the patent, please see: <http://patft.uspto.gov/netacgi/nph-Parser?Sect1=PTO1&Sect2=HITOFF&d=PALL&p=1&u=/netahtml/srchnum.htm&r=1&f=G&l=50&s1=6848211.WKU.&OS=PN/6848211&RS=PN/6848211>

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2. **Bamboo: Pandas risk starvation as bamboo flowers**

Source: The Age (Australia), 30 March 2005

Hundreds of giant pandas in western China could die from starvation because the bamboo plants they eat have begun to flower and die back.

Wardens in the north-western province of Gansu are to monitor the 102 pandas in the Baishuijiang State nature reserve for signs of hunger after the arrow bamboo in the region began a potentially devastating flowering and dying-back phase. This occurs once every 60 years.

With bamboo die-back seen to some degree in all the regions where the endangered animals live, conservationists warned that China's entire wild panda population, estimated to be 1590, could be at risk. They appealed to people not to drive off starving pandas if they entered villages looking for food.

Pandas are compelled to eat half their own body weight in bamboo each day to survive. But they refuse to eat it when it flowers. The bamboo blooms produce seeds before dying off but it takes 10 years for a new crop to mature.

The reserve's director said old and unhealthy animals in the reserve would be the first to be moved to areas that still have edible bamboo.

For the full story, please see:

www.theage.com.au/articles/2005/03/29/1111862388189.html?oneclick=true

Related story:

Hungry giant pandas to get new food source: www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-03/28/content_428640.htm

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3. Bamboo business is booming in Rajahmundry, India

Source: Business Standard, India, 1 April 2005

Earnings from the bamboo plantation project in the Rajahmundry region are filling up the coffers of the Andhra Pradesh Forest Development Corporation (APFDC). Spread in an area of 11 723 ha, the project covers the forests of Maredumalle, Jelugumalle, Eluru, Palvancha and Kothagudem in the East Godavari, West Godavari and Khammam districts in Andhra Pradesh.

APFDC is planning to expand the plantation to another 8 000 ha in the next fiscal year. The demand for bamboo is increasing steadily, and according to a study, it would increase by 60 percent during the next 10 to 15 years

The bamboo project has proved to be highly cost-effective with the cost benefit ratio being between 1.3 and 1.4. Though bamboo plantations are being harvested with a felling cycle of three years, efforts are being made to bring the felling cycle to two years.

Old bamboo plantations raised with traditional methods are being replaced with modern methods of intensive site preparation based on scientific methods for increasing the bamboo yield. The raising of plantations under intensive management has been taking place since 1999.

One traditional bamboo tree gives six to seven culms (bamboo shootings) per year while the bamboo raised with intensive site preparation gives 35 to 40 culms per year.

There are two harvesting periods in a year. Where intensive management takes place, the survival rate is 99 percent, whereas in the traditional plantation the survival rate is 50 percent.

The cost of production/ha in the traditional bamboo plantation is Rs 10 800, while in the intensive site management it is Rs 35 800 per hectare.

The revenue/ha in the traditional bamboo plantation is Rs 58 000, while the revenue on the upgraded bamboo under the intensive site management is Rs 2.10 lakh per hectare.

For full story, please see: www.business-standard.com/common/storypage.php?storyflag=y&leftnm=lmnu2&leftindx=2&lselect=1&chlogin=N&autono=184692

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4. Bamboo and bamboo shoots

Source: Chia Joo Suan in Malaysia Star, Malaysia, 23 March 2005

Bamboo shoots have increased in popularity as an ingredient in Asian cuisine in recent years. It is crunchy and has a unique taste.

Fresh bamboo shoots are the young shoots of the bamboo plant just emerging from the ground. Each new shoot is attached to the parent rhizome at the screw neck. After harvesting, the outer leaves covering the shoots are peeled away and any fibrous tissue at the base trimmed. There is tremendous heat generated at the apex and the shoots are often kept in cool places to prevent overheating and deterioration.

The health supportive nutrients in bamboo shoot are protein, minerals and fibres. It is low in fat and sugar and has no cholesterol. The shoot has a good profile of minerals consisting mainly of zinc, potassium, manganese and copper plus lower amounts of phosphorous, iron and selenium.

Similar to cassava root, raw bamboo shoots contain cyanogenic glycosides, which are cyanide-producing compounds. Do not eat the raw shoots. Eating raw bamboo shoot can lead to hydrogen cyanide toxicity. The shoots are safe to eat provided they are prepared properly.

Bamboos are actually giant grasses belonging to the grass family (*Graminae*). There are over 1 000 species of bamboo, of which only about 50 are edible, growing in different parts of the world, most abundantly in China, India and Japan. The survival of the pandas in China depends on the availability of certain species of bamboo which is their staple diet.

Bamboo shoot grows rapidly and is a popular food among young people in many cultures. Flavours may vary with species.

The big leaves of the *Indocalamus* species are used for making roof coverings and bamboo hats. They are also used to wrap *Zongzi*, a pyramid-shaped dumpling made of glutinous rice, usually made and eaten during the Chinese Dragon-Boat Festival.

Scientists at Chonnam National University, South Korea, found that adding powdered bamboo leaves in making kimchi could maintain the sourness and extend the storage period of the preserved vegetable.

In nature, stiff yet bendable bamboo plants are sway freely in strong wind and, amazingly, the stem (culms) are found to have a breaking-point comparable to that of steel. The stems are coated with a protective screen of wax that contains silica, lignin and pentosans, which contribute to their flexibility.

Bamboos are also used to make pulp and paper, furniture, household items and building materials. Certain species such as the *bambu hitam* (black bamboo) are ideal for making musical instruments. The discovery of flavonoids in the leaves has given bamboo the potential of being used for medicinal purposes.

For full story, please see:

<http://thestar.com.my/lifestyle/story.asp?file=/2005/3/23/features/10441848&sec=features>

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5. Bushmeat: Tackling the illegal meat trade

Source: Scotsman, UK, 23 March 2005

Tighter controls should be placed on illegal meat imports to prevent another foot-and-mouth disease outbreak, the Government's spending watchdog warned today. Some 12 000 tonnes of illegal meat and meat products are imported to Britain each year.

Two-thirds of meat seized at airports is pork, but camel, frogs legs, snails and bushmeat such as monkey and antelope is also regularly smuggled in.

The international trade in bushmeat is estimated to be worth between \$20 million (£10.6 million) and \$200 million (£106 million).

Bushmeat supplies 50-85% of the protein requirement of tropical forest-dwelling people in Africa, and three-quarters of Ghanaians regularly eat it.

Customs was given £4 million in 2003/4 by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, with a further £3 million earmarked for subsequent years, to tackle the illegal trade.

The National Audit Office has called for more resources to be invested to match the effort made by Australia and New Zealand in keeping out illegal meat.

More than 15 000 seizures of illegal meat and food products were made by British Customs in its first year. The meat is most commonly smuggled into the country in air passenger baggage. Earlier this month a Nigerian woman was arrested at Heathrow airport after customs officials found 16 stones of snails in her luggage.

Proposals for tighter controls to curb the trade include on-the-spot fines

For full story, please see: <http://news.scotsman.com/latest.cfm?id=4298242>

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6. Ginseng flourishes in Wisconsin, USA

Source: Jessica Lim Siao Jing, Wisconsin State Journal, 21 March 2005

Thriving in well-drained, shady and humus-rich soils, the American ginseng has been prized for its medicinal value for thousands of years. In the 18th century, Native Americans used the roots of the dark green plant to treat coughs, headaches, rheumatism and fevers and the Chinese believe it has aphrodisiac qualities.

Today, the American ginseng, or *Panax quinquefolium*, an alternative to its invigorating Asian cousin, is believed to alleviate stress, improve one's love life and enhance the immune system.

The benefits of ginseng can be boiled down to one word: ginsenosides, the active ingredient in ginseng that gives you a natural energy boost without turning you into a bundle of nerves. All true ginseng roots contain ginsenosides, which vary dramatically depending on the type of ginseng and the age of the root when harvested. The higher the amount of ginsenosides, the more potent and expensive a root is.

And ginseng can be expensive, not just for its attributes but because it is so difficult to grow. Ginseng's growing period lasts about five years. The ginseng seeds have to be stratified - removed from its red, pulp exterior, washed and buried in the sand for a year - before being replanted for four years.

The average American ginseng costs about \$20 for 4 ounces and wild ginseng can cost more than \$400 a pound. Seemingly bizarre, this does not appear so absurd a price considering that the oriental variety is internationally protected and close to extinction because of over-picking.

Viewed in similarly high esteem is the American wild ginseng. Poaching of wild ginseng is such a problem in the United States that growers have taken to security-tagging their roots using microchip implants. A few poachers have received jail sentences for looting ginseng fields.

The rolling hills of Wausau, along with its loamy soil, cold winters and cool summers, are ideal for growing ginseng. That is why 95 percent of the nation's ginseng is cultivated in Wisconsin by approximately 1 200 growers.

For full story, please see:

www.madison.com/wsj/home/features/index.php?ntid=32106&ntpid=1

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7. Ginseng: Legislation aims to regulate ginseng harvest

Source: WBOY-TV - Clarksburg, WV, USA, 24 March 2005

Ginseng has been harvested in the wild in West Virginia for at least 200 years, according to the state Division of Forestry. But increasing amounts of it are cultivated as an agricultural crop, and now the Legislature is considering rules that will help distinguish wild from cultivated.

American ginseng grows in forests in all of West Virginia's 55 counties. Its root is valued in Asian markets as a medicine for increased vitality and longevity and ginseng trade is protected by an international agreement to prevent overharvest.

In 2002, the Division of Forestry documented a harvest of more than 6 400 lbs of ginseng in West Virginia. The harvest was valued at more than \$2 million. Harvest varies with factors that include the economy, according to research at West Virginia University. In the mid-1980s, when unemployment was high, nearly 40 000 lbs were harvested one year.

But while the agency already regulates ginseng, that regulation has not been tight enough, said Delegate Bob Beach, D-Monongalia. "People contacted us with concerns that the bulk of ginseng brought to market is cultivated when the sellers are saying it's wild,"

Beach said. "Wild ginseng can bring \$400 to \$600/lb on the market -- cultivated ginseng is much less than that."

Anyone dealing in ginseng must pay a small fee and obtain a Forest Product Removal Permit. Roots may be dug from 15 August to 30 November, and harvested roots must be weighed and certified by the Division of Forestry by 31 March. Uncertified roots after that date bring a fine for illegal possession.

HB2663, which passed in the house earlier this month, makes one change to the wild harvest, according to Beach: It delays the digging season by two weeks, starting it 1 September, which will allow plants to drop their seeds and to be dispersed again.

This is consistent with other WVU research indicating ginseng berries ripen in West Virginia in the latter part of August and that pushing the harvest date back will help preserve wild populations.

Mainly, though, the bill aims to regulate the cultivated harvest. A farmer who wants to grow ginseng now will need to contact the Division of Forestry. "The DOF will go in, inspect the plat and make sure it's free of wild ginseng before they plant their seeds. The plat will be laid out and then it's actually documented and filed with the DOF," Beach said. "That in turn allows us to track how much is being planted as an agricultural product."

The bill specifies all ginseng sold must be specified as cultivated or wild. Violation of the new rules may result in a \$100 to \$500 misdemeanor fine.

For full story, please see: www.wboy.com/story.cfm?func=viewstory&storyid=1831

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8. Gum arabic: Uganda to export gum arabic

Source: [The Monitor](#) (Kampala), Uganda, 30 March 2005

Once dismissed as a useless region, Karamoja is now poised to become a focal point of corporate attention as investors start pouring in millions of dollars to exploit Gum Arabic.

According to Ms Susan Muhwezi, the advisor to President Yoweri Museveni on the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), Uganda could start exporting the prized gum in December or January next year. This will hopefully set off unprecedented infrastructural developments that could potentially uplift Karamoja from grinding poverty to a somewhat modern society.

Gum Arabic, which is derived from two acacia species; *Acacia senegal* and *Acacia seyal*, is used in cosmetics (lotions and protective creams), pharmaceuticals, foods, lithography, soft drinks (stabilises emulsions), textiles and several other products and also constitutes a global multi billion-dollar industry.

It grows exclusively in arid climatic conditions and is currently produced by the so-called gum belt, stretching from Senegal to Sudan. "Previously, it was thought that Uganda was far south below this belt and could have these gum trees," said Anthony Nwachukwa, the Managing Director of America's Atlantic Gum Corporation and lead consultant for the project steered efforts to start commercial exploitation of the product.

Nwachukwa said that while in the US in 2002, President Museveni met the country's association of soft drinks and convinced them that Uganda had the prized gum trees upon which the association mobilised money to fund a mission to determine the veracity of the claims. A team of scientists went to Karamoja in 2003 and took samples, which were shipped for testing in the US laboratories. "The samples passed the test and we concluded that Uganda can produce Gum Arabic," he said.

The US is the largest market for Gum Arabic, for both processing and consumption.

Muhwezi and Nwachukwa did not say the exact extent of Uganda's potential and what it could earn once export starts. However, they said earnings by traditional producers could offer some estimation of the fortune that could flow into Uganda and Karamoja in particular. Sudan, the largest exporter, produces 25 000 tonnes annually, followed by Chad with 10 000, then Nigeria, whose production fluctuates between 3 000 to 5 000 tonnes. They

believe that Uganda has the potential to produce 20 000 tonnes. With a tonne costing \$4 000, Uganda could earn \$80 million, easily exceeding its lead export of coffee.

However, before serious production starts, Muhwezi said that the company, Gum Arabic Uganda Ltd, which is undertaking the investment, would have to purchase land for cultivation of trees, in addition to the existing ones, erect storages, processing plants, and other requisite structures. "The government will also have to extend roads, water, electricity and other necessary services," she said.

The locals who had hitherto been using the trees for charcoal and shelter construction will now start earning by picking the gum for sale.

For full story, please see: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200503290765.html>

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9. Lac: New programme to raise lac production

Source: Financial Express - Bombay, India, 30 March 2005

The ministry of commerce has approved a three-year comprehensive programme aimed at increasing the production of lac in Bengal by 150% from the current value of around Rs 161 crore. The programme has been worked out jointly by the state government's panchayat and rural development department and Shellac Export Promotion Council (SEPC).

Since the main obstacles to increasing productivity are non-availability of improved broodlac (seed) and lack of training in scientific cultivation procedures, the Indian Lac Research Institute (ISRI), Ranchi and various NGOs have also been involved in the programme.

Apart from increasing productivity, generating higher income for the downtrodden of the forest region engaged in lac cultivation is one of the main objectives.

To reach the targeted export mark, all aspects of production and marketing have been encompassed in the project, said the executive director of SEPC, Dr D Roy. The project would stress the improvement of broodlac through research. This would be followed by scientific cultivation.

The status paper prepared for this purpose shows that cultivation of lac still remains limited to only 4 lakh host trees, which is barely 50% of the total number.

For full story, please see: www.financialexpress.com/fe_full_story.php?content_id=86554

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10. Medicinal plants: World Going Herbal in HIV/Aids Fight

Source: [The Times of Zambia](#) (Ndola), 29 March 2005

In his book "Amazing Power of Healing Plants", Dr Reinaldo Sosa Gomez quotes the American professor and scientist Scott Elliot as having said that Peruvian jungle dwellers discovered the value of the bark of the 'Cinchona' tree that contains an alkaloid called quinine used in treating malaria. One day, the countess of Cinchon (from which the tree derives its name) and viceroy of Peru (1628-1639) came down with a persistent fever and was cured with the bark of the tree.

The use of this medicine was later propagated and the reputation of quinine grew rapidly and sold at high price. Today, its use around the world has been invaluable in the treatment of the world's number one killer disease.

Dr Gomez also reminds the world of how the Chinese have been using a medicinal plant called Ma-huang, containing a substance called ephedrine, for thousands of years to combat coughs, asthma attacks and bronchitis. Physicians today prescribe it to fight numerous pulmonary infections just as the Chinese have been doing for 3 000 years.

Many expeditions are being made by scientists into South American, African and Asian jungles in search of new medicinal plants.

Dr Gomez applauds the recent decision of various health oriented institutions to give more relevance to natural medicine. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has sponsored an active programme on promoting the development of medicinal herbs and other natural medicines since 1977. At the 13th World Health Congress a resolution was adopted urging governments to take seriously the traditional medical systems and treatments of their respective countries.

A number of countries especially in the West now practice natural and homeopathic medicine to the same level as allopathic or drug-based medicine.

In Zambia, PANOS Southern Africa recently held a one day workshop in a series of many, for journalists to discuss the "Access to Treatment: Alternative Treatment". The workshop sought among other things to discuss and share ideas and experiences on issues related to HIV/AIDS so as to help journalists keep abreast of new developments. The programme included field visits to the two institutions that are sourcing, using and researching on natural medicines in relation to HIV/AIDS.

One of the institutions visited was the Zambia Institute of Natural Medicine and Research (ZINARE), which was established in 2004. ZINARE facilitates scientific approach in the utilization of herbal medicine and promotes the production of affordable drugs especially for HIV/AIDS patients and undertakes advocacy activities aimed at plant protection and promoting the use of affordable indigenous herbal medicine from Zambia and Africa as a whole.

ZINARE's executive director, Dr Lawrence Chanza said that herbal medicines were being used more in Zambia now with the advent of HIV/AIDS. It works closely with the ministry of Health in their research. Professor Sitali Manjolo, multi-sectoral researcher HIV/AIDS with ZINARE, said there was need to exercise care in herbal medicine for HIV/AIDS research, not all plants were poison free. He said the efficacy of a herb would also depend on the type of soil or climate in a particular area as plants extracted material from the soil.

Dr Noahimba, a botanist and consultant researcher said HIV/AIDS was a crisis problem arising from negligence and wondered why Zambia was still going chemical when the rest of the world was going herbal. He said that it is the only country that has not integrated herbal medicines into its programme. Yet, with the numerous improvements in the health of people using herbal medicines, it is possible to conquer the impact of HIV/AIDS, Dr Zimba added.

Zambia has the best trees with high selenium content and has a diversity of over 6,000 plants with high nutritional qualities.

The use of natural remedies as an alternative to modern medicine in the prevention and treatment of diseases is an area that needs to be taken seriously. Health experts say, "Modern medicine has made great strides. But some of the greatest strides have been found to relate back to rather simple things: 'What you eat, what you drink, what you think, and what you do.'" The solution to the HIV/AIDS pandemic is here.

For full story, please see: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200503290681.html>

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11. Sandalwood: Indian court directs sandalwood oil units to close **Source: Business Standard – India, 1 April 2005**

The Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court on Wednesday directed the state government to close down all sandalwood oil factories in the state and conduct a survey of sandalwood trees in state forests. The forest department later informed the high court that all 33 sandalwood oil factories in the state have been closed down and assured to undertake survey of sandalwood trees.

A division bench, while hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by Nature Conservation Society alleging illicit felling of sandalwood trees and inaction of the authorities, directed the forest department to conduct survey of all sandalwood trees in the state. At the same time the court deplored the casual attitude adopted by the forest department towards sandalwood trees, which have been classified as reserve trees and command a high commercial value.

The forest department claimed that it had not granted license to a single sandalwood unit as claimed by the petitioner society, however, permission was granted to some units for extraction of oil from sandalwood.

The forest department further claimed that these units were granted license by the directorate of industries and not by them. The high court also made it clear that grant of any such license was contrary to the orders of the Supreme Court.

According to the petitioner, sandalwood is used for manufacture of sandalwood oil which is obtained from the heartwood by process of condensation. For that the sandalwood is cut into pieces and then crushed in a disintegrator and converted into powder, which is put in a container and high pressure steam is passed through it. After condensation mixture of oil and water is obtained.

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12. Willow and its uses

Source: Express Newslines, Mohali, India; 16 March 2005

The beneficial plant, Willow (*Salix* sp.) is grown in European countries. It has many species which are used for different purposes.

The willow wood is used to make cricket bats. But it also has many medicinal and nutritional properties:

- Willow contains salicin and tannin and can be used as an anti-inflammatory, antipyretic, analgesic, antiseptic and astringent.
- The bark of black willow is used to cure rheumatism and arthritis. Rheumatism sufferers benefit greatly from a willow wash when the 'tea' is applied externally adjacent to the affected joints.
- Salicin is an aspirin type chemical and the 'tea' can be used for headaches, fevers and, some even say, hay-fever.
- Even the tea contains antiseptic qualities and is an excellent mouthwash.
- It can also be applied to external wounds.

The wood of willow plant is also used for basket weaving since it is light and flexible (especially after being soaked in water).

For full story, please see: www.expressnewslines.com/special/fullstory0305-insight-Uses+of+willow+plant-status-11-newsID-2224.html

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NEWS

13. *Non-wood News*

From: FAO's NWFP Programme

The latest issue of *Non-wood News* is now available on-line from our NWFP home page at www.fao.org/forestry/site/23947/en. Hard copies have already been sent to all those on our mailing list. *Non-wood News* is free of charge. If you would like to receive a copy, please contact non-wood-news@fao.org.

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14. Earthcorps International: Free training course

Source: *Connect*, Vol. XXIX, No.3-4, 2004

Earthcorps is a non-profit, hands-on NGO working locally to solve global environmental issues that organizes a 6-month free training course in Seattle, Washington. EarthCorps' programmes create a sense of community ownership and responsibility for our natural resources, foster cross-cultural and intergenerational understanding, promote civic engagement and encourage volunteerism.

EarthCorps engages young people from all parts of the world in service to the environment and is looking for outstanding youth (18-25 years of age) from international environmental organizations to take part in its training program. The EarthCorps program is ideal for volunteers and/or staff of any organization that works with youth and the environment. Current international partners include organizations working on the following issues:

- Environmental restoration (i.e. erosion control, reforestation, construction of hiking trails, etc)
- Environmental education and youth leadership
- Ecotourism, sustainable livelihoods and environmental business development
- Land protection and preservation

EarthCorps charges no fees to their international participants. They provide a monthly stipend, health insurance, gear, transportation and accommodations/homestays. The only expenses incurred by international participants and/or their sponsoring organizations are visa processing fees and travel to and from Seattle. (Limited travel scholarships and subsidies which cover 30% of transportation costs up to \$500 are made available to exceptional candidates.)

For more information, please contact:

EarthCorps

6310 NE 74th Street, Suite 201E

Seattle, WA 98115, USA

Tel. +1-(206) 322-9296

Fax. +1-(206) 322-9312

www.earthcorps.org

www.earthcorps.org/getinvolved/international.asp

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15. International Youth Camp on traditional knowledge

From: Nikolay Shmatkov, IUCN-Russia, shmatkov@iucn.ru

International Ethno-Ecological Youth Summer Camp "Oran: Traditions and Nature of Kamchatka" starts its activities on Kamchatka Peninsula (the Russian Far East) in summer 2005. International university students are welcome to participate to explore unique lifestyles and traditions of Kamchatka native peoples, living together under a roof of a traditional house with the local young people in the far away Native Eveni village of Anavgai.

The major focus of the Camp is the use of wild harvested plants in traditional cultures of the Russian Far East. The Camp is organized by IUCN-Russia in collaboration with Canadian and German partners under support of the IUCN-CIDA Project "Building Partnerships in Forest Conservation and Management in Russia.

For more information about the Camp please see www.summercamp-kamchatka.org

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16. PhD & Postdoctoral Fellowships - Sustainable Development
From: FAO's NWFP Programme

Location: Yokohama, Japan

Closing date for applications: May 6, 2005

United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS) is now accepting applications for its three fellowship programmes: UNU-IAS PhD Fellowships, UNU-IAS Postdoctoral Fellowships, and JSPS-UNU Postdoctoral Fellowships.

UNU-IAS PhD and Postdoctoral Fellowships are offered for a period of 10 months beginning in October 2005. JSPS-UNU Postdoctoral Fellowships are offered for 12-24 months beginning in November 2005. Postdoctoral candidates must have completed a PhD degree, and PhD candidates must be at the advanced stage of their doctoral dissertation. Candidates' current research must be closely related to one of the current thematic areas of the Institute (see www.ias.unu.edu/research for more details). For additional research areas and separate fellowship conditions for JSPS-UNU

UNU-IAS is a multi-thematic, interdisciplinary, research and training centre located in Yokohama, Japan. Its programmes are directed at pressing global issues of concern to United Nations, making use of advanced research methodologies in the field of sustainable development. Our fellowship programmes are aimed at providing young scientists, policy makers, and developing country scholars with the opportunity to expand their intellectual vision beyond a single scientific field.

For more information, please contact: fellowships@ias.unu.edu

or visit: www.ias.unu.edu/fellowships

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COUNTRY INFORMATION

17. Azerbaijan: France to donate 10,000 euros for new forests

Source: "Azernews", March 30, 2005 in CENN Daily Digest, 4 April 2005

Specialists from the French international forestry organization, Office National des Forêts International, held a news conference at the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (MENR) on Friday. The experts are in Baku at the invitation of the ministry. Elaborating on the French mission, Minister for Ecology and Natural Resources Huseyn Bagirov said that the visitors would closely examine the country's forestry and implement joint projects for restoration of forests and planting of greenery.

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18. Brazil seeks public views on biodiversity research rules

Source: SciDev.Net, 22 March 2005

The Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Natural Resources (IBAMA) is seeking input — especially from scientists — on its proposed changes to laws governing the way Brazil's biodiversity is used for research and education. The changes represent the latest in a series of efforts to simplify the bureaucracy that Brazilian researchers must deal with. To collect comments on the proposals, the institute, which is part of the Ministry of Environment, launched a month-long consultation on 9 March.

The changes would unite under a single piece of legislation all regulations covering research in nature reserves and the collection of biological specimens from anywhere in

Brazil. They would also make it easier for researchers at museums, botanical gardens and universities to exchange biological specimens with institutions in Brazil and abroad.

IBAMA's proposals are intended to remove bureaucracy created by 'anti-biopiracy' laws introduced in 2001 to combat the unauthorised removal from Brazil of biological resources with potential commercial value. Brazilian scientists claimed the 2001 rules hindered research on biodiversity by creating complex and time consuming procedures for those applying for research permits (see [Brazil's biopiracy laws 'are stifling research'](#)).

"One of our masters students has been waiting for nearly two years for government permission to collect samples of plants that she is studying," says Ruy José Válka, curator of the herbarium of the National Museum, based at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. Válka told SciDev.Net that the herbarium, which houses more than half a million specimens of Brazilian plants, has had to virtually cease research collaborations with foreign institutions because of the current laws.

IBAMA says that one advantage of the proposed changes is that some researchers will be able to apply for a permanent licence to collect biological material.

The institute is also introducing an Internet-based application process in order to reduce the time researchers must wait for an answer from several months to a maximum of 30 days. IBAMA's proposals follow previous efforts to eliminate the red tape facing Brazilian researchers.

IBAMA says it is relying on the scientific community to comment on the proposals, which will be available until 7 April at: www.ibama.gov.br/consulta/consulta_ins.htm. For full story, please see:

www.scidev.net/news/index.cfm?fuseaction=readnews&itemid=2005&language=1

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19. Cameroon: Atlas to ease forest management

Source: [Cameroon Tribune](#) (Yaoundé), 31 March 2005

A new element, the most modern of all the tools used by government in controlling forest exploitation activities, has been introduced in the whole gamut of forest management in Cameroon. The Interactive Atlas of Cameroon, presented to the Minister of Forestry and Wildlife, Egbe Achuo Hillman, brings in a peculiar system of monitoring forest activities: that which can enable officials to sit in their offices and have a comprehensive view of the field.

Unlike a simple atlas generally known to be a collection of maps in a volume, the Interactive Atlas of Cameroon, encompasses a great deal of items necessary for the effective and sustainable management of the forest. It is a bound collection of maps accompanied by supplementary illustrations, facts and figures, dates, names of industries and actors on the field, places and graphic analysis.

Behind this initiative, described by the Minister of Forestry and Wildlife as a pacesetter in the Central African sub-region, is the World Resources Institute's Global Forest Watch initiative. As explained by its coordinator, Benoît Merten, the atlas possesses facts and information on forestry, presents them in a visual manner and puts together facts and information that were hitherto neither linked nor easily accessible. By doing this, Global Forest Watch intends to contribute in a significant manner to the amelioration of forest management and rational, sustainable and responsible use of natural resources.

But what difference does the new instrument make of existing ones? It is a modern device which involves the use of information gathered through satellite periodic detection. It enables the administration to work almost on the spot to determine what is happening on the field.

Although the Interactive Atlas of Cameroon provides information nationwide on forestry activities, it focuses more on the southern forested region of the country. The atlas is a veritable tool that can be used to determine whether forest Management Units are being exploited in accordance with the law or not. The atlas traces, at each given period, road

networks used by forest exploiters and on the basis of this, makes it possible for the administration to know whether Forest Management Unit licences were issued to exploiters in the zone or not.

The atlas is produced within the framework of the 2002 collaboration agreement signed between Global Forest Watch and the then Ministry of the Environment and Forestry. It covers activities from 1999 to 2003.

For full story, please see: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200503310703.html>

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20. Cuba bets on bee honey exports

Source: CubaXP, 21 March 2005

Cuba's economy, in an effort to diversify exports, is betting on bee honey as a major hard-currency earner. According to experts, bee honey, especially the so-called ecological honey, benefits from high prices in the international market.

Eastern Santiago de Cuba province, which produces 700 tons of honey a year, stands out in that activity. In addition, five municipalities in the province have been certified as producers of ecological honey, which has an added value in the international market.

A ton of ecological honey is priced at more than \$1 500.

For full story, please see: www.cubaxp.com/modules/news/article-1100.html

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21. Fiji: Honey attracts farmers to course

Source: Fiji Times, 17 March 2005

The one-week beekeeping workshop organized by the Department of Co-operatives in Labasa has attracted more participants than anticipated.

Beekeeping Co-operative Officer Tomasi Lutu said the department had expected 30 participants but received interest from 70 people instead. "The response has shown that people in the North have now ventured into other new areas of farming after the decline in the sugar industry", he said. While he noted that beekeeping would never take the place of the sugar industry, Mr Lutu said it would always be a very good money earner.

The workshop is being co-ordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture at the request of the Department of Co-operatives.

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22. India: Bill for tribals' right to forest produce

Source: The Indian Express, 17 March 2005

While the Tribal Affairs Ministry is drawing up a bill on land rights, the Environment Ministry, not to be left behind, is working on other aspects. These have largely to do with setting up communities with rights to forest produce.

The Ministry has prepared the Minor Forest Produce (Ownership Rights of Forest Dependent Community) Act and circulated the bill to all principal secretaries and chief conservator of forests. The Ministry will hold consultations before finalising the draft after which it is scheduled to meet the state departments. The bill extends to all forest areas except national parks, sanctuaries and other notified areas.

"Tribals will be given more rights to sell and collect forest produce. They will have ownership rights to forest produce. Various states have their own mechanism. The

government is now bringing in a uniform legislation," said an official. States including MP and Chhattisgarh have already given rights to tribals but this legislation will formalise them.

The bill, as envisaged by the Ministry, looks at setting up Forest Dependent Communities — essentially meaning a tribal group constituted into a Joint Forest Management Committee. The ministry expects the states to assign specific forest areas to these forest dependent communities, which will have the ownership of minor forest produce found in the designated area.

The Ministry, of course, points out that the harvesting of this produce will be on a non-destructive and sustainable basis and will follow the working plan delineated by the state.

Forest produce is defined as all non-timber forest produce of plant origin and includes honey, lac, wax and tussar. The ministry also plans to encourage states to give ownership rights for bamboo and cane in areas adjoining villages through an executive order.

As a check, the draft specifies that the net income from the sale of the produce will be deposited in the account of the community and utilized as per an action plan chalked out by the community. But 25 percent has to be spent on regeneration and development of the forest area; 75 percent will be distributed in the community. The draft also gives the state the option of giving the community the right take cognizance of a forest offence committed in the area.

For full story, please see: www.indianexpress.com/full_story.php?content_id=66637

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23. India: Rich biodiversity confirms Chattisgarh as India's herbal capital

Source: New Kerala - Ernakulam, Kerala, India, 23 March 2005

Taking into account the extremely rich biodiversity of the state with a sizable amount of medicinal, aromatic and dye plants, the state of Chhattisgarh has been declared as the herbal capital of the country.

One of the major herbal procurement centres in the state is the district of Raipur, which is also the capital of the state. Now in order to utilise the natural bounties up to the maximum, various projects are being undertaken by the state government. The Forest Protection Committee in Gariaband of Raipur district has begun manufacturing herbal products under the brand name "Bhuteshwarnath", the local religious deity.

Tribals are being employed for manufacturing Chawanprash, tooth powder, medicines to cure diabetes, herbal tea, and antibiotic powder, among other products. "We have taught the tribals the process of making a variety of products, and now they are aware of the medicinal qualities of the herbal plants," said Umesh Kumar Shrivastav, an Ayurvedic expert.

The state government has been thoroughly supportive of this endeavour. "Because of this attitude only have we succeeded," said S D Badgaiya, District Forest Officer.

Various forest divisions in the state are working towards identification, plantation, harvesting and marketing of medicinal plants and now the manufacture and marketing of herbal and ayurvedic products have added a feather in their cap.

Chhattisgarh State Minor Forest Produce (Trading and Development) Cooperative Federation Limited, a nodal agency for all aspects relating to management, development and trade of minor forest produce and non-wood forest produce sector in the state, has sought the support of various Minor Forest Produce Federations to encourage small Forest Committees to take up the production and trade of ayurvedic products. It would also strengthen the livelihood security of tribals through sustainable and non-destructive forest management. In August last year, the Medicinal Plant Board extended an aid of about 2 crore rupees to 48 farmers in the state to cultivate a variety of medicinal plants.

Over 800 varieties of herbs and plants are found in the state. In view of the richness of medicinal and herbal plants, the state government is trying to develop a mechanism for conservation, domestication and non-destructive harvesting with the active support from

local people including traditional healers and vaidyas. The socio-cultural, spiritual and medicinal arena of the rural populace, particularly the tribals should form the backbone of community based conservation and utilization of medicinal and herbal plants. (ANI)
For full story, please see: www.newkerala.com/news-daily/news/features.php?action=fullnews&id=89461

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24. Malaysia: Sustainable forest projects eligible for EC-UNDP grants
Source: Malaysia Star, 20 March 2005

The United Nations and the European Commission (EC) have initiated a joint programme to provide financial grants to NGOs and indigenous groups in Malaysia to conserve and manage forest resources.

The UN, through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), together with the EC, had initiated the fund for NGOs and community organizations which are actively involved in sustainable tropical forest projects. The fund, dubbed the "EC-UNDP Small Grants Programme for Operations to Promote Tropical Forests" can provide up to RM240 000 to organizations involved in forest protection projects with indigenous ethnic groups.

Programme assistant Maizura Ismail said that the EC and UNDP were now inviting interested NGOs and ethnic community groups in Malaysia to apply for the funding by submitting proposals to the UNDP about their forest conservation activities or intended projects. "The fund is part of a regional initiative to promote tropical forests and it is implemented by the UNDP through the Regional Centre for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture.

"Through this fund, the EC and the UNDP hope to contribute towards improving the lives and livelihood of the native hardcore poor, women and marginalized groups among the indigenous communities who are dependent on forests for their daily survival. "It is hope that they can control and manage their forest resources by developing and practicing novel traditional ways of forest usage," she said.

Maizura said grants are available for projects with a maximum duration of 18 months.

Interested applicants can submit their proposals to the UN office at Wisma UN in Kuala Lumpur by **29 April**.

Detailed information is available at the website www.sgpptf.org

For full story, please see:

<http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2005/3/20/nation/10469175&sec=nation>

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25. Nepal: Medicinal plants' contribution on revenue significant
Source: The Rising Nepal, 22 March 2005

Medical and aromatic plants have been generating revenue of more than Rs. 20 million annually. Of the 200 species of aromatic plants listed in Nepal, 176 species have been used in trading.

According to the Department of Plant Resources, there are 700 medical plants in Nepal and more than 35,000 plant species are being used in various human cultures around the world for medical purpose. Dr. Sushim Rajan Baral, vice-president of Ecological Society (ECOS), said that 50 to 60 species were highly traded commercial items and all the districts were involving in the trade. He said that Rs. 14.6 million was collected from the Mid-Western Development Region only. Similarly, the figure was Rs. 486,000 in the Eastern Development

Region, Rs. 390,000 in the Western Development Region, Rs. 2.75 million in the Central Region and Rs. 1.98 million in the Far-Western Region.

Dr. Baral said that the entrepreneurs from the Terai to the Himalayan regions were involved in using medicinal plants and their uses.

According to "Aspects of the Trade in Medical and Aromedical Plants", published by the Forest Resources and Survey Centre, every year 10 000 to 15 000 tons of non-timber forest production (NTFPs), that also include aromedical products representing around 100 species are harvested from forest lands in the middle hills and high mountains and traded to India.

Almost all parts of the plant such as roots, rhizomes, leaves, stems, bark, fruits and seeds, are exported. The annual value of the trade of NTFPs with India is estimated at US\$8.6 million, which constitutes 4 percent of the total contribution of forestry to the national economy, the book said.

A study in 1988 by the government showed that only 20 percent of the population benefit from modern health service and the importance of medical plants at the subsistence level are considerable, but difficult to quantify. Seven hundred medical plants collected from forestlands have been recorded as being used locally in Ayurvedic preparations.

According to a paper presented at a programme one-week ago by Bhaweshwar Das of Department of Plant Resources, over 2.37 million kg of crude herbs are being traded annually at an average price of Rs. 113 per kg.

The global demand of medical and aromatic plant is over US\$ 62 billion and the demand is growing at a rate of over 15 to 25 per cent annually. The market of Nepalese herbs internationally is estimated to be more than Rs. 267 million.

According to the Department of Forest, Chiraito or Swertia sps. occupy the major position in the trade of wild medical plants. Thirty-four districts have been found to contribute in the supply of the herb and more than 50 percent is traded from east Nepal. It is one of the highly valued medical plants used in the Ayurvedic system, the department said

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26. Nepal: certification of NWFPs

Source: Rainforest Alliance [rainforestalliance@ra.org], 2 April 2005

While more than 80% of all medicinal plants are collected from the wild, the collectors rarely receive a living wage. This is particularly true in Nepal where every year villagers gather some 15 000 tons of medicinal plants, pack and dry them and sell them to traders for export.

Thanks to the efforts of the Nepal Nontimber Forest Products Promotion Alliance, essential oils and handmade paper harvested to protect forests and provide benefits to villagers in Nepal are now available in the US.

"The Rainforest Alliance/FSC certification of the forest user groups in Nepal ensures responsible forest management," explains Walter Smith, senior forester at the Rainforest Alliance, "It also provides Western markets with quality control and the assurance that the products they are buying – namely essential oils and a paper handmade from the bark of a bush locally called Lokta -- are obtained legally and sustainably."

For more information, please see: www.rainforest-alliance.org/news/nepal.html?tr=y&aid=801845

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27. Rwanda: bamboo woodlands

Source: The New Times (Kigali), 18 March 2005

After years of suffering from prolonged drought, and lack of forest cover for soil conservation, Umutara and Kigali-Ngali provinces are set to have bamboo woodlands.

The bamboo forest currently found in Volcano National park in the northern part of the country, have multipurpose functions like provision of habitat and food to mountain gorillas, and support to human activities like building, handicrafts and beekeeping.

David Kagoro, the Liaison officer of World Agroforestry Centre (WAC) Rwanda revealed that the planting of bamboo forest in Umutara and Kigali-Ngali provinces is an attempt to afforest areas with trees that withstand prolonged drought. Kagoro said that under the request of the Ministry of Lands and Environment, WAC through the National Institute of Agriculture and Scientific Research (ISAR) in Butare, has started stimulation of bamboo trees at ISAR for extreme multiplication of more young trees for transplanting in to specified areas of the two provinces.

"As bamboo trees are used for food, construction material, bridges, handicrafts, landscaping and musical instruments, it is better to plant them in areas without forest cover whatsoever, like Umutara and Kigali-Ngali provinces," he said.

Asked where the WAC gets bamboo buds that are being propagated at ISAR, Kagoro said that few bamboo buds of lower quality are from within Rwanda, but that bamboo buds of better quality that grow to about 40 metres tall are imported from Kenya.

According to ecological experts, these plants are evergreen and show little growth above ground the first year, since roots are rapidly forming underground. They are also very adaptable and survive droughts and other stressful environmental phenomenon.

They also articulate that afforesting of bamboo is easy, because it is tough and adaptable for many soil types and can tolerate dry and wet conditions. Bamboo is also known to be good in recycling oxygen into the atmosphere and has virtually no pests or disease problems.

For full story, please see: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200503180469.html>

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28. Uganda: Forests contribute \$190m to livelihood

Source: [New Vision](#) (Kampala), 19 March 2005

Forests contribute \$190m (sh332.3b) to people's livelihoods nation-wide, a study by the Wildlife Conservation Society and National Forest Authority has established.

"Average annual incomes from forests are between 8% and 35% of annual incomes to households," the study said. According to the study, the economic value including all marketable and non-marketable values of Ugandan forests is about sh593.24b, which is 5.2% of the gross domestic product.

The study "The value of Uganda forests; a livelihood and eco-system approach" was launched in October 2004.

Forests cover 4.9m hectares, which is 24% of Uganda's land.

For full story, please see: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200503210497.html>

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EVENTS

From: FAO's NWFP Programme

The Global Women's Forum

Kampala Uganda

11-15 April 2005

The Global Women's Forum will review the progress made by women on sustainable forest management since Beijing 1995.

The main objective will be to examine the gains and challenges met by women in implementing SFM actions to which governments committed themselves. The Forum will focus on the involvement of women in:

- Forestry in improving family livelihoods including contributions of timber and non timber forest products; agro-forestry programmes.
- Energy conservation with specific reference to biomass energy
- Environmental sustainability, biodiversity protection.

Other objectives of the forum are to:

- provide a platform to exchange knowledge, skills, ideas and information among women leaders, foresters and academicians in SFM with particular focus on SFM.
- review and identify the areas where women have gained access to control over forestry resources and resource management since Beijing 1995.
- create mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of IPF/IFF Proposal for action PfA) and compliance by governments, international agencies and civil society organizations (CSO's) with specific reference to SFM.
- Assess the contributions made by women in the SFM in achieving the
- Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with specific reference with MDG 7 "Ensuring Environmental Sustainability"
- Enhance women's capacity in forest resource management and related areas.

For more information, please visit www.uwtpm.org/globalforum

Or contact the organizers:

Tel; +256-75-643 113/41-236 832

Fax: +256-41-345 597,

E-mail: ruthmubiru@yahoo.com or uwtpm@infocom.co.ug

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Biodiversity Assessment and Monitoring Course

8 May–10 June 2005

Front Royal, Virginia, USA

Guides you through the process of designing, implementing, and monitoring local and regional biodiversity programs.

For more information, please contact:

MAB Program

Smithsonian Institution

S. Dillon Ripley Center

1100 Jefferson Drive SW

Washington, DC 20560-0705, USA

Tel: +1-202.633.4792. Fax: +1-202.786.2557

Email: sevinj@si.edu

www.si.edu/simab

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The Yew Chronicles--Microtubule-Stabilizing Therapeutic Agents

11-13 May 2005,

Beijing, P.R. China

For more than a decade, the Native Yew Conservation Council (YewCon) has convened educational and scientific conferences to exchange and disseminate information and ideas on the yew (*Taxus*), the principal resource for the production of paclitaxel (Taxol®) and related taxane microtubule-stabilizing therapeutic agents for the treatment of cancer and, in principle, other debilitating diseases.

Conference objectives are:

1. To review the status of yew resources and address recent changes in natural resource policies and other developments that bear on the conservation and sustainable use of yew as a source of paclitaxel, or in principle, taxane precursors for semi-synthesis of paclitaxel, or other taxane-based analogues.
2. To review, discuss and analyze the significance of recent advances in the development of non-yew sources of taxanes, epothilones, discodermolides, other natural products and their analogs that share a common mechanism of action with paclitaxel, and have the potential to replace the yew as a source of microtubule-stabilizing therapeutic agents.

For more information, please contact:

Dr. Stanley Scher

MiSTAs Program Coordinator

The Native Yew Conservation Council (YewCon)

P.O. Box 2928

Berkely, CA 94702-2928

USA

Tel: +1-510.526.0770

Fax: +1-510.526.7467

e-mail: stanley@yewconservation.org or info@yewconservation.org

www.yewconservation.org/YewCon/

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The 2005 International Symposium on Society and Resource Management (ISSRM2005)

16-19 June 2005

Östersund, Sweden

ISSRM2005 is the official meeting of the International Association for Society and Natural Resources. It is being hosted by the European Tourism Research Institute (ETOUR), Mid-Sweden University and the Mountain Mistra Research Program.

For more information, please contact:

ISSRM 2005, ETOUR, Mid-Sweden University

SE-831 25 Östersund, Sweden

Fax: +46(0)63195810,

Email: issrm2005@etour.se

www.issrm2005.com/index.html

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A Future Beneath the Trees

25-27 August 2005

Royal Roads University in Victoria, Canada

A Future Beneath the Trees is an international symposium on non-timber forest products, community economic development and forest conservation that is being organized by the Centre for Non-Timber Resources at Royal Roads University. The symposium will address the opportunities and challenges of commercial development of non-timber forest products and the impacts of development on rural communities and forest ecosystems.

The deadline for submissions to the Call for Papers is **April 15, 2005**.

For more information, please contact:

Geoff Gosson

Project Coordinator

Centre for Non-Timber Resources

Royal Roads University

2005 Sooke Road
Victoria, B.C. V9B 5Y2 Canada
Phone: +1-(250) 391-2600 ext. 4328#
Fax: +1-(250) 391-2563
E-mail: ntfp@royalroads.ca
www.ntfpvictoria2005.ca or www.royalroads.ca/cntr

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The Smithsonian Environmental Leadership Course

11–23 September 2005
Front Royal, Virginia, USA
2 weeks, 80 hours
Emphasizes communication skills to facilitate your interaction with managers, decision-makers, and resource personnel.
For more information, please contact:
MAB Program
Smithsonian Institution
S. Dillon Ripley Center
1100 Jefferson Drive SW
Washington, DC 20560-0705, USA
Tel: +1-202.633.4792. Fax: +1-202.786.2557
Email: sevinj@si.edu
www.si.edu/simab

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NTFP Fair and Forum 2005

24-28 September 2005
Moscow, Russia
IUCN-Russia announces the Second NTFP Fair and Forum "Gifts of Forest: Culture of Use" to be held in Moscow at the All-Russia Exhibition Center.

Non-timber forest products, including wild harvested forest berries, fruit, mushrooms, nuts, medicinal plants, birch bark have been traditionally used for centuries in forest regions of Russia. Now these resources obtain a new meaning for local communities, being of crucial importance for small sustainable business development, which help generating additional incomes for the poor and save forest environment and traditional knowledge.

The NTFP Fair and Forum will provide opportunities for producers all over Russia and from abroad to develop new marketing contacts, share the lessons learned and discuss the problems of the sector. There will be broad sales of NTFP food and crafts organized. In 2004 more than 9 000 people visited the Fair.

Please contact IUCN-Russia to participate at the event at info@iucn.ru

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LITERATURE REVIEW AND WEB SITES

36. Worrying decline in nature's 'services'

Source: United Press International (in World Peace Herald, 30 March 2005).

A host of benefits man has reaped from the planet's soils, forests and oceans for millennia are eroding at an unprecedented rate, according to a new and worrying report issued Wednesday.

Released by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Paris, the study finds that a staggering 60 percent of "services" provided by natural ecosystems are being degraded or used in ways that cannot be sustained. The bulk of the environmental degradation has taken place over the last 50 years. "We've been drawing on nature's capital," said Salvatore Arico, ecosystem and biodiversity science expert at UNESCO, and one of the authors of the new study. "It's like having money in the bank, but not living on the interest but rather on the money itself -- at a certain stage, it will disappear."

The painstaking product of research by more than 1 300 scientists in 95 countries, the report is considered the most comprehensive assessment to date of the state of ecosystems worldwide.

Most of the destruction has been wrought as a by-product of rising demands for food, fresh water, timber, fiber and fuel over the past half century. Between 3 percent and 10 percent of mammals, birds and amphibians are threatened with extinction. Such losses are quantifiable in practical ways, the report notes.

Deforestation has not triggered a staggering loss in species diversity, for example, but many other troubling side effects. Among them are the loss of forests' natural ability to provide fresh water and reduce carbon emissions and to reduce the spread of diseases like malaria and cholera.

The study adds to mounting body of evidence about the destructive effects of human activity on the planet. But it is unique in offering such practical calculations about the tolls of industrial development on the environment -- particularly in the loss of natural services most people take for granted.

It also suggests that goals endorsed by the international community in 2000 to eradicate poverty, hunger and child mortality -- among others -- would be tough to meet. "If nothing changes, I'm afraid the future isn't that rosy," Arico said. Plows will turn the last forests and grasslands into fields, more fish will disappear from the world's water bodies, more invasive species will destroy domestic habitats, and climate change will become the main driver of biodiversity loss, the study's authors predict.

But the study also points to ways to reverse the grim trend. The options range from restoring wetlands and controlling population growth to scrapping economic disincentives to preserving the environment.

Such changes require more holistic ways of drafting policies on such issues as transportation, tourism and agriculture, the report's experts say.

"The main message," Arico added, "is that the future is definitely in our hands."

For full story, please see: www.wpherald.com/storyview.php?StoryID=20050330-032311-1626r

Related stories:

Earth near breaking point, experts warn. <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/7336592/>

A productive, but taxed, Earth: www.csmonitor.com/2005/0331/p11s02-sten.html

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37. Other publications of interest

From: FAO's NWFP Programme

Beehler, B.M., et al. 2004. Virgin rainforests and conservation. *Science* 305(5686):943-944. www.sciencemag.org/cgi/search?volume=305&firstpage=943&sendit.x=30&sendit.y=3&sendit=Search&DOI=&author1=&author2=&titleabstract=&fulltext=&fmonth=Oct&fyear=1995&month=Oct&year=2004&hits=10<!--

Bowyer, Jim; Howe, Jeff; Guillery, Phil & Fernholz, Kathryn. 2005. *Bamboo Flooring. Environmental Silver Bullet Or Faux Savior?* Dovetail Partners, Inc.

The world market for bamboo is large and growing. Recent estimates place the global market for bamboo at about \$12 billion; market growth to \$20 billion or more is foreseen by the year 2015. Some environmental aspects of bamboo production are clearly positive. Wide distribution, rapid growth and renewability, a source of useful products and income for millions of traditionally low income people - all of these factors point to the environmentally and socially desirable material described in promotional materials for bamboo products. However, increasingly bamboo products are coming from intensively managed plantations that do not deliver the same benefits as natural bamboo forests.

www.dovetailinc.org/documents/DovetailBamboo0305.pdf

Coulston, J.W. and Riitters, K.H. 2005. Preserving biodiversity under current and future climates: a case study. *Global Ecol. Biogeogr.* 14(1):31-38.

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Hoyt, Reginald. 2004. *Wild Meat Harvest and Trade in Liberia: managing biodiversity, economic and social impacts.* ODI Wildlife Policy Briefing, Number 6, April 2004.

Liberian forests and the fauna they contain are a conservation priority within the Upper Guinea Forest block. However, the rate of bushmeat consumption in the country is potentially a threat to its biodiversity. Wild meat and the bushmeat trade represent a resource from which a wide range of Liberians benefit, unlike the timber and mining industries. The challenge ahead is to find a compromise that meets the nation's biodiversity conservation goals, while integrating the management of this valuable natural resource into a broader framework that increases national and community management capacity.

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Oudhia, Pankaj. n.d. *Traditional medicinal knowledge about common herbs in Chhattisgarh, India: Interactions with the Female herb collectors of Dalli-Rajhara region.*

http://botanical.com/site/column_poudhia/publish/journal.cgi?folder=journal&next=530

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38. Web sites and e-zines

From: FAO's NWFP Programme

Cámara Forestal de Bolivia

www.cfb.org.bo/cfbinicio/frainicio.htm

Connect

Unesco's International Science, Technology and Environmental Education Newsletter

www.unesco.org/education/educprog/ste/index.html

Edible Insects

Insects are important protein sources in many parts of the world. On this Web site you can find nutritional tables (from Iowa State University).

www.ent.iastate.edu/misc/insectnutrition.html.

Forest Invasive Species Network for Africa (FISNA)

www.fao.org/forestry/site/26951/en

Forests Forever

This website aims to raise awareness of the environment by showing the abundance of nature and the beauty of forests. The site contains amazing photography from seven forests around the world, including detailed geographic information after each photo gallery. Go to Topics & News, then Forest Gallery.

www.forests-forever.com

Infosylva

FAO's Forestry Department is offering periodic e-bulletins with news from FAO and selected non-FAO news clippings related to forestry that are available in English, French or Spanish. FAO news items are available in all three languages. Non-FAO news clippings are available only in their original language. To subscribe, send email to mailserv@mailserv.fao.org, leave the subject blank and then put in the first line of the message the following: subscribe INFOSYLVA-L.

Livelihoods and Forestry Programme, Nepal

Improving the livelihoods of poor rural people by promoting equitable and sustainable use of forest resources

www.lfp.org.np/

Non Timber Forest Products bibliography database

www.ifcae.org/cgi-bin/ntfp/db/dbsql/db.cgi?db=bib&uid=default

NTFP related curriculum development

www.forestry.ubc.ca/ipfe/ipfe_project_report.html

Trees and markets on-line

A newsletter on tree cultivation and marketing of products and services from trees.

www.worldagroforestry.org/treesandmarkets/pages/newsletter.htm

Virtual Mangrove Tour of Belize's Mangal Cay

Using state-of-the-art digital imaging and virtual reality techniques, this is an effective teaching and learning tool,

www.serc.si.edu

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

39. Center for International Forest Research (CIFOR) (2 positions)

Source: Community Forestry E-news 2005.03(31st March 2005)

Position: Regional Coordinator - Central Africa; Yaounde, Cameroon

Position: Senior/Principal Scientist - Forests and Livelihoods Programme; Bogor, Indonesia

Closing date: 15 April 2005

Full details of the Regional Coordinator position and details of the Forests and Livelihoods programme can be accessed on CIFOR's website:

www.cifor.cgiar.org/docs/_ref/jobs/index.htm.

Interviews for both positions will be conducted in late May. Applications should include a covering letter, a detailed CV, and the names and addresses (including phone, e-mail) of three or more professional referees. They should be marked confidential and *sent by e-mail* to: Bourrier International Consultants Inc., 12 Roseglen Private, Ottawa, ON, K1H 1B6, Canada, Tel: (1-613) 247-7291, E-mail: bici@sympatico.ca.

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MISCELLANEOUS

40. Ancient bamboo slips sheds light on building of Great Wall

Source: China News, Beijing, 25 March 2005 (in New Kerala, India)

Archaeologists in China's Hunan province have found some 36 000 priceless bamboo slips, about 35 000 of which bear authentic records which could shed more light on the building of the world-famous Great Wall.

The bamboo slips, ingrained in official scripts, provide a detailed, encyclopaedic account of the imperial Qin Dynasty (221-206 B.C.), a noted researcher with Hunan Provincial Institute of Archaeology, Zhang Chunlong said. These historic records, believed to have been kept by the Qin court, will shed light on their researches on the politics, culture and economics of Qin Dynasty, Zhang said.

For full story, please see: www.newkerala.com/news-daily/news/features.php?action=fullnews&id=90380

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41. Canopies: Top-level study of rainforests' secrets

Source: *The Guardian*, 21 March 2005

British-based scientists are aiming to occupy the high ground of biology. Five giant cranes - each carrying an observation post and scientific laboratory - will tower over the treetops of

rainforests in Brazil, Ghana, Madagascar, India and Malaysia in a \$17m (£9m) attempt to explore one of life's most mysterious frontiers, the canopy.

The forest treetops are where the sun, rain and living things first meet. An estimated 40% of all terrestrial species are to be found more than 70 feet up, where the first wispy leaves and twigs compete for solar energy.

Almost 90% of the earth's biomass - the sheer weight of life - is in the forests. But the canopy is an almost entirely unexplored zone. "Some people say we know the surface of the moon better than we know the tops of the trees," said Andrew Mitchell, of the Global Canopy Programme, centred at Oxford. "We find that about 80% of the insects we recover from the canopy are undescribed, new to science. There is an astonishing variety of life up there. So from the life-on-Earth point of view, it's really important to find out. It is totally undiscovered territory."

Ten cranes are already in use, mostly in temperate forests. But the greatest richness of life is concentrated in the tropical forests. The programme has just received backing from the United Nations environment chiefs and five governments.

Forests are powerful players in the carbon cycle, and have a huge role in the global warming theatre. If all goes to plan, the first five cranes will tower over the rainforests, swinging a research platform and instruments over the treetops, observing the foliage, flowers, birds, insects, epiphytes, parasites, reptiles and mammals in life's upper storeys, ideally without snapping a branch or disturbing a nest.

Canopies are delicate environments. More than 20 years of canopy science has convinced biologists that they need literally to get on top of the subject. "It is in the canopies that trees pass their genes around. This is where they produce flowers and fruits. It is where the sun's energy is beating down. It is where the forest meets the sky and as a result it is the most energy rich part of the forest," he says.

"The great thing about a canopy crane is that, with a helicopter, you can slide the crane down in between the trees without causing any damage. It stands on a concrete plinth that you do have to build but it doesn't have to be very big. It is simple technology, used every day in our towns. No other system allows you to get to that much forest, day after day, year after year."

The crane and gondola can deliver researchers to any point in almost a hectare of forest, from the highest fronds almost to the ground. Research at canopy level will be matched by remote sensing from space, and instrument readings at the forest floor.

"The great thing is we have the backing of the United Nations environment programme and the backing of five important national governments," said Dr Mitchell. For full story, please see: www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,3604,1442231,00.html

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42. More could be done to protect native plant species

Source: ABC Online – Australia, 1 April 2005

A world expert on medicinal plant conservation says Australia is lagging behind other countries in the protection of native plants from overseas exploitation.

Aboriginal communities in the Kimberley, in northern Western Australia, are pushing for protection for a native bush fruit with extraordinary levels of vitamin C. Gubinge is currently harvested on a small scale for use in anti-oxidant tablets, but it is understood large pharmaceutical companies have been investigating the potential for growing it in Brazil.

Professor Jerry Bodeker says he is not surprised by the widespread interest in the fruit and does not believe its protection is a lost cause. "I don't think it's something that's a helpless situation. I do think that there are steps that can be taken to ensure that the local communities or even all of the people across the top of Australia are given some sort of ownership of that and accrue benefits from that," he said.

For full story, please see: www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200504/s1336042.htm

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43. Poland: Amber smuggling

Source: Radio Polonia – Poland, 30.03.2005

Polish customs agents foiled today an attempt to smuggle 70 kg of amber from the Russian enclave of Kalinigrad into Poland. According to reports in the local media, they found the booty worth US\$16 000 hidden inside a fake fuel tank in a car driven by a Kaliningrad resident.

The Polish Baltic port city of Gdansk is a global center for the production of amber jewellery. It relies heavily on supplies of fossilized tree resin smuggled from the neighbouring Kalinigrad which is a major source of amber.

For full story, please see: www.radio.com.pl/poloniam/article.asp?tid=21163

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www.fao.org/forestry/foris/webview/fop/index.jsp?siteId=2301&langId=1