



## FORUM WORKSHOP REPORT

<b>Event Title</b>	<b>Ecosystems and Food : What role for conservation in enhancing food security for the rural poor</b>
<b>Rapporteur's Name</b>	Georgina Peard IUCN Programme Officer, Conservation and Poverty Reduction. Email: georgina.peard@iucn.org <i>Special thanks to Sara Scherr and Seth Shames of Ecoagriculture Partners for their support in capturing the outcomes of this event.</i>

<b>EVENT NUMBER</b>	1533	<b>DATE</b>	8 October 2008	<b>TIME</b>	16.30	<b>ROOM</b>	116
<b>ORGANIZER INSTITUTION</b>	IUCN – Office of the Senior Advisor, Social Policy						
<b>SPEAKERS</b>	<p><b>Opening:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Gonzalo Oviedo</b>, Senior Advisor, Social Policy</li> </ul> <p><b>Facilitator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Jeff McNeely</b>, IUCN Chief Scientist</li> </ul> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mohammed Mukhier</b>, Head, Disaster Policy &amp; Preparedness, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)</li> <li>• <b>Jane Madgwick</b>, CEO, Wetlands International</li> <li>• <b>Lindiwe Sibanda</b>, CEO, Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN)</li> <li>• <b>Toby Hodgkin</b>, Director, Global Partnerships, Bioversity International</li> <li>• <b>Juan Gonzalez-Valero</b>, Head of Corporate Responsibility, Syngenta International AG</li> </ul> <p><b>Concluding comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Gill Shepherd</b>, Poverty and Landscapes Advisor, IUCN Livelihoods and Landscapes Strategy, and member of the Commission on Ecosystem Management.</li> </ul>						

### WHAT NEW IDEAS AND MAIN MESSAGES WERE RAISED AT THE EVENT?

#### Food security is a complex issue

- The conservation community needs to embrace the full definition of food security (physical availability, economic and physical access, food utilization, and stability of all three), and to get out of the 'availability box', i.e. considering only production / availability aspects. Social, economic and political dimensions are critical; most famines result from political failure.
- Food security today does not automatically lead to food security tomorrow. The humanitarian and development communities need to recognize that the definition of food security should also include something about the sustainability of that which is actually underpinning food production, i.e. biodiversity, water, ecosystem services etc.
- Food security is also referred to as household economy or household security. Fundamentally it is about the livelihood security of people.

**Conserving ecosystems can enhance food security, but we need to better understand and communicate the linkages**

- Ecosystem conservation contributes to food security in a variety of ways, and should be considered as critical 'infrastructure'.
- Wetlands provide many ecosystem services, including improved water security by maintaining and regulating flows from mountain to sea. Development activities that degrade wetlands are actually undermining food security in the long run. Poorly planned agricultural irrigation schemes supporting food production in one area may diminish food resources for others downstream. Wetland conservation cannot be achieved without addressing food production systems, and food security cannot be achieved without taking a catchment approach to reconcile water flows for many competing demands. If the linkages are better understood, food production systems could be designed to work with ecosystem processes, thus allowing wetlands to deliver benefits for food security without compromising ideals for biodiversity.
- Ecosystems are areas where agriculture and wild relatives of cultivated crops and livestock are interacting all the time, just as farmers are using all areas of the ecosystem.
- Ecosystem conservation contributes to the conservation of genetic diversity – we need to rely on a broad diversity of species and varieties to meet the challenges of climate change. In the field of agrobiodiversity, a more ecosystem or landscape perspective is being adopted, moving away from the old, static on-farm view. The dynamics of informal seed trading systems that farmers use to maintain traditional varieties, including exchanges with wild species, is an example.

**Food security depends on improved productivity – Ecosystems are productive landscapes**

- In order to take food security seriously, the conservation community must face the issue of a growing population and growing demand. Conservation efforts need to be balanced with a productivity increase and improved efficiency. A major dilemma is how to produce more from less.
- We should not see a great disconnect between productive systems and natural systems. The conservation community needs to be engaging in both production and conservation since most areas where we work are also agricultural areas.
- We need to increase productivity but we have choices about *how* we do it that will be more or less sustainable – this is where the conservation community should have a voice.

**Conservationists need to clarify their message and provide real data and tools that help improve food security**

- The conservation agenda is still considered in parts to be an agenda of 'preservation'. There needs to be greater clarity on this. The conservation community needs to make it clear what they have to offer in terms of tools and processes to help increase food security.
- The conservation community can assist in defining sound agricultural practices and systems that can cope with increased productivity needs while responding to biodiversity needs.
- Most humanitarian and development organizations do mention the environment but they need support to be able to deliver and bring out about change. They need information on how conservation can help increase food security; on credible and easily accessible data that can contribute to better planning; and on what tools and services exist to make better use of ecosystems and improve availability, access and utilization of food.
- IUCN should position itself strategically in relation to major drivers of food insecurity (e.g. climate change, urbanization...).

**Innovative partnerships are needed to mobilize social forces**

- The conservation and humanitarian communities need to partner on this issue. 'Vulnerability' is a key point of connection between the two communities.
- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has 100 million social change people on the ground. If we can develop a clear and simple message on how the environment is linked to food security, we can unlock an incredible force and mobilize these people to do the extension work.
- We must work with the farmers; they are part of the ecosystem and we need their feedback and wisdom.

**World Headquarters**

IUCN  
Rue Mauverney 28  
1196 Gland  
Switzerland

**International Union for Conservation of Nature**

Tel +41 22 999 0000  
Fax +41 22 999 0002  
mail@iucn.org  
www.iucn.org

**We need to act quickly**

- We cannot accept that 750 million people are going hungry. We need to agree quickly on some simple actions to start making a difference.

**WHAT SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS DID YOU FORMULATE AT YOUR EVENT? LIST THE SPECIFIC TARGET OF YOUR RECOMMENDATION.****Key recommendations:**

- IUCN and the conservation community should be working on food security. We need to think about it wherever we are working; consider ways to best influence policy, package our information in more effective ways and expand our partnerships into organizations that work on the ground in ways that we are not yet working or able to work.
- To do this we will need to involve Members, Commissions and the Secretariat, and seek greater integration between them. In particular the Secretariat should aim to build on and add value to the work of Members.
- Ecosystem conservation is an on-farm / off-farm issue; we need to move away from traditional thinking of conservation.
- We need to educate our own donors, to bring ecosystems thinking in to their understanding and view of the world.
- Bringing the ecosystem perspective to all actors is time consuming; packaging ecosystem language and thinking for unfamiliar audiences is hard – we need help from those living within ecosystems and work more actively with development organizations.

**Recommended roles and key priorities for IUCN with most added-value**

IUCN should look to play a complementary role to its Members in addressing this issue, and seek to add value to what is already happening, focusing around the following:

- Facilitate dialogue and refine the message(s) – encourage different sectors and communities to 'open up' to different thinking, and to have serious dialogue on potential solutions. Facilitate realistic reflection on different methods and approaches to improving food security, including for instance food sovereignty; on sustainable ways to increase and intensify productivity; technology that can be supportive; acceptable trade-offs, and so on. Support Members & Commissions to participate and have influence in this dialogue by contributing their knowledge / experience.
- Influence policy – generate, synthesize, package and disseminate knowledge; influence who is involved in policy processes; and participate in policy processes. Help hold governments to account. Ensure voices are heard. And include all forms of knowledge (e.g. oral culture).
- Develop partnerships: drawing on the work and evidence generated by Members & Commissions, partner with humanitarian and development agencies to (i) strengthen their messages and actions by integrating the environment, (ii) make use of their networks to reach and mobilize new audiences, e.g. extension workers, aid workers.
- Raise awareness: communicate and promote better understanding and acceptance of key messages within and outside the conservation community, e.g. biodiversity in landscapes, including agrobiodiversity, is useful and not just there to be conserved; conservation is not just about preservation but about ensuring long term sustainability of resources and services for human well-being.

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### WHAT FOLLOW-UP IS EXPECTED?

Participants at the workshop were requested to leave their business cards and contact details so that this dialogue could continue. IUCN will communicate and consult with them in order to gain their further input and suggestions. Based on this dialogue IUCN will consider the best way to follow up on this issue in the coming months.

### FURTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

More information from this workshop (event 1533), including keynote powerpoint presentation from IFRC: [http://intranet.iucn.org/kb/pub/wcc/forum\\_event.cfm?E1533/Final Document/](http://intranet.iucn.org/kb/pub/wcc/forum_event.cfm?E1533/Final Document/)

IUCN's food security webpages:

[http://www.iucn.org/about/work/initiatives/sp\\_cprihome/sp\\_cpri\\_themes/\\_sp\\_cpri\\_food/index.cfm](http://www.iucn.org/about/work/initiatives/sp_cprihome/sp_cpri_themes/_sp_cpri_food/index.cfm)

Websites of Panelist's organizations:

[www.biodiversityinternational.org](http://www.biodiversityinternational.org)

[www.wetlandsinternational.org](http://www.wetlandsinternational.org)

[www.fanrpan.org](http://www.fanrpan.org)

[www.syngentafoundation.org/](http://www.syngentafoundation.org/)

[www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/recovering/food-security.asp](http://www.ifrc.org/what/disasters/recovering/food-security.asp)

#### Some other relevant workshops during the Forum:

[1200 - Rethinking Conservation through the lens of Food Sovereignty: implications for policy and practice](#)

**Aliances Workshop** - IUCN CEESP and International Institute for Environment and Development

See also videos from the workshop at: <http://www.iied.org/natural-resources/key-issues/food-and-agriculture/conservation-and-food-sovereignty-workshop-video-barcelona-oct-08>

[2024 - Assessing the performance of ecoagriculture landscapes: Plan for the future](#)

**Learning Opportunity** - EcoAgriculture Partners and Cornell University

[1176 - Strategies and tools for community knowledge sharing for agriculture, rural development and biodiversity conservation](#)

**UNDP Poble** - Ecoagriculture Partners

[1182 - Exploring the role of conservationists in agricultural landscapes](#)

**Aliances Workshop** - Ecoagriculture Partners

[493 - Finding the balance - biodiversity conservation and productive agriculture](#)

**Knowledge Café** - Earthwatch Institute (Europe)

[165 - Conservation and Livelihoods in Production Landscapes: Coffee and cocoa consumers push sustainability in tropical agriculture](#)

**Aliances Workshop** - Rainforest Alliance, Inc.

[242 - Integration of Biodiversity and Agrobiodiversity Conservation](#)

**Knowledge Café** - IUCN SSC Crop Wild Relative Specialist Group

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