Preparing for new projects

A three-day retreat to familiarize the WCA/HT staffs with three new projects to be executed as from next January ended Wednesday 5 November 2008 at the coastal city of Kribi.

The retreat comes on the hills of a party in Yaounde on Friday 17 October to celebrate the new projects for WCA/HT. Addressing the staff at the retreat, the Representative, Dr Zac Tchoundjeu exhorted the staff to hard work so that they could continue to merit the trust of donors. “You all have done a wonderful job...It is not time to lie on your laurels”. The three projects worth USD 8 million are: (i) Promoting Development of Economically Viable Rubber Smallholdings in West Africa funded by Common Fund for Commodities is designed to enhance economically viable rubber cultivation in smallholdings through high quality planting materials of high yielding clones. The project will run for 48 months will be executed in Nigeria with technology transfer to other CFC countries IRSG member countries. (ii) Agroforestry Tree Products for West/Central Africa seeks to promote tree domestication in a broadened scope which encourages rural innovation and it will also enable rural actors to adapt and disseminate tree domestication to improve farmers’ livelihoods. It is funded by International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and will be executed in Nigeria, Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo for a period of three years.

At the end of the retreat, the staffs are physically energized and determined to do more.
CGIAR finance officer visits Cameroon

Mr. Shey R. Tata, the Lead Finance Officer in the CGIAR Secretariat was in Cameroon recently for a working visit during which he held a working session with the four CGIAR centres in Cameroon: IITA, CIFOR, WorldFish and ICRAF at the IITA campus in Nkolbisson Yaounde. He used the occasion to brief senior scientists and staff of the four Centre on the proposed reforms in the CGIAR. He said that a reinvigorated CGIAR system is needed to confront the mounting challenges of rising food prices and increasing concern over global climate change. The rationale for CGIAR reforms is contained in the document “A Revitalized CGIAR – A New Way Forward: The Integrated Reform Proposal” (http://www.cgiar.org/meetings/agm08/agm08_business.html), which will be discussed at the upcoming Annual General Meeting of the CGIAR (AGM08) in Maputo, Mozambique, December 1-5.

After the working session, Mr Tata visited an ICRAF pilot village nursery managed by a farmer in Lekie-Assi Village, on the outskirts of Yaounde. The field trip provided Mr.Tata, who works at the system level, a rare opportunity to see, touch and feel how domestication technology by ICRAF is impacting the lives of local populations. He visited a third generation nursery and met Mr. Christophe Misse Misse, the farmer who runs the nursery, and several of his colleagues. Mr. Misse Misse explained how the proceeds from the sale of plants have helped to pay school fees for two of his children in boarding schools in the city and others in primary school, as well as being able to building a house to accommodate his family and relations. Mr Tata said “It was a unique experience”.

At the end of the visit, Mr Tata thinks the “successful efforts must be scaled-up to be able to improve more lives”.

La zone de Mindourou sur la bonne voie

En fin Juillet 2008, s’est tenue une formation sur les techniques de multiplication végétative des arbres agroforestiers de haute valeur. Cette formation qui a eu lieu à Medjoh (zone de Mindourou - Est Cameroun) s’est passée dans le cadre de la collaboration ICRAF- DACEFI. Des représentants de cinq groupes paysans ont été formés pour la gestion durable de leurs forêts communautaires. Thaddée Sado de ICRAF était sur le terrain du 11 au 14 Novembre 2008 pour le suivi.

Selon Thaddée, la zone de Mindourou est sur la bonne voie. Trois mois seulement après la formation, trois pépinières sont déjà installées. Chacune de ces pépinières dispose d’un hangar, d’un châssis de bouturage et de rééducation. En outre, une cinquantaine de plants greffés, marcottés et bouturés de différentes espèces ont été produits. Ceci est un signe qui montre que les paysans de la zone ont embrassé l'idée et ont bien assimilé les notions apprises pendant l'atelier. Cependant, le financement de ce projet arrive à terme à la fin du mois de Novembre 2008.

Dans l’intérêt d’intégrer les plants produits dans les systèmes de culture, il serait nécessaire que ICRAF, dans la mesure du possible, continue le suivi des différents groupes jusqu’à la maîtrise non seulement des trois techniques de multiplication végétatives (bouturage, marcottage et greffage), mais aussi des aspects liés à l’intégration. En outre, par la voie de Thaddée, ces paysans tendent la main à tout autre bailleur qui s’intéresserait à la gestion durable des ressources du patrimoine forestier de l’Est.
Soyah forest gets management committee

The forest was initially very rich in wildlife and timber species but it was plundered by people from the nearby town of Mamou, Guinea. A management committee was set up during a general assembly meeting held from 15-17 September 2008. The forest covers a surface area of 7723 ha and it was classified in 1945.

The people hunted animals, cut trees and expanded their farms and the neighbouring communities did nothing to stop the situation. About two thirds of the forest was ravaged by 2007 as the civil unrest in Guinea weakened the government’s capability to ensure control. As such the four forest officers could do little to protect the forest from destruction. More so, the notion of co-management of forest was largely unheard of in the communities around the Soyah classified forest.

Upon arrival in May 2008, the LAMIL-TBA staff embarked upon an education and sensitization campaign for all parties concerned. The local administration was encouraged to consider the communities not as threats to the forest but as potential partners in management and vice versa. After being taught their roles and responsibilities, as well as the opportunities and benefits of working together, the administrative authorities of Mamou and Soya participated in installing the first Forest Management committee for the villages within and around the classified forest. The attendance at general assembly meeting was massive.

Over 460 persons including about 200 women have already registered, raising a total of about USD1000. The most successful case of co-management in Guinea today is the Nyalama Classified forest which has less than 200 registered members. The Nyalama Forest management committee raised USD1500 within a period of 12 months from different sources of revenue. This massive adhesion to co-management shows the level of enthusiasm that communities have shown towards their new found responsibilities. To crown it all this year also saw the decision by the Council President and fringe communities to forbid any cultivation in the 3000 ha of follow in degraded forests opened up over the last two years.

Farmer leaders trained on group dynamics and marketing

The training organized by ICRAF also brought together some NGOs and it took place last October in Basankusu in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The four-day training that was carried out by Charly Facheux and John Mafolo had three main modules including practical exercises, group work and field visits. The main objective was to develop the agroforestry sub-sector approach and income generating activities in DRC. The same thing had been developed in many sites in Cameroon. This will help compare the results. In all, some 44 participants (12 women and 32 men) received the training.

The first module focused on group dynamics. Here, emphasis was on the creation, leadership and management of groups. The second module was an introduction to marketing. Participants were familiarised with certain key concepts such as market, products, segmentation, the 4Ps and to link these concepts with the daily activities. The third module was on rapid market survey. This was based on an earlier need for capacity building of NGOs and focal points, expressed during a planning meeting. The trip was also an opportunity to visit certain markets in Kinshasa (Gambela, UPN, Selembao, Rond point Ngaba and Matete) to explore possible outlets for NTFPs from the Equateur Province. Charly had the opportunity to have an idea of the volume of exchange in agroforestry products ahead of the start of the Agroforestry Tree Products for Africa in the DRC.
ICRAF mobilizes against HIV/AIDS

ICRAF is organizing a one day sensitization seminar on HIV/AIDS under the theme “Individual mobilisation to be an actor of change within the context of HIV/AIDS”. The event will take place on Saturday 29 November 2008 at Cresa Forêt Bois (at the entrance of the IRAD campus in Nkolbisson Yaoundé) as from 9am. The seminar will bring together ICRAF staffs and their families.

Agricultural & Tree Products Program to hold steering committee meeting

The fourth steering committee meeting of the Agricultural and Tree Products Program takes in Bamenda, North West Region from 15-16 December 2008 at the Ayaba Hotel. The programme is being financed under the Food for Progress program of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The meeting will be chaired by Mr. Mbassa Ndine Roger, Chairman of the Steering Committee. It will be attended by project donors and partners. Highlights of the meeting will include a presentation of work in progress by the different components, presentation of financial reports and presentation of resolutions. There will be field visits to Belo, Bafut, Mambu and Mankon to see what ICRAF CANADEL and WINROCK are doing on the ground.

Eni Kuchambi, a junior Anafe professional will undertake a post-graduate diploma training course in GIS (Geographic Information System) and Remote Sensing offered by the African Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education- English (ARCSSTEE) at Obafemi Awolowo University campus Ile-Ife Nigeria. The course will last nine months and begins next January. It will be sponsored by the National Space Research Development Agency (NASRDA) of Nigeria and UN office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), Vienna, Austria.

Poème

La Femme rurale

Femme Rurale, Mère de l’Humanité
Toi qui au lever du soleil te soucie de la famine
Ta houe en main, parcourant des sentiers à pieds, te dirige vers les travaux champêtres
Malgré les conditions difficiles dans lesquelles tu évolues, tu ne t’es jamais découragée
Tu t’es toujours souciée non seulement de ta famille mais de l’humanité toute entière
A travers ta perspicacité, ton endurance au travail, ta dure labeur au travail du champ,
De la terre, tu contribues de façon remarquable et significative à nourrir le monde entier
Le fruit de tes efforts non seulement te sert à entretenir tes beaux familiaux mais aussi
Des qu’il quitte ton champ, va vers des horizons divers à travers plusieurs circuits de transport
Terrestre – Aérien – Maritime – Voie ferroviaire
Pour être acheminé dans le monde entier
Malgré le fait que toi qui a travaillé à la sueur de ton front ne reçoit que les miettes et demeure davantage dans la pauvreté
Les autres bagarrent pour avoir la grosse part du gâteau à ton détriment
Femme Rurale, Mère de l’Humanité, Ne te décourage pas

Tu dois te sentir fière du fait que par tes efforts tu contribues à nourrir le monde
Tu n’es pas seule, tes mérites, tes valeurs, ton esprit d’humanisme sont reconnus
Même si beaucoup reste encore à faire, des efforts sont faits partout dans le monde
Pour éradiquer à ta situation et te soutenir
Femme rurale, Berceau de l’humanité,
Ne te décourage pas
Reste égale à toi-même
Tu es amour,
Tu honores la femme
Tu honores l’humanité
Arriveras un jour ou tout changera et tout ce qui t’es du te reviendra
Femme rurale, Berceau de l’humanité,
Merci pour tout ce que tu fais pour honorer les Femmes
Merci pour tout ce que tu fais pour nourrir les familles
Merci pour tous tes efforts
Que cet ange qui m’a inspiré pour ce message touche le cœur de l’humanité
Que Dieu te bénisse pour toujours !

Edith Christiane Souop
HR and Admin Officer