

## ECPGR supports capacity building workshop in East Africa



The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) is a multilaterally negotiated instrument that requires domestication at the regional and national levels. To that effect, a capacity building workshop on the Treaty was held in Entebbe, Uganda on 19-20 March 2009. The workshop was the result of team work led by the Eastern Africa Plant Genetic Resources Network (EAPGREN), which operates under the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), which hosts the Treaty Secretariat, as well as Bioversity International and the European Cooperative Programme for Plant Genetic Resources (ECPGR).



*A Marabou Stork (Leptoptilos crumeniferus) stalking the banks of Lake Victoria in search of a good catch.  
Photo: L. Maggioni, Bioversity International*

The workshop was attended by representatives of seven ASARECA countries (Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Sudan and Uganda). With the active support of resource persons from the above mentioned international institutions, the participants discussed the most efficient regional and national strategies for establishing a global system to provide farmers, plant breeders and scientists with access to plant genetic materials as well as ensuring that recipients of those materials share benefits they derive from their use with

the countries where they have been originated.

Representatives of ECPGR (Frank Begemann and Lorenzo Maggioni) presented the European experience regarding the regional implementation of the International Treaty, particularly through a mechanism to make European Multilateral System accessions visible on the on-line information system EURISCO. Also the concept of a European Genebank Integrated System (AEGIS) was illustrated.

In an effort to make the Treaty operational in the region through cost-efficient



and tailor-made measures, the workshop participants approved a road map for the implementation of the Treaty. The road map activities range from a series of practical short-term administrative actions to make genetic materials available under the Treaty rules, to broader measures for the management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture. Participants highlighted the most pressing capacity building needs in relation to all the elements of the road map and, in response to that, the workshop resulted in a concerted plan of assistance between EAPGREN, the Treaty Secretariat and Bioversity International. In addition to this plan, participants recommended actively seeking financial support to further the capacity building efforts in the region.

## EPGRIS3 takes first step for characterization and evaluation data in EURISCO

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On 7 May 2009 an EPGRIS3 self-funded workshop was organized at the Bundesanstalt für Landwirtschaft und Ernährung (BLE) in Bonn, Germany. The workshop was attended by 12 participants including most of the collaborators in EPGRIS3 activities 2-05 (Characterization and Evaluation Data) and 2-06 (Linking EURISCO and the European Central Crop Databases).

The one-day workshop was divided into two sessions, with nine presentations sketching the PGR documentation landscape and the treatment of characterization and evaluation (C&E) data in genebanks and European Central Crop Databases in the morning, and the afternoon dedicated to discussion of the proposal for inclusion of C&E data in EURISCO, as written by Theo van Hintum.

The afternoon discussion about the C&E discussion paper was positive and constructive. There was a general consensus regarding the proposal as presented in the morning session and it was adopted, implying that everyone present supports the principle of creating a repository of unstandardized C&E data in the framework of EURISCO. Obviously the repository should only be used for non-confidential data.

It was stressed that only C&E data on accessions already in EURISCO could be uploaded, however, it was agreed that any registered "uploader" (the National Focal Point (NFP), or someone approved by the NFP), can upload data on any EURISCO accession, independently from the national inventory to which they belong.

Some modifications to the proposal for the structure of the C&E data to be uploaded were discussed and adopted; they have been worked into an amended proposal. (continued on page 7)



*EPGRIS3 participants at the Rhine river.  
Photo: Anonymous*