

Welcome to the 14th Issue of the **Water & Food Monthly!**

This month's issue brings you a personal account of survival during the Tsunami by the CPWF Program Coordinator, a field report of a Yellow River Basin visit, a feature on CPWF #42—Groundwater Governance in Asia, news of the CPWF management team restructuring and more...

Contents

Experiences in the tsunami	1-2
Sumernet (Sustainable Mekong Research Network)	2
Partner Profile	2
Project Profile	3
Knowledge Sharing in Research	3
Basin News: A visit to the Yellow River Basin	4
April News	5
Assessing crop production, Nutrient Management, Climatic Risk and Environment Sustainability with Simulation models	6
Secretariat News	7
Recently released publications	7
Announcements	8

Experiences in the tsunami

by Jonathan Woolley

I've been asked by several colleagues about my family's experiences in the recent tsunami. Thank you all for your concern and enquiries. It's special to feel supported by, and to matter to, a community and our CPWF community is that for me.

We were on Christmas holiday at Arugam Bay in Sri Lanka's south east coast, a remote, beautiful and simple resort, and one of the island's closest points to the earthquake's epicentre off Sumatra. Just before 9 a.m., my wife Pilar and I were on a short pre-breakfast walk along the beach and our daughter Olivia was about 800m away, about to enter the sea in front of our small hotel. We had earlier sat together commenting how perfect the morning was and how tranquil the sea. There was no visible warning—here the sea did not draw back at all—we were admiring it as it was so beautiful. The first hint we had was a wave (more like a surge as it didn't break) that came too far, wetting us suddenly, but not violently. Instinctively, we retreated.

About 15 seconds later, Pilar and I were caught in the middle of our backs by a second surge, when near the top of the beach. The third surge washed us through a simple open building. The fourth somehow swept us near a palm tree that we wound ourselves around, holding on to it and to each other. There we weathered what were apparently about four more surges over what seemed like the space of about 10 minutes. We remember the sea as cold, brown and full of debris. The sea washed over us as we held onto our tree; we both remember thinking that we couldn't resist the tremendous push and pull much further. In retrospect, we were very lucky to be partly protected from the debris and the full force of the waves by the building still standing near our tree. Then in a flash, the water level fell as though a plug had been pulled from a bathtub. We had to resist being sucked away, while wedged between our tree and a floating tree-trunk pressing against us. We still somehow thought then that we had been involved in a freak local tide. It was only when we saw the level of destruction and death near our hotel that the extent of it dawned.

Meanwhile, Olivia was on a more exposed part of the bay, open to the full force of the waves. By about the third surge, she climbed on top of a one-storey structure; as it collapsed, she calculated a grab for the leaves of a palm tree, from which she hung for a few seconds, until she was swept further inland and grabbed hold of the trunk of another palm tree just below the leaves. She has a photograph of the tree taken later—the leaves are about 8m above the ground. Others in this area were swept a kilometre into the lagoon or out to sea. When she couldn't hold on any longer, Olivia slipped into the water, fortunately as the last surge of the first incident was draining. She made her



Jonathan Woolley - CPWF Program Coordinator

Partner Profile: our partner featured in this issue is the

Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS)

JIRCAS promotes research aimed at achieving a stable global food supply and ensuring sustainable agriculture, forestry and fisheries in harmony with the environment. It conducts interdisciplinary research on biological and social aspects of agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and undertakes collaborative projects with institutions of developing countries and international organisations. JIRCAS makes active contributions to address the agricultural, forestry, fisheries, food and environmental problems with a focus on developing regions.

For more information please visit: <http://www.jircas.affrc.go.jp/index.html>

JIRCAS and the CPWF

JIRCAS is one of the 19 CPWF Consortium Steering Committee members and is one of the Advanced Research Institutes. JIRCAS is a partner in the new CPWF Basin Focal Project in the Mekong Benchmark Basin. For more information on CPWF and JIRCAS cooperation email Osamu Ito at: Osamuito@jircas.go.jp



way back to our two-storey hotel building. It was still standing although one-storey buildings of the same hotel had been utterly destroyed.

Our son, Alan, who had been asleep in a second floor room, was awakened by the deep rumbling noise (near our palm tree I remember no noise at all) and got out of bed in time to see the water pouring in. Seeing the destruction, he thought we'd all been lost. Fortunately, within half an hour of the first wave, we were reunited in one of the few remaining buildings. There, we withstood six more sets of surges over the next 3 hours. From the height of the hotel, we could just about detect new surges coming. With each, along with 10 other people, we clutched pillars in the corridor, surfboards and each other. The peak of each set of surges washed powerfully through the open corridors, specially the last two that occurred close to each other around 12.30 pm and seemed the strongest. Through different estimates, we reckon that the peak level of most of the sets of surges was about 10m above normal sea level, which in that flat terrain was devastating, entering at least a kilometre inland.

One of Alan's first actions was finding a mobile phone that had luckily been on a high bedroom shelf and was still dry. Once reunited, we used that to seek the help of IWMI, who provided wonderful support and advice and contacted the British High Commission in Colombo, which kept a register of all the foreign nationals in our group. We were advised to retreat to higher ground once the waves abated. That we did, spending the next 24 hours on a hilltop 10m above sea level and almost a kilometre inland with some 150 others. The injured and foreigners were evacuated by Sri Lankan Air Force helicopters to Ampara, a nearby district capital, but it was a slow process only possible in daylight. Meanwhile, food and water was dropped to us and a few with medical skills attended the wounded. We were stranded as the bridge had collapsed leaving us in effect on an island.

In the community of Arugam Bay, some 250 people perished out of 2000, many of them women and children, including the hotel owner and a number of guests.

We keep in touch with several members of our global "hilltop survivors group". Having gone through a similar experience, we can provide mutual support and there is less to explain. The group has raised funds to help in Arugam Bay and Olivia has conducted a needs assessment and linked with local NGOs to distribute our contribution. It sometimes seems complicated to know how and where to help. Despite the availability of funds, there is still much confusion and disorientation.

My personal conclusion to all this, so far, is still contained in the comment by a wise Sri Lankan doctor, who treated us on return to Colombo: "You have passed in a few minutes through an intensity of experience that some never have in a lifetime."

Sumernet (Sustainable Mekong Research Network)

Sumernet is a partnership founded in August 2004 by 12 research and policy institutions from the Mekong region (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and Yunnan Province of the People's Republic of China). Its objective is to catalyse the transition to sustainable development through the sustained production of independent, verifiable, and publicly available policy-relevant knowledge.

For more information please go to: http://regserver.unfccc.int/seors/file_storage/10

Project Profile: We will feature at least one project in every issue. Would you like it to be yours? Send us your story and watch this space. For contact details please see the back page.

This month we feature Funded Project #42 "Groundwater Governance in Asia: Capacity Building through Action Research in Indo-Gangetic (IGB) and Yellow River (YRB) Basins"

Besides being the food bowl for over 2 billion people, the Indo-Gangetic and Yellow River Basins in Asia have one important commonality: vibrant groundwater economies. Since 1970, rapid growth in tube-well irrigation has created an agrarian boom with huge productivity and livelihood benefits that must alas eventually end. That is unless basin managers soon master groundwater governance. The two basins have 15 million tube-well owners, who are neither registered, licensed, nor subject to any regulations. Groundwater agencies here are strong in developing groundwater and understanding how it behaves. But governing groundwater economies also requires understanding people and their institutions. Governance in this context is about institutional structures and processes designed to establish *direction* and *control* on these economies.

Today, there are few points of contact between this informal groundwater economy and public systems. Further, there is little coordinated research on groundwater focusing on the resource, the people and institutions using and managing it.

Thus this project is designed to engage key public groundwater agencies in the countries of the two basins in a shared plan to develop a toolkit for proactive groundwater governance, and to catalyze a change program to promote assuming a wider mandate. The project goal is to support conditions that aid proactive governance of groundwater socio-economy for better productivity, equity and sustainability of groundwater use. The purpose is to begin a process of strategic and organizational change in groundwater areas of basin states through capacity building and the birth of an applied knowledge base vital to boost groundwater governance.

The participating institutes are the International Water Management Institute; Bangladesh Water Development Board, Bangladesh; CCAP, Chinese Academy of Sciences, China; Dept. of Agricultural and resources Economics, UC Davis, USA; Department of Irrigation, Government of Nepal; Institute of Rural Management, India; Water and Power Development Authority, Pakistan.

For more on this project, please email: k.villholth@cgiar.org

Knowledge Sharing in Research

The "Knowledge Sharing (KS) in Research Pilot Project" Inception Workshop will take place on June 7-10, 2005 at IWMI headquarters in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The KS Pilot Project is a joint effort between the CPWF and IWMI with the intention to identify, analyse and promote best practices in innovative knowledge sharing and science communication in research projects. The pilot project works with 10 case study projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The KS Pilot Project Leader is Sanjini de Silva. (also CPWF Communications Coordinator) Contact sanjini.desilva@cgiar.org



The two basin have 15 million tube-well owners, who are neither registered, licenced, nor subject to any regulations."



Headwaters of the yellow river, Tibetan Plateau



Revegetation at the edge of the Great Wall, Shaanxi Province



Degraded rangeland on the Tibetan Plateau, Qinghai Province, China



Checking experimental oat farming system for improved livestock production, Tibetan Plateau, Qinghai Province

Basin News: A visit to the Yellow River Basin

by Mark Giordano

In September 2004, the Yellow River Conservancy Commission (YRCC) and other Chinese scientists and government workers were joined by a group of international researchers in an intense study of the Yellow River and its management challenges.



The main goal of the venture was to further prioritise Yellow River Basin (YRB) research needs both within and beyond the CGIAR Challenge Program. All, or parts, of the group travelled nearly the full length of the river, studying issues, such as the challenges of rangeland management on the Tibetan Plateau, options for research to support increased water productivity in Inner Mongolia, the implications for water use of efforts to prevent erosion on the Loess Plateau, and rising recognition of environmental flow needs for the river generally and the delta especially.

The role of research in addressing these issues was put in the context of China's fast changing economic and social environment and the Yellow River Basin's evolving institutional structure. As well as discussing YRB research needs, the team also examined ways for China to increase information on the Yellow River and its management outside of China, and how China, with its long history of water management, can play a greater role in improving global water management.

The main research group consisted of Yunpeng Xue and Sun Feng of the YRCC, Peter Rogers of Harvard University, Hugh Turrall and Mark Giordano of IWMI, which was led by CPWF Coordinator, Jonathan Woolley. Numerous Chinese researchers from the various provinces visited were also involved.



Integrated livestock farming system in an area of low rainfall, Inner Mongolia



Terracing to control erosion, Loess Plateau

April news

April has been an especially busy and productive month. A number of interesting conferences and workshops were held in various destinations.

- **“New Currents In Conserving Freshwater Systems”, a conference at the American Museum of Natural History, New York City, April 7 - 8, 2005**

An interdisciplinary summit for scientists and conservation practitioners was held to highlight recent successful initiatives in freshwater conservation, and to discuss how and where cutting-edge ideas and tools could be implemented.

For further information please visit the symposium website at <http://cbc.amnh.org/symposia/freshwater/resources.html>.

- **A Workshop on Globalization and Trade: “Implications for Water and Food Security”, Turrialba, Costa Rica, April 18-20, 2005**

The International Workshop in Costa Rica brought together 25 experts on the various aspects of water, food, globalization and trade. The objectives of the workshop were to identify the major risks and impacts on water and food security for developing-countries from globalization and trade; while attempting to quantify these impacts as much as possible; identify research gaps and avenues for collaboration among different disciplines; develop possibly first-cut policy responses based on the results from the papers presented; and identify actions for policymakers to consider.

To view the announcement, go to: <http://theme5.waterforfood.org/events/20050418ws.pdf> or read the abstracts at: <http://theme5.waterforfood.org/events/20050418CRabstracts.asp>

- **CGIAR Challenge Programs featured in the European Forum on Agricultural Research and Development Workshop, April 27 - 29, 2005**

The European Forum on Agricultural Research and Development (EFARD) met in Zurich, Switzerland recently. As part of their Focus for Europe initiative for 2005, they highlighted the CGIAR work at the Forum. Ian Johnson, CGIAR Chairman, made a keynote address and speakers included Pamela Anderson, CIP incoming Director General. A substantial CGIAR exhibition was prominently placed at the Forum.

During the event, a workshop on “Research Partnerships in the CGIAR Challenge Programs” was held on April 28 at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, emphasizing the relevance of and benefits to partners of the CP, with particular relevance to a European audience. The overall message of the workshop and Francisco’s presentation was that the Challenge Programs are innovative mechanisms to expand partnerships and thereby strengthen research.

V.V. Sugunan, CPWF Theme Leader 3, [Fisheries and Aquatic Ecosystems](#), represented the CPWF at the workshop to provide a short presentation outlining the Challenge Program and its experiences to date. A detailed program is available at: <http://www.efard2005.org/>

- **Training Workshop on River Basin Management and Organisations for mid career water professionals from South Asia, Sri Lanka, April 25 - 29, 2005**

The workshop organised by the [Network of Asian River Basin Organizations \(NARBO\)](#), was aimed at officials and professionals from government and non-government organizations in Asia involved in the management of river basins and the implementation of integrated water resources management.

For more information, visit the NARBO website at: <http://203.209.62.200/narbo/>



Dr. John Wendt shows how to sample soils for mass assessment of change



A group discussing follow-up actions



Workshop participants doing an exercise with trainer Dr. Gerrit Hoogenboom

Assessing Crop Production, Nutrient Management, Climatic Risk and Environmental Sustainability with Simulation Models

by Ramadjita Tabo

The African Network for Soil Biology and Fertility (AfNet) of the Tropical Soil Biology and Fertility (TSBF) institute of CIAT and CPWF funded Project #5 “Enhancing rainwater and nutrient use efficiency for improved crop productivity, farm income and rural livelihoods in the Volta basin” coordinated by ICRISAT and presented by the International Consortium for Agricultural Systems Applications (ICASA) held a training program on DSSAT Version 4 in Arusha, Tanzania, in August 23 –28, 2004.

Today, increased food production depends on the careful use of resources. Additionally, climate change, climate variability, soil carbon sequestration and the long-term impact on food security and environmental sustainability have become important. Many weather, soil, genetic and management factors affect the way a crop will respond to irrigation, fertilizer and other management practices. Decisive appropriate crop management strategies under these uncertainties have major economic and environmental implications. Computer simulation models of the soil/plant/atmosphere system make vital contributions to furthering our grasp of the processes determining crop responses and predicting crop performance, resource use and environmental impacts for different environments and management scenarios.

DSSAT, a research tool for crop production analyses contains a suite of model for specific simulations. DSSAT v4 is windows based and includes the CSM model as well as tools and utility programs for managing soil, weather, genetic, crop, economic and pest data, and application and analysis programs. DSSAT-Cropping System Model (CSM) is a new, general cropping system model for simulating crop growth and development and soil and plant water, nitrogen and carbon dynamics.

The overall goal of the training program in Arusha was to familiarize participants with a computer model for the simulation of crop growth and yield, soil and plant water, nutrient and carbon dynamics and their application to real problems. The 29 participants from nine African countries gained understanding of the various DSSAT tools interfaces while identifying which inputs are required for simulating production scenarios. They also learned how to create their own template experiments.



2004 Faculty and Participants of the training program

Secretariat news

- **Capacity Building Officer**

Short listed candidates from overseas for the post of CPWF Capacity Building Officer were interviewed on April 7 – 8, 2005 at IWMI, Colombo, Sri Lanka. As part of the interview process all candidates attended a panel interview and made a presentation to IWMI staff. On April 21, the CPWF announced the appointment of Ms. Marcia Macomber as the new Capacity Building Officer for the CPWF. Marcia holds a M.S, in Resource Geography from the Oregon State University, USA and is at present the Director of Program Development, Universities Partnership for Transboundary Waters at the same institution. She has previously held positions in several countries including Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Niger. Marcia will take up her new position on September 1, 2005. Welcome aboard the CPWF team!



Marcia Macomber, the new Capacity Building Officer for the CPWF

- **Management Team restructured**

At the 5th CPWF Consortium Steering Committee Meeting the CPMT management structure revisions were approved. These revisions are due to the program maturing and a streamlined management team with an expanded membership will best take the program forward. The management team will therefore be greatly reduced in size, to six, allowing it to concentrate on management and to interact more effectively and frequently. Concurrently, it will be expanded to contain the specific skills needed to perform urgent and important tasks. It will consist of the Program Coordinator, the Program Manager, one representative each of Theme Leaders and Basin Coordinators, and two from the wider CPWF community of practice.

The selection committee has already elected Kim Geheb as the Basin Coordinator representative and Francis Gichuki as the Theme Leader representative for the new CPMT and they will serve on the management team from April 2005 to March 2006.

The other two members of the wider community of practice drawn from project leaders and their partners, and members of the Consortium institutions of the Joint Venture Agreement are to be selected from project researchers, project leaders in the presently funded projects and from the 19 Consortium institutions.

If you are a member of one of these eligible groups and would like to offer and develop your experience in management of an international research programme, please write to the CPWF Secretariat to request details of the simple application procedure. You should have approximately 10-15% of your time potentially free for such an assignment for which your institutions would be compensated by CPWF.

Closing date for applications is May 20, 2005.

Recently released publications

- ***River Restoration in East Asia***

River Restoration in East Asia is the proceedings of the 3-day East Asia Regional Seminar on River Restoration held in Kuala Lumpur in January 2003.

For more details or to download the publication, go to: http://www.riverbasin.org/ev_en.php?ID=3954_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC.

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Announcements

• Special Call for Research on Water & Food

The International Foundation for Science (IFS) and the CGIAR Challenge Program on Water & Food (CPWF) issue a call for research proposals open to young scientists.

Researchers in developing countries who satisfy the IFS eligibility criteria and do research in Crop Water Productivity Improvement; Water and People in Catchments Aquatic Ecosystems and Fisheries; Integrated Basin Water Management Systems; or the Global and National Food and Water System may apply for the grant.

Application Deadline: **30 June, 2005**. For information about the IFS grant and application process, please go to: http://www.ifs.se/Programme/waterandfood_call_2005.asp.

The first IFS/CPWF call for research proposals to young scientists ended on December 31, 2004. The applications received were reviewed by an IFS External Review Panel. A meeting was convened in Stockholm and 8 were selected. We will keep you posted on more news about the grants as they become available.

• New research grant opportunities for young researchers from developing countries

International Foundation for Science (IFS) and the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS), Japan, are pleased to announce a new call for applications to two Grant/Fellowship competitions titled the Agriculture for Peace Fellowship (APF) Competition and the Science and Technology Fellowship (STF) Competition. Please consult the IFS web for complete details: <http://www.ifs.se> and for more information about UNU-IAS, please visit <http://www.ias.unu.edu>.

Share your news and views!

To make this newsletter a successful and useful tool for all of us, share your progress, results and stories, or simply send us interesting snippets that your colleagues might find interesting! Contributions can be short and simple—ideally with a nice photo or graphic.

We would appreciate your feed back. Is it useful? What would you like to see more of? Do you like the layout?

The newsletter is available in HTML, PDF, printed and text-only version. Visit www.waterforfood.org for back issues.

We maintain a mailing list for the distribution of this newsletter. If you have colleagues that may find the newsletter useful, please send us their e-mail address (es) or alternatively forward it to them.

Send your contributions and comments to:

Sanjini de Silva—sanjini.desilva@cgiar.org

The Editor, Water and Food Monthly

CGIAR Challenge Program on Water and Food

For further information about the program contact the CPWF secretariat at cpsecretariat@waterforfood.org

Photo Credit: Sanjini de Silva, Jonathan Woolley

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