

Preface

The RIHN pre-research (PR) project in FY2006 “Vulnerability and Resilience of Social-Ecological Systems” has just completed the one-year preparatory stage.

During the fiscal year 2006, many project members visited Zambia and discussed with many people including farmers, university professors, researchers, and government officials and conducted preliminary surveys. With the cooperation of local villagers and government officials, we obtained a permission to use a plot of fallow land for our field experiment during our project and started soil analysis. Also, two graduate students have started living in villages in the Southern Province before the cropping season and collecting detailed information regarding agricultural production, labor migration, drought responses. Geographical information based on ground truth survey is under way. In March 2007, the MOU was signed between RIHN and Zambia Agricultural Research Institute (ZARI) as a major research partner. We are also preparing household survey with the Central Statistical Office in this spring.

The year 2006 was the time we strongly realized the globalization process. The economic boom in China and Korea has increased the copper demand and price significantly. And as a result of the copper boom in Zambia, Kwacha appreciated from 4,670ZK in August 2005 to 3,500ZK in June 2006. How the expansion of trade and the exchange rate shock might be affecting the small-scale farmers is an important issue. Recently India and China are emerging as an important trade and investment partners for Africa. Some people mention new “Africa’s Silk Road”.

Our project has just finished the stage of pre-research study and is moving into the stage of full research project. We appreciate 1-3PR members for their efforts for the preliminary research and field surveys. We also appreciate kind support by the evaluation committee members, director, program directors, administrative staff and the colleagues of RIHN for making this exciting research program possible.

March 2007

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