

[Keynote Address]

## Conservation and Adaptive Management of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)

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### Abstract

Worldwide, specific agricultural systems and landscapes have been created, shaped and maintained by generations of farmers and herders based on diverse natural resources, using locally adapted management practices. Building on local knowledge and experience, these ingenious agri-cultural systems reflect the evolution of humankind, the diversity of its knowledge and its profound relationship with nature. These systems have resulted in the maintenance and adaptation of globally significant agricultural biodiversity, outstanding landscapes, indigenous knowledge systems and resilient ecosystems, but above all, in the sustained provision of multiple goods and services, food and livelihood security for millions of poor and small farmers. Following several years of field work and consultations with member countries and national and international institutions, FAO launched a Partnership Initiative on Conservation and Adaptive Management of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg 2002. GIAHS Initiative seeks to promote their international and national recognition and dynamic conservation - including where necessary the revitalization of agricultural heritage systems and their key elements. This presentation describes several sample agricultural heritage systems, the criteria used in their evaluation, and the key challenges the GIAHS initiative confronts in establishing between 100-150 Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems.

**Keywords:** Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems; agricultural biodiversity; dynamic conservation; adaptive management; food security