

A Collaborative Tool for Mobilizing Knowledge in Agrobiodiversity and the Interface with Climate Change: the Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research

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ABOUT

The Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research was established in 2006, and has also recently gone 'online'. It provides a framework for collaboration and cooperation among those working to maximise agrobiodiversity's contribution to human well-being and to deal with global challenges such as climate change, water quality and land degradation. The overall goal of the Platform is to enhance the sustainable management and use of agrobiodiversity by improving knowledge of all its different aspects. The Platform is hosted by Bioversity International.

WHY IS THE PLATFORM NEEDED?

Improved practices are required to maintain and make the best use of agricultural biodiversity for farmers and society. This challenge is embraced in the Millennium Development Goals and the 2010 Biodiversity Target, but its achievement is threatened by climate change. The Platform was established to address critical 'knowledge gaps' in the development and implementation of appropriate responses.

OBJECTIVES

- To support the development of an adequate agrobiodiversity knowledge base
- To identify ways in which agrobiodiversity can contribute to addressing some of the major global challenges faced today, including climate change
- To identify and facilitate new and innovative research partnerships.

Agricultural biodiversity, or agrobiodiversity, includes all the components of biological diversity of relevance to food and agriculture as well as the components of biological diversity that constitute the agro-ecosystem: the variety and variability of animals, plants and microorganisms, at the genetic, species and ecosystem levels, that sustain the functions, structure and processes of the agro-ecosystem.

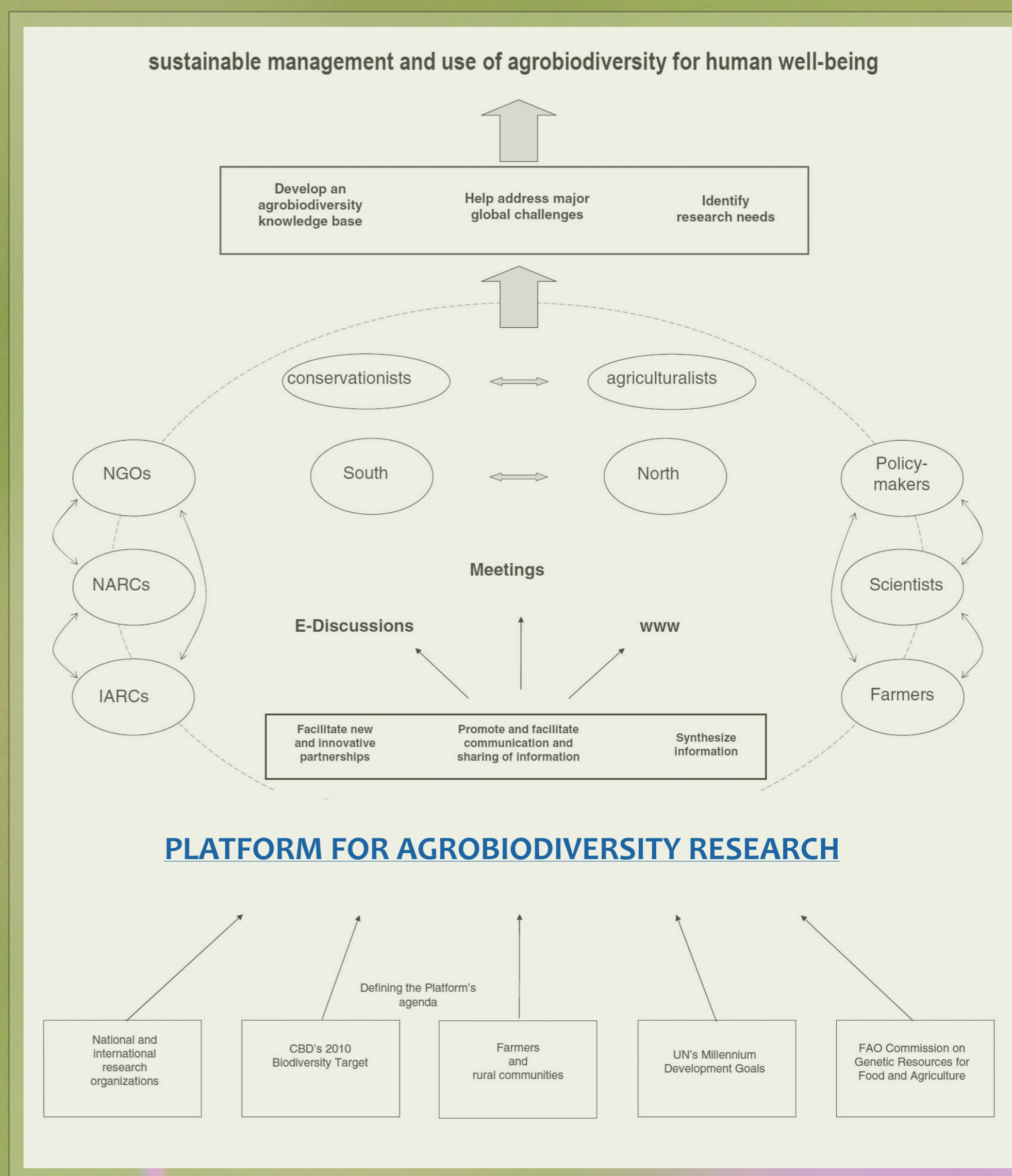


WEBSITE SCREENSHOTS

THE PLATFORM FOR STUDENTS AND RESEARCHERS

The Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research is a vibrant knowledge pool and learning resource for universities, lecturers, students and researchers. All services are free to the end-user, and include:

- Information on regional opportunities for thesis and dissertation research
- A peer support mechanism for sharing and review of PhD research proposals
- Networking opportunities through a global community of experts, academics, researchers and practitioners
- Opportunities to take part in new cross-cutting, multi-disciplinary research activities
- Online discussions exploring key knowledge gaps in agrobiodiversity. The first discussion will start in September 2008, on the subject of agrobiodiversity and climate change
- Cutting-edge publications and research documents
- 'Learning cases' on agrobiodiversity, which will serve as stand-alone learning modules in relevant courses.



OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The Platform for Agrobiodiversity Research can play an important role in facing the increasing challenges in agriculture and conservation of biological diversity, by strengthening the knowledge base needed to support the development of a more sustainable agriculture and halt the loss of biodiversity in and around agricultural areas

- Dr Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity

CURRENT ACTIVITIES: Using agrobiodiversity to manage climate change

The Platform has recently started work on a new project entitled 'The Use of Agrobiodiversity to Manage Climate Change - charting experiences from rural communities and indigenous peoples'. In short, the project aims to:

- bring together information from the rural communities, indigenous peoples and research workers on how they use agrobiodiversity to cope with climate change
- stimulate communication between agrobiodiversity researchers, users and maintainers
- identify tools and practices relevant to using agrobiodiversity for coping with climate change and making these widely available.

Ultimately, the goal is to provide a synthesis of available information, assess major knowledge gaps and identify research that will respond to the needs of farmers, communities and indigenous peoples. It is also expected to promote awareness of the vital role of agrobiodiversity in adapting to climate change among key audiences, including donors, development agents and the global biodiversity community.

Can you contribute? Visit the website to find out more, and see how you can assist in building a global knowledge base on climate change coping strategies using agrobiodiversity. Or post a blog!

Website: www.agrobiodiversityplatform.org/climate_change/

Blog: www.agrobiodiversityplatform.org/climate_change/blog/



agrobiodiversityplatform.org

IMAGE: B. VAN SCHAGEN



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