



December 2012

# UNU-LRT Newsletter

## Dear Friends of UNU-LRT

When another good year for the UNU-Land Restoration Training Programme has come to an end, we celebrate the milestones reached in 2012 and look forward to the coming year.

We send our best wishes for the festive season ahead and wish you a happy new year.

The UNU-LRT team

## Six-Month Training Programme in 2012

The six-month training programme started on 11 April 2012. Ten fellows participated in this year's training; five women and five men. They came from Ghana, Namibia, Uganda, Mongolia and Uzbekistan. The first eight weeks of the training focused on degradation and desertification, land restoration and sustainable land management. Dr. Richard Thomas, the assistant director of the Dryland Ecosystems Programme at UNU-INWEH, taught the fellows about water management in drylands. Two specialized lines were offered in 2012. The specialized line *Sustainable Land Management (SLM)* was offered for the fifth time and *Land degradation and Global Environmental Change (LDGC)* for the first time.



The UNU-LRT fellows in Vatnajökull National Park during an excursion in summer 2012. Photo: Hafdis Hanna Aegisdottir.

The fellows worked on their individual projects during the latter three months of the programme. As in the previous years, this year's projects were very diverse, ranging from projects within the social sciences (surveys and examinations of participatory approaches of land management) to scientific field- and laboratory based projects. The fellows choose a subject for the project that is of their interest and to the interest and importance for their workplace and country.

On 20 September, the fellows presented their individual project work in an open seminar at the Agricultural University of Iceland. On 4 October, all ten fellows graduated from the UNU-LRT six-month training programme.

## The workshop Soils, Governance and Society

An interdisciplinary workshop on Soils, Governance and Society was held in Iceland in the first week of June. The workshop was held by the Soil Conservation Service of Iceland, Pennsylvania State University and the University of New England, in partnership with the Global Soil Partnership and the UNU-Land Restoration Training Programme.

The workshop brought together people from various disciplines such as academia, administration and practitioners, as well as from different regions of the world. The focus of the workshop was to explore how natural resource governance might be radically improved to meet the many challenges to sustainability. The fellows of the UNU-LRT six-month training course participated in the workshop and gave a presentation. The title of their presentation was *Land degradation in Africa and Asia: Natural resource governance*. Esther Amoako from Ghana gave the talk on behalf of the UNU-LRT fellows.



The 2012 UNU-LRT fellows at the workshop Soils, Governance and Society. Photo: Hafdis Hanna

## International guest lecturer and seminar on land health

This year's main international guest lecturer was Dr. Jeffrey Herrick. Dr. Herrick is a renowned soil scientist and a leading scientist in rangeland health issues. He works for the USDA-ARS and is based in Jornada Experimental Range in New Mexico. Dr. Herrick has wide experience in research, teaching, and conducting monitoring and assessments all over the world, including Mongolia and Namibia.

The UNU-LRT programme organized an open seminar on land health on 18 June in cooperation with the Agricultural University of Iceland (AUI) and the Soil Conservation Service of Iceland (SCSI). The seminar was held to celebrate 17 June, which is the World Day to Combat Desertification. Talks were given at the seminar on rangeland health conditions in Iceland and on global sustainable land management, opportunities to integrate local and scientific knowledge based on an understanding of land potential.



Dr. Herrick in the field with UNU-LRT fellow Johnny Kofi Awoonor from Ghana. Photo: Hafdis Hanna Aegisdottir.

## New UNU-LRT website soon launched

The UNU-LRT website is being revised and a new site will be launched in the next few weeks. The new website will have new features, such as a direct link to Facebook and a Google map showing UNU-LRT partner countries and information about graduated fellows. As on the current website, news about the activities of UNU-LRT will be posted on the new website.



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Land Restoration Training Programme

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