

Conservation and
Adaptive Management
of

**GLOBALLY
IMPORTANT
AGRICULTURAL
HERITAGE
SYSTEMS**

Maharaj Muthoo
Member, GIAHS Steering Committee



UNITED NATIONS
UNIVERSITY



GIAHS: Heritage for the future

Definition :

Remarkable Land Use Systems and landscapes which are rich in biological diversity evolving from the ingenious and dynamic adaptation of a community/population to its environment and the needs and aspirations for sustainable development (FAO)

- **Integrated Agricultural, Forestry, Livestock and Fishery systems**
- **Result of co-adaptation and co-evolution of plants, animals, humans and landscape under specific environmental circumstances**
- **Managed through highly adapted social and cultural practices and institutions**
- **Provide food and livelihood security and social, cultural and ecosystem services**
- **Important at local, national and global levels**
- **They are under threat**

Examples of GIAHS

- Rice based traditional systems
- Maize and root crop based agro-ecosystems
- Pastoral transhumant and nomadic systems
- Irrigation, soil and water management systems in drylands
- Multi-layered home gardens and agro-forestry systems
- Taro-based systems
- Fishing, hunting and gathering systems



GIAHS have other values
beyond production of foods,
fibres...

These living and evolving
systems and communities
have kept their distinct
identities intact on the
strength of unifying values
such as **nature, family,**
community, history, and a
sense of belonging to their
natural habitats

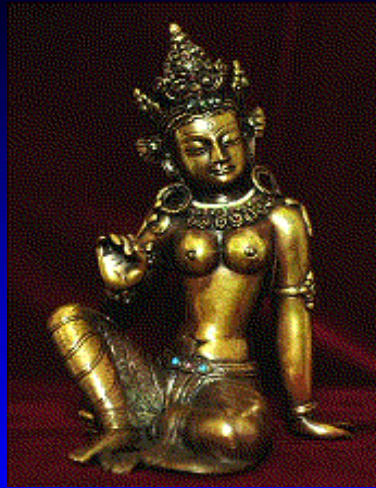
Tradition and culture has always
been an integral part of rice based
livelihood systems

In China



the Goddess **Guan Yin** took pity on humans and gave her milk and blood to create white and red rice.

In the Himalaya



Goddess **Pavarti**, the daughter of the mountains, was the first to grow rice.

In India



Rice is associated with prosperity and with the Hindu Goddess of Wealth, **Lakshmi**.

In Indonesia and Bali.



People perform rituals to honor **Dewi Sri**. As goddess and guardian of rice and the rice harvest,

In Japan



It is said that the Sun Goddess **Amatereshu-Omi-Kami** grew rice in the fields of heaven, giving the first harvest to **Prince Ninigi**. He was told to take it to "The Land of Eight Great Islands," Japan.

In Vietnam



For the **Rungo** people, the shadows on the moon are created by the Rice Goddess stacking up her freshly harvested rice in the shade of a Bo tree.

In Hindu Temples



Large tapestries of rice cakes are made as **offerings to Hindu temples**.



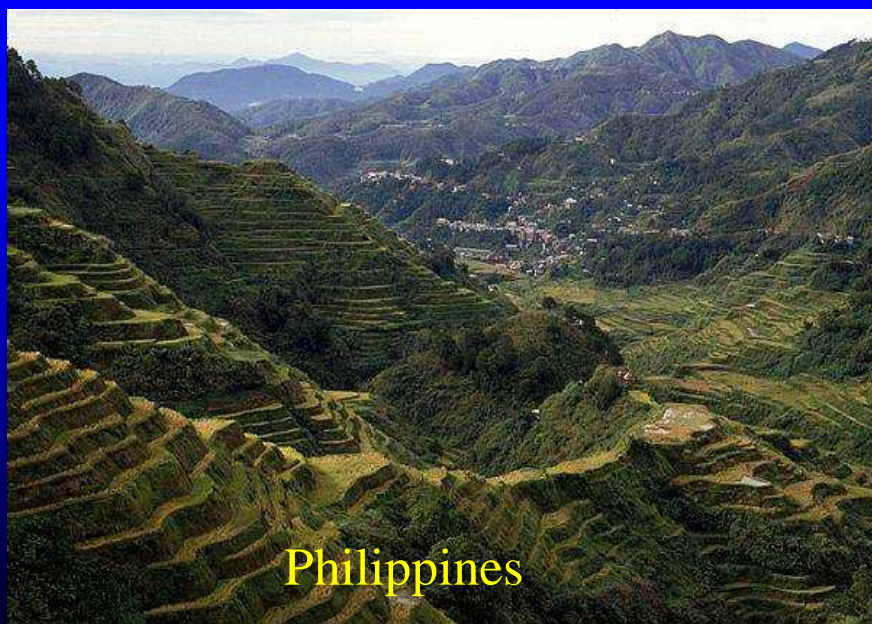
NUMEROUS EXAMPLES OF GIAHS EXISTS ACROSS THE WORLD



Peru



Indonesia



Philippines

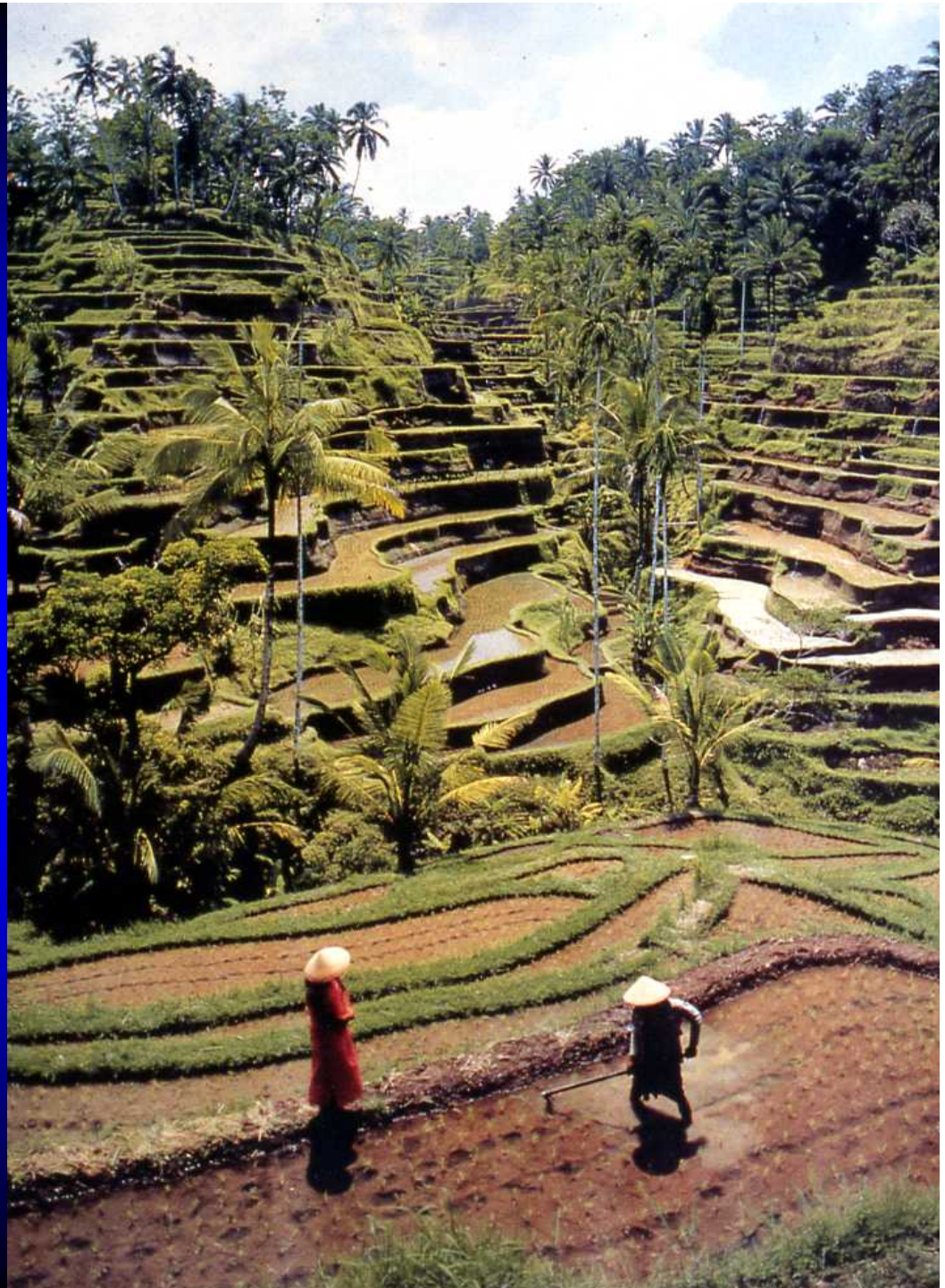


Madagascar



THEY ARE UNDER THREAT

- Inappropriate policies & institutions
- Neglect of diversity & traditional knowledge
- Low priority to *in-situ* conservation and communities
- Population pressure
- Climate & Cultural Change...



Overall goal of GIAHS Initiative

to “protect and encourage customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements”, specifically within agricultural systems. CBD: Article 8(j)

Objective

to promote dynamic conservation and adaptive management of globally significant agricultural biodiversity harboured in globally important agricultural heritage systems.

GI AHS APPROACH

- Promote traditional, family and community driven agricultural and indigenous knowledge systems
- Enable & disseminate best-farmer practices
- Establish criteria for sustainability science with local & Global goals
- Provide leads for alternative opportunities & adaptive technology



GIAHS DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

- Improving understanding of agriculture systems in their environmental, socio-economic policy and cultural dimensions
- Generating increased recognition of the global significance of agricultural systems
- Building the capacity of national and local institutions and providing support to promote dynamic conservation and sustained viability
- Conservation and sustainable use and, rehabilitation of agricultural biodiversity and genetic patrimony, ecosystem services and landscape diversity
- Recognition and safeguarding and of the resilience provided by the combination of knowledge systems and social organisation
- Mitigating threats of degradation and root causes of dysfunction and enhancing environmental and socio-economic benefits at local and global levels and;
- Adding economic, environmental and cultural value to products, artefacts and knowledge systems of GIAHS by supportive policies and incentives for their sustainability

FAO –GIAHS Initiative

Establishing sites around the world

Paradigms Shift; Champions; Stakeholders

- **Emphasize PEOPLE in Ecosystems as part of Ecosystem Approaches**
- **Connect better with the Right to Food initiatives**
- **Raise awareness and understanding of GIAHS among international development organizations and scientific institutions**
- **Implementation of GIAHS initiative**
- **Identify and safeguard system sites**

Strategy and Intervention Schemes

Global level

facilitate international recognition of the concept of GIAHS wherein globally significant agrobiodiversity is harboured, and it will consolidate and disseminate lessons learned and best practices from project activities at the country level

National level

ensure mainstreaming of the GIAHS concept in national sectoral and inter-sectoral plans and policies

Local level

address conservation and adaptive management at the community level

Biodiversity is “The life insurance policy for life itself”

**GIAHS is not about the past
but it is about the future**

Thank you



Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems
(GIAHS)

