



INFOSPOT

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KEEPING YOU INFORMED

First
Edition

QUARTERLY REPORTS 1ST QUARTER AND PLANS FOR PELUM-KENYA FOR 2009 ACTIVITIES

SALUTATION IN THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE INFO SPOT IN 2009.

By Zachary Makanya, Country Coordinator

This is the first Issue of the PELUM-Kenya's INFO SPOT in 2009. As we start the year 2009, I wish to salute all PELUM-Kenya members, partners and Country Desk Staff: *Sawubona! Sawubona* is a Zulu greeting which means "I see you". Zulus do not greet others "how are you?" where in many cases, many people answer in the positive even when all is not well. *Sawubona* means I see that you are here, recognize, and appreciate your presence and greatly respect what you are doing for it is important! Yes, we at the Country Desk "see" all our members and partners and hence commit ourselves to work even harder to support you all and each other as we all endeavor to meet the aspirations for 2009. This year, we have also been joined by Ms. Betty Muasya, the CAL Programme Officer and Mr. Roland Mwalugha our new Driver. We also welcome them.: *Sawubona!*

Campaign Advocacy and Lobbying.

During the year 2008 the PELUM Kenya Campaign Advocacy and Lobbying (CAL) department actively pursued building capacity of Small holder farmers, consumers, policy makers, legislators and the general public on issues around GE / GMOs and their implications to the Kenyan Agriculture.

Lobbying meetings and the Biosafety Bill.

Through KBioC, awareness and consultative meetings were organized to come up with the best ways to strengthen the coalition and the best strategies to use for proposing and pushing for the Biosafety bill strengthening in Parliament in 2008. Several lobbying meetings were held by the KBioC for the Policy makers to sensitize te legislators and the pubic about GE /GMO and the gaps in the faulty Biosafety Bill. Towards the end of the Year 2007 the Parliament had dissolved to pave way for the General Election. The Biosafety Bill which was then in the process of discussion, was therefore reintroduced a fresh in the Year 2008.

A participatory study was commissioned to identify the gaps contained in the proposed Biosafety Parliamentary bill where the Coalition Members went through the Bill with the help of technical support. This was done in a view to identify the weak areas requiring amendments. Based on these findings an alternative Biosafety bill was developed. The coalition spearheaded efforts to have the bill brought back to the people for strengthening which included direct petition letters to the office of the president.

One Legislator agreed to table the motion in Parliament to reject the Government Bill and adopt the Alternative Biosafety Bill. The motion did not succeed and hence the alternative bill was rejected. The government bill was discussed and went through the first, the second and the third reading despite the spirited campaigns and protests by KBioC. In an effort to create awareness to the public and the Legislators several campaign activities were organized. Notable result is that by end of year 2008 the President had not yet as-

Embracing Indigenous and Traditional Foods by word and deed

The Indigenous Food Programme at PELUM Kenya, though having suffered some setbacks in the first quarter of 2008, due to the Post election violence crisis was not deterred from moving forward. The is implemented by five different communities in Kenya – Kamba, Luo, Pokot, Kikuyu and Luhya. In April 2008, after the planning meeting therefore useful tips on harmonizing the project partner communities came in very handy during the project implementation.

YARD hosted a workshop on Ecological Production training in May 2008 and took the opportunity for the participants who were drawn from across the 5 partners to visit the Ndaka-ini dam, the source of water supplied to Nairobi. Closely following in June 2008 was the Agroprocessing workshop hosted by INADES Formation in Machakos and thereafter a follow up practical workshop by RODI in Kisumu. Participants had the breath-taking visit to the City at the lakeside and to the lake itself; some of them for their very first time.

Demonstration and Press Conferences

The CAL Programme Organized for demonstration walks in Nairobi, Kitale, Machakos and Eldoret. The farmers have been participating in the demonstration walks. The demonstrations were peaceful and in all the occasions, Press conferences were organized where the farmers expressed their views concerning the Biosafety Bill and urging the Legislators and the President not to assent to the faulty Biosafety Bill. Press statements and petitions were developed and issued in all the occasions



Development and distribution of information materials,

A 2 days workshop was held in August 2008 to develop Policy briefs and Posters on Health implications, environmental, social and economic effects of GE/GMO. The information package was also meant to urge the Legislators and the public to reject the faulty Biosafety Bill



Assessment and Cross Visits

From the month of July to December 2008, PELUM Kenya carried out an Institutional Development and program audit assessment and evaluation visit on all the Indigenous Food Implementing Partner Organizations. Important issues were discussed in order to strengthen the organizations. A report was shared with respective organizations for reference to critical issues especially where action needed a keen follow up.



On the other hand farmers from the partner organizations from the Luhya, Pokot, Luo and Kikuyu community visited the Kamba community during the Open Forum day in Kathonzeni on 24th November 2008. A discussion over declaring the partner organizations and their respective regions as free of Genetic Modification in seed was held. An exhibition of indigenous food as tasting went on, at the different stands.

Full reports on all the activities are available from PELUM Kenya and will soon be posted on our website www.pelum.net

Networking and collaboration activities

PELUM-Kenya continued with a close collaboration with Kenya Organic Agriculture Network (KOAN) in many areas in promotion of organic farming, creating awareness to the public and campaign against Genetic Modified Organisms (GMOs)

PELUM-Kenya further collaborated with Israel Embassy for the members to participate in seminar on Organic Farming Principles and Practices (9th to 24th September 2008). 3 Senior Officers participated in the Course which was held in Mashav College Israel.

PELUM-Kenya is in a process of establishing stronger linkages with the Embassy and the College for participating in such Courses.

PELUM-Kenya collaborated with NECOFA Kenya and Slow Food International where 3 members of Sustainable Agriculture participated in Terra madre Conference held in November Italy October 2008.

LIFE

Life is a series of problems: Either you are in one now, you're just coming out of one, or you're getting ready to go into another one. The reason for this is because God is more interested in your character than your comfort; God is more interested in making your life holy than He is in making your life happy.

We can be reasonably happy here on earth, but that's not the goal of life according to God. The goal is to grow in character, in Christ likeness. With this in mind, let's look at the financial crisis and economic degradation most African countries are experiencing.

Kenyan's in general begun the Year with dampened enthusiasm and dented optimism. Our happiness was diluted and our peace was threatened by the financial illness that had infected our families, organizations and the entire country at large.

With everyone desperate to find a remedy that would cure their financial illness and help them recover their financial health for sustainable livelihood, very few smiles were shared or exchanged. We all expected the financial experts to provide us with remedies, forgetting the fact that it is these experts who created this financial mess in the first place.

This year, we should take a different approach and tap into the financial wisdom of our elders who survived along with no advice from the so called financial advisors; they just applied their wisdom from the day to day life and hence became financially wiser, saved in times of bumper harvests and had just enough to see them through the hard dry spells. They used the following simple rules of life;

- Hard work:** All hard work brings profit or pays off; but mere talk leads only to poverty.
- Laziness:** A sleeping lobster is carried away by the water current.
- Earnings:** Never depend on a single source of income.
- Spending:** If you buy things you don't need, you'll soon sell things you need.
- Savings:** Don't save what is left after spending; spend what is left after saving.
- Accounting:** It's no use carrying an umbrella, if your shoes are leaking.
- Auditing:** Beware of little expenses; a small leak can sink a large ship.
- Risk-taking:** Never test the depth of the river with both feet.
- Investment:** Don't put all your eggs in one basket.

I'm certain that those who have already been practicing these principles remain financially healthy. I'm equally confident that those who resolve to start practicing these principles will quickly regain their financial health in time.

Let us become wiser and lead a happy, healthy, prosperous and peaceful life.

Putting on the Armor for TRADIFFA

The PELUM Association Food Torch was up for competition in October 2008 in Morogoro, Tanzania. The year's festival was dubbed **TRADIFFA**: "Traditional and Diverse Foods From and for Africa" and was combined with the PELUM Association TGM. PELUM-Kenya has been the food Torch bearer since 2005 when she won the traditional food competition in Kabwe Zambia, and therefore in this food competition was what was popularly referred to as the 'defending Champions'.



Most countries had interestingly innovative traditional food, preparation methods, culture and display techniques.

Indeed the Association proved that there is a lot of promotion of this food going on in all the countries.

PELUM Kenya was represented at the festival by two Board members, one PELUM Member, six farmers and six country desk staff. The team displayed strong commitment despite the long travel by road from Kenya to Morogoro, and put on the armor of competition. This saw PELUM Kenya emerge winners of the Food Torch for the second time in a row and celebration and dance ensued after announcement of the results. Coming very closely were PELUM Uganda and PELUM Tanzania, and a very strongly emerging PELUM Rwanda followed as the fourth.

Annual General Meeting Highlights

AGMs are usually held once per Year. During AGMs 3 members, (Chairman of the board, a farmer and the CEO) from each Organization are usually invited. This is a meeting for members where ratification of policies and decisions, adoption of new policies or structures and voting for office bearers takes place. It was agreed that:

- Only active members will be retained in membership. Members who had stayed for a very long time without payment were given time limit for payment and failure would result to warning letters and thereafter dismissal from the Membership. The issue of membership was discussed at length.
- 3 members were struck out from the list due to their inactive or redundant for quite a length of time and non payment of subscription fee
- 3 members were maintained for being active in PELUM activities however they were urged to pay up their debts
- The temporary members were formally endorsed and the current members stand at 37. Elections were held and a new Board member (Treasurer) was elected after the seat fell vacant. The new Treasurer elected is Ms Daisy Rono from ARDP.

Members had an opportunity to visit a group from KIOF, one of the member organizations. In addition, during the AGM members took the opportunity to also air their views and their position regarding the Genetic Modified Organisms (GMOs) through media. A Press Conference was convened. The members urged the President, The Prime Minister and the MPs to reject the Bill seeking to introduce GMOs in Kenya

Indigenous Food and Innovations

In order to enrich ideas of the Indigenous Food project, farmers were encouraged to take an active part in the Innovators' Forums organized in western and Eastern regions of Kenya by the PROLINNOVA Kenya network. The Western region Innovators' forum was hosted by VI Agroforestry and took place at the Ahero training Institute, while the Eastern region innovators' forum was hosted by Ukambani Christian Community Services (UCCS), a member of PELUM Kenya at the FTC, Machakos.



Both forums were organized by PELUM Kenya during the month of December 2008.

PELUM PARTICIPATES IN PLANET DIVERSITY IN BONN

A planet diversity conference took place in Bonn, Germany from May 12 to 16th May 2008. PELUM Kenya was represented by Esther Bett from RODI and Jack Rware from Kumbukubu organic growers. The entire KBioC coalition was represented by the two above plus Dr. Maingi of ANAW and Ms. Wanjiru Kamau of KOAN. The PELUM Kenya participants were supported by Henrich Boll Foundation.

COP 9 MOP 4, May 2008.

The Conference of the Parties is the governing body of the Convention, and advances implementation of the Convention through the decisions it takes at its periodic meetings. Issues that were discussed included, Agricultural biodiversity Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, Invasive Alien Species, Forest Biodiversity, Incentive Measures and Ecosystem Approach

The PELUM Kenya CAL officer was keen on the issues on Agro fuels, GM trees, Access benefit and sharing and protected area a little bit. Many countries acknowledge that biofuels, bioenergy and biomass have massive potential in regards to the fuels problems global, and there was also a consensus that Biofuels should not be promoted at the expenses of food production.

PELUM KENYA IN PURSUIT OF PEACE AND RECONCILIATION IN KENYA

PELUM-Kenya Board members found it pertinent to organize and hold Peace and Reconciliation meeting for the members. This was as a result of the post election ethnic violence that erupted after the disputed Presidential Elections. Members came from different ethnic background and therefore there was need to facilitate harmony and cultivate a good working environment. 80 participants were in attendance. 3 participants from each organization were invited, (The CEO, a Board member and a Farmer).

It was a session where members shared their experiences and fascinating first hand information from among the members. Many members were affected directly and indirectly. Lives and properties were lost. Among the participants, 5 members had been Internally Displaced. The five IDPs were each provided with items and cash for assistance. Members reconciled and developed strategies to initiate and engage in peace initiatives in their region

Up coming events in 1st Quarter 2009

- An exposure trip for 3 PELUM-Kenya members to South Africa Makhathini area where GE/GMOs were legalized.
- Radio programs on food security with special focus on GE/GMOs and indigenous foods options.
- 2 national workshops and other local workshops with communities on agro fuels.
- Board Meeting 11th March 2009
- Country Working Group (CWG) meeting 12th to 13th March 2009- (Host Organization C-MAD, Western Kenya)
 - Members will have an opportunity to share the PELUM-Kenya strategic plan (SP)
 - Members will have an opportunity to share the findings of study carried out by consultant about the Agro fuels.
 - Share the calendar of activities for the Year 2009
 - Share about the progress in development of PELUM-Kenya M&E tool
- Monitoring and Evaluation SUSALI II workshop for PELUM-Kenya staff.
- PELUM Kenya Financial Audits in February 2009.
- Review and planning meeting for Indigenous Food Project Partners at SACDEP Thika
 - Agro Processing and Value Addition workshop hosted by BERMA in Busia
 - Delivery of Project Motor bikes to the 5 IPs of the Indigenous Food Project
 - Hold a review committee meeting on NTFPs Agrospecial Publication
 - Farmer Led Documentation (FLD) Training meetings with SMART Initiatives and Ugunja Community Resource Centre (UCRC)
 - Radio broadcasts for SUSALI II Programme