

## **Dr Hannah Jaenicke is moving on from *Crops for the Future* on 31 March**

Statement from John Palmer and George Rothschild on behalf of interim governing body for *Crops for the Future*.

After more than four years as Director of the *International Centre for Underutilised Crops (ICUC)* and more recently as Interim Global Coordinator of *Crops for the Future (CFF)*, Dr Hannah Jaenicke will be leaving the position at the end of March of this year. Given her role in masterminding the concept of CFF and then taking the idea through to actual implementation of the organisation, we feel that it is appropriate to summarise some of these achievements below.

Based in Sri Lanka over the past four years, Dr Jaenicke has been remarkably successful in further promoting the importance of underutilised crops internationally. During her time as Director of ICUC, that organisation gained worldwide recognition for its work, but Dr Jaenicke also recognised that there was a need for greater critical mass in terms of institutional capacity to help address the many research and development issues associated with underutilised crops. She took the opportunity to do this by proposing and being the principal driver for the creation of CFF through the merger of ICUC with the Global Facilitation Unit for Underutilised Species (GFU) - the global partnership programme of GFAR, hosted by Bioversity International.

With the cessation of funding for GFU and the departure of its coordinator in early 2008, Dr Jaenicke had, as Director of ICUC, to virtually single-handedly establish CFF. This meant, among many demanding tasks, to develop a 5-year strategic plan, organising independent reviewers and a panel to find an appropriate hosting organisation and geographical location for CFF, and, of overriding importance, to secure funding from donors to support the organisation. It is a measure of her abilities that she managed to achieve these objectives, whilst still maintaining a research program for ICUC, and developing a new program for CFF.

Through these significant achievements, Dr Jaenicke has provided a very substantial foundation for CFF which will begin to operate formally from the regional office of its hosting organisation, Bioversity International, in Serdang, Malaysia in July 2010. From 1 April 2010 onwards, the Global Coordinator position will be taken up by Dr Michael Hermann, whose background we summarise in the next notice.

Although Dr Jaenicke is moving on at the end of March, CFF is very fortunate that it can continue to maintain linkages with her through her involvement in several projects on underutilised crops –including the CoDI project supported by DFID's Research into Use Programme.

Finally, on behalf of our colleagues on the former Board and Steering Group of ICUC and GFU, respectively, and of the current interim governing body of CFF, we wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude and appreciation for the remarkable

contributions that Dr Jaenicke has made in establishing CFF and highlighting the importance of underutilised crops throughout the world.

**New Global Coordinator for *Crops for the Future*: Dr Michael Hermann**

Statement from John Palmer and George Rothschild on behalf of interim governing body for *Crops for the Future*.

As noted in the notice above, a new Global Coordinator for CFF will begin work on 1 April 2010. He is Dr Michael Hermann, who has over the past 22 years worked in the area of agricultural biodiversity, mostly with CG centres and their partners – and in particular the International Potato Center (CIP) and Bioversity International. Trained as a crop ecophysiological and horticultural engineer, Dr Hermann has worked for 20 years in Latin America, but also managed large multi-locational projects in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. His special area of expertise is on root and tuber crops, but his experience has more broadly emphasised use strategies for underutilised crops, post-harvest technologies, and product and small enterprise innovation with the ultimate goal of linking poor farmers to markets for income generation.

Dr Hermann also has experience in policy work on underutilised crop species. In particular, he has been spearheading advocacy efforts in conjunction with UNCTAD, donors and trade promotion bodies for legislative change of EU food safety legislation that has emerged as a non-tariff barrier to trade in biodiversity products. Over the past two years, he has been jointly contracted by Bioversity International and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) to work in Montreal as a liaison officer to support the SCBD with the implementation of the Convention's agricultural program. During this time, he has however continued to manage research projects in Latin America on behalf of Bioversity International.

Although Dr Hermann will take up his position as Global Coordinator for CFF on 1 April, he is also required to complete his contract with Bioversity-SCBD which terminates at the end of June. It has therefore been agreed that he will divide his time equally between CFF and Bioversity-SCBD from 1 April to 30 June.