

Regional Strategy on Crop Wild Relatives in SADC Region

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Background

- Crop wild relatives (CWR) are wild species that are closely related to crops and are recognized as a vital component of agricultural biodiversity
- CWR are known to be locally adapted and contain an incredible amount of genetic diversity for improved tolerance to extreme temperatures, drought and flooding.
- They are an important source of genetic diversity for crop improvement
- Besides their use in breeding programs, **they can be gathered from the wild and cooked, and can be sold** to provide rural households for income generation
- CWR are vulnerable to changes in land use patterns due to infrastructure developments, growing urban dwellings and climate change

***In-Situ* Conservation Programme**

- Participatory approaches contribute positively in the conservation of local crops and their wild relatives
- Community involvement in the CWR *in situ* conservation - to strengthening/enabling them to make better decisions about the use of land and the resources
- They are a rich source of knowledge on the identification of plants and where they occur
- Getting their involvement at an early stage in the design and implementation helps to ensure that the strategies are appropriate and acceptable to all
- Community participation promote shared responsibilities

Regional Strategy on Crop Wild Relatives

- A regional strategy - if in place - will take care of cross-boarder resources including those that are a priority to the region
- The existence of a regional strategy can lead to the development of a harmonized policy
- Conservation-worthy rich diversity areas can be identified and accorded close monitoring if they are outside protected areas
- Development of CWR conservation strategies to take into account local needs and indigenous knowledge
- Conservation and collection activities will be well coordinated at regional level
- A concept for an integrated regional CWR conservation strategy has been developed and to be presented to the SPGRC Technical meeting in December 2016
- There will be need for fund mobilization for scaling up the development of national and regional strategies.