

## THE CBUD PROGRAMME DOMESTICATION AND PRODUCT CHAIN DEVELOPMENT AS AN EFFECTIVE PROTOCOL FOR BIODIVERSITY UTILISATION AND DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS CONSERVATION AND RURAL POVERTY REDUCTION IN GHANA

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Indigenous biological food resources abound in Ghana. However, many of them are mainly recognised, sustained and utilised at the farmer/rural community level and are not part of main stream agriculture: their contribution to the nation's gross domestic product is very limited. The biological significance and the potential of these resources, commonly referred to as non-timber forest resources, have been generally recognised but they have not yet featured significantly on the national economic agenda, despite their importance within the context of in-situ on farm conservation. Until recently no dedicated institution existed in Ghana to address the specific issues related to these resources. In 1999, the Centre for Biodiversity Utilisation and Development (CBUD) was established within the Institute of Renewable Natural Resources (IRNR) of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Kumasi, Ghana. Within a short period of time this Dutch-funded programme has emerged as a Centre of Excellence with the mission to co-ordinate the process of identification of potential products of Ghana's biodiversity and to subsequently support and facilitate their production, processing and marketing. So far, CBUD has pursued this process of domestication and product chain development with five lesser-known food resources: snails, indigenous leafy vegetables, *Tetrapleura tetraptera* (a Mimosaceae known for its medicinal and food value, called 'Prekese'), grasscutter (*Thryonomis swinderianus*, a popular bushmeat) and *Telfairia occidentalis*, a Cucurbitaceae locally known as 'Krobonko.' This work involves sustained research efforts to accompany the domestication of wild biological resources on farms managed by farmers as CBUD partners. This basic production process is followed by a series of product chain development processes aimed at value addition. In all this, CBUD plays the role of facilitator; the execution of activities and the implementation of the programme itself is carried out by a host of partners ranging from farmers, NGOs, universities to local government and ministries. CBUD's aim is to utilise the country's biodiversity and to develop its products as a means to provide rural and in some cases urban people with a livelihood that is sustainable. Farmers and the other partners within the CBUD framework create the synergy of demand for these resources; this then enjoins other people to conserve and nurture the richness of biological resources that the country possesses. The experiences so far bear testimony to the validity of CBUD's philosophy and approach. Institutional arrangements already involve forty partner institutions across Ghana, and over 1,500 agricultural producers have taken up the production of the commodities promoted by the Centre throughout southern Ghana. The programme will soon expand to the northern half of the country.