

Preface

Fiscal year 2008 is the second year of five-year RIHN Full-Research (FR) for our project “Vulnerability and Resilience of Social-Ecological Systems.” Our project is grouped into one of the members of Ecosophy program under the new five RIHN research programs.

The year 2008 was the year of world financial crisis as well as political transition. The stock price depreciated tremendously. At the same time, the crude oil price reached 100USD/ barrel in early 2008 hiked up to 139USD/barrel in June and ended up 43USD/barrel in December. In September 2008, President Levy Mwanawasa passed away in Paris and Zambia elected a new president Rupiah Banda. The transition to the new regime proceeded quite peacefully. Also the U.S. elected first African American to be a president.

During the FY2008, project researchers stayed for long-term field research in Zambia. The field experiment for the impact of various fallow systems on agricultural yield and soil nutrients in the Petauke District, Eastern Province is underway. In the Sinazongwe District, Southern Province, annual rainfall for the 2007/2008 cropping season was twice the normal level. The rain gauges and weather stations we installed in 2007 September to collect farm-specific rainfall and weather information effectively detected this year’s abnormal weather conditions. The annual rainfall reached 1600 mm in some areas of our field site. Extensive damage to road and fields are observable. Farmers were trying to overcome this situation via various coping strategies including shifting cropping patterns. The intensive household survey is progressing. The land use and forest cover information using satellite data and aerial photographs as together with intensive ground survey analysis is also underway. We also launched Resilience Working Paper Series in early 2008 and published them on-line at our project home page so that information can be easily disseminated to public through the internet. Papers are contributed both by visiting fellows and project members. Also two interesting working papers by graduate students were just added to our publication.

Our project has just finished the second year of full-research. We appreciate our project members for their efforts and contributions to the steady progress of our project. We also appreciate the Project Evaluation Committee (PEC) members, director, program directors, administrative staff and the colleagues of RIHN for their kind support and for facilitating this trend setting integrated research program.

February 2009

Chieko Umetsu

E-04(FR2) Project Leader

Research Institute for Humanity and Nature, Kyoto, Japan