

For he's a jolly good (Africa Climate Change) Fellow!

Title Last month David Kuria was awarded a Certificate of Completion for successfully finishing an Africa Climate Change Fellowship with the BirdLife Africa Secretariat in Nairobi, Kenya. David has had a long association with BirdLife as the Director of The Kijabe Environment Volunteers (KENVO) - one of the foremost Site Support Groups in Kenya. KENVO provides local communities with the information, education and resources they need to advance environmentally friendly businesses, by connecting local entrepreneurs with low-interest loans. However, for the last year David has undertaken a BirdLife-hosted project to investigate the understanding of Climate Change by local communities: their traditional coping strategies and how the policies in Kenya are supporting their adaptation. "Participation in the Fellowship has enabled me to articulate and communicate community issues regarding Climate Change and Environmental Conservation at a national level, in both a scientific and policy dimension", remarked an excited David Kuria upon receiving his certificate. "David's Fellowship project, implemented at the Kikuyu Escarpment Forest IBA, has made an important contribution to the implementation of the BirdLife Programme in Africa, by bringing to the fore the need to incorporate community knowledge, and how to capture this in the design and implementation of Climate Change projects", said Dr Julius Arinaitwe - BirdLife's Regional Director for Africa who represented BirdLife at the Culmination Conference. David received his award at a colourful ceremony held during a four day Culmination Conference in Dakar, Senegal, to review the activities of the first round of the Africa Climate Change Fellowship Programme (ACCFP), which funded the Fellowship. The Dakar conference provided a platform for ACCFP Fellows, partners and network members to explore the main adaptation priorities, needs and challenges that have been investigated. A diversity of topics were addressed including: strategies for small-scale farmers to climate-proof their livelihoods; vulnerability and adaptation options for local communities; capacity building at various levels to enhance adaptation; role of information and research in addressing Climate Change, disaster risk management; incorporating traditional knowledge in coping, and: adapting to Climate Change and risks to biodiversity and ecosystems. A workshop was also held to train the Fellows in writing scientific publications. The conference was attended by about 100 people including Fellows, representatives of "home" and "host" institutions, ACCFP partner organisations, donors and the Universite Cheikh Anta Diop which hosted the conference. The Conference ended on a positive note with the launch of ACCFP phase 2, which will run from 2011-2012 aiming to provide about 50 more Fellowships. BirdLife is looking forward to even greater engagement by contributing ideas to the key topics to be addressed by Fellows, hosting some Fellows and networking with other people met at the meeting. Last year BirdLife launched The Africa Climate Exchange which links to various sources of information on climate change in Africa and other parts of the world. The website has a growing library of hundreds of freely downloadable documents. The Africa Climate Exchange can be used by

people looking for information on climate change and impacts, as well as experts seeking scientific information. To find out more, please click here. <http://www.africa-climate-exchange.org/> ACCFP aims to develop the capacity of Africa's upcoming scientists and other professionals to address Climate Change Adaptation in Africa. It is implemented through a partnership of START International, the Institute of Research Assessment of the University of Dar es Salaam and the African Academy of Sciences, with funding from IDRC and DFID.