

## **The Dutch-German ABS Capacity Development Initiative for Africa: Achievements and Upcoming Activities**

Organized by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, the Dutch Directorate for International Cooperation (DGIS) and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

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Participants from six workshops held to date under the ABS for Africa Initiative reported on the different events they attended. The events, which addressed various aspects of ABS, have either taken form of multi-stakeholder workshops focusing on a specific region, or addressing specific topics such as the certificate of origin or bio-trade and ABS. Over 60 participants attended the side event which reviewed the history of the ABS for Africa Initiative.

Following opening remarks from Léontine Crisson (The Netherlands Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality) and Anne-Katrin Pfeiffer (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development), Dr. Andreas Drews (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH) outlined the objectives, instruments, milestones and results achieved so far under the Dutch-German ABS Capacity-Development Initiative for Africa.

Dr. Kassahun (Ethiopian Institute of Biodiversity Conservation) reported on the pilot workshop held for Southern and Eastern Africa in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in October 2005. He explained that participants discussed bio-prospecting cases and national ABS legislation, and highlighted that recommendations on future work under the Initiative were elaborated on the basis of capacity-building needs identified by participants. Dr. Andreas Drews explained that the Initiative was called into life following this pilot workshop.

Outlining the kick-off workshop held in Cape Town, South Africa, in November 2006, Kabir Bavikatte (Natural Justice, South Africa) presented the vision for ABS in Africa in the year 2010, as developed by workshop participants. He highlighted that the vision reflects all stakeholders' interests and is intended to guide the Initiative's work. He said the field trip to the San-Culture and Education Center !Kwa ttu, where participants discussed the case of bio-prospecting Hoodia with stakeholders, had been instrumental in elaborating this multi-faceted vision.

Prof. Johnson Ekpere (Nigeria) subsequently outlined a workshop that focused on the certificate of origin. At this workshop, held in Addis Ababa in March 2007, participants reviewed the report put forward by the technical expert group that had met to discuss the same subject in Lima, Peru, in January 2007. Prof. Ekpere stressed that participants developed a common African viewpoint on the subject matter.

Pierre du Plessis (CRIA, Namibia) reported on a workshop entitled “ABS, Biotrade & Commercial Research”, convened in Windhoek, Namibia in June 2007. He noted that discussions highlighted the difficulty of distinguishing between bio-trade and ABS, and drew attention to the field trip, which illustrated the Namibian pipeline approach of bio-prospecting Marula.

Bon N’Konzi (Republic of Central Africa) reported on the multi-stakeholder workshop held for central African countries in Douala, Cameroun, in September 2007. He said that the workshop, which was organised in partnership with the Commission des Forêts d’Afrique Centrale (COMIFAC) examined the status of relevant ABS legislation and implementation in the region, and prepared a common position for WGABS-5. N’Konzi stressed that the field trip to village communities harvesting *prunus africana*, and discussions with these and other stakeholders of this bio-prospecting case had been of great value to the workshop deliberations.

Following this presentation, Suhel al-Janabi (GTZ) introduced the African delegations briefing and capacity-development meeting that had taken place immediately prior to WGABS-5. He underscored that this bilingual workshop for African delegates was organised in partnership with the African Union, the Government of Quebec and the Institut de l’énergie et de l’environnement de la Francophonie (IEPF). The meeting had provided participants with a background on the ABS process and a technical briefing on all substantial agenda items of WGABS-5.

Finally, Dr. Andreas Drews announced further steps planned under the Initiative, including multi-stakeholder workshops for Western Africa and the Maghreb to be held in November 2007, and an Africa wide workshop in December 2007. He drew attention to a delegations briefing that will take place prior to WGABS-6 in Geneva, Switzerland.

For further information on the Initiative, please visit [www.abs-africa.info](http://www.abs-africa.info).

Photo captions

1. Leontine\_NL

Léontine Crisson (Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, the Netherlands) welcomes participants to the side event

2. AKP\_Germany

Anne-Katrin Pfeiffer (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany) draws attention to funding opportunities for ABS capacity-development activities under the GEF

3. Andreas\_GTZ

Dr. Andreas Drews (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH) highlights results achieved so far under the Initiative

4. Kassahun\_IBC

Dr. Kassahun (Institute of Biodiversity Conservation, Ethiopia) reports on the pilot workshop

5. Kabir\_Natural Justice

Kabir Bavikatte (Natural Justice, South Africa) presents the vision for ABS in Africa in the year 2010

6. Ekpere\_Nigeria

Prof. Johnson Ekpere (Nigeria) explains that participants of the “certificate of origin”-workshop considered the recommendations put forward by the technical expert group

7. du Plessis\_CRIAA

Pierre du Plessis (CRIAA, Namibia) explains the risk involved in commercialising genetic resources

8. N’Konzi\_Central Africa

Bon N’Konzi (Central Africa) reviews the workshop held for central African countries

9. Suhel\_GTZ

Suhel al-Janabi (GTZ) reports on the first African delegations briefing