

Limbe To Host Pan-African Access, Benefit Sharing Workshop

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LIMBE, in the Southwest Region, will between January 30 and February 3, 2012, be the venue for the 6th Pan-African workshop on Access and Benefit Sharing, ABS, of the exploitation of natural resources.

The Ministry of Environment, Nature Protection and Sustainable Development is hosting the workshop in partnership with the Central African Forest Commission, COMIFAC. This information is contained in a press release issued January 23 by the Ministry.

Up to 100 participants expected at the workshop would be drawn from ABS National Focal Points; representatives of competent national authorities for ABS; representative of relevant regional and international [research] institutions; NGOs; indigenous and local communities; as well as representatives of the private sector involved in bio-trade and bio-prospecting.

The release says that within the first three days, participants would exchange national and regional experiences in addressing ABS, with a special focus on non-timber forest product based value and supply chain.

Giving an example of *prunus africana* as one of such products, it is noted that the participants would go on a field trip to Mount Cameroon.

Approaches for addressing the trans-boundary nature of many biological and genetic resources with a special focus on the regional ABS strategy of COMIFAC and the need to consider the establishment of a Global Multilateral Benefit-Sharing Mechanism are items also high on the agenda of the Limbe workshop.

At the end of the meeting, African stakeholders would have the opportunity to consider the draft technical study: "Gap Analysis and Review of the African Model Law" with a view of contributing to a harmonized implementation of the Nagoya (Japan) Protocol in Africa.

They will also discuss the outcomes of the expert workshop on ABS that held in Addis Ababa in September 2001 and African perspectives on ABS relevant work and its implications for the national implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on ABS.

On the expected outputs of the workshop, the release mentions enhanced understanding and "common ground" between users and providers on the concept of genetic resources, and improved preparedness of African stakeholders and private sector representatives for the upcoming discussions on article 10 of the Nagoya Protocol during the second meeting of the Ad hoc Intergovernmental Committee for the Nagoya Protocol (ICNP) in April in New Delhi, India.

The identification of challenges and recommendations for future work under the ABS Initiative as well as the forwarding of the said recommendations to the African Union, AU, Commission for next steps to finalise the "Gap Analysis and Review of the African Model Law" and bring it on the agenda of political decision makers also constitute expected outputs of the workshop.