

Sixth Pan African Access and Benefit Sharing Workshop

Limbé, Cameroon, 30th January – 3rd February 2012

OUTLINE

Organisers

Facilitated by the **Access and Benefit Sharing Capacity Development Initiative** and hosted by the **Cameroonian Ministry of Environment, Protection of Nature and Sustainable Development** and the **Central African Forest Commission**.

Background of the Workshop

Since 2006, the Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Capacity Development Initiative (ABS Initiative) has convened five Pan African workshops as well as numerous training courses and workshops with a regional or issue based focus, playing a critical role in building capacity on ABS issues in Africa. This sixth edition of the Pan-African ABS Workshop took place after a year of fruitful activities addressing the challenges of a coherent, effective and harmonised implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on ABS adopted at the 10th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in October 2010.

The success of this workshop was assured by the very enthusiastic participation of more than 110 representatives from the African continent. During the first three days of the workshop, participants engaged in lively discussions on valorisation approaches and sustainable value chain development linking ABS, biotrade and scientific research on genetic resources (GRs). The field visit at the foot of Mount Cameroon allowed the participants to explore in greater detail the national case of the *Prunus Africana* value chain. The rich discussions on the exploitation and commercialisation of *Prunus Africana* showed clearly the need to develop appropriate legislative frameworks that will provide legal certainty with respect to ABS issues and ensure the protection of traditional knowledge (TK) associated with GRs.

The last two days and a half provided participants with the opportunity to exchange views and valuable experiences on African and international processes relevant for national, sub-regional and regional ABS implementation. Further, participants discussed, based on a gap analysis report on the African Model Law (AML), the possibility of the development of practical guidelines for the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol in Africa. Finally, a proposal, coming from the expert workshop on ABS and Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) in Addis Ababa, for the development of templates for Prior Informed Consent, Mutually Agreed Terms and the International Certificate of Compliance formed the basis of fruitful debates.

The objectives of this workshop:

The overall objective of the first three days of the workshop was to provide the participants including private sector representatives, a forum to exchange about:

- National and regional experiences addressing ABS, with a special focus on non-timber forest product based value/supply chains, e.g. *Prunus Africana* (including a field trip to Mount Cameroon);
- Approaches for addressing the transboundary nature of many biological and genetic resources with a special focus on the regional ABS strategy of the African Central Forest Commission (Article 11 of the Nagoya Protocol) ; and

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- The need to consider the establishment of a Global Multilateral Benefit-Sharing Mechanism (Article 10 of Nagoya Protocol).

The last two days of the workshop provided space for the African stakeholders to:

- Consider the draft technical study: “Gap Analysis and Review of the AML”, with a view to contribute to a harmonised implementation of the Nagoya Protocol;
- Discuss the outcomes of the expert workshop on ABS and IPRs in Addis Ababa in September 2011; and
- Further discuss African perspectives on ABS relevant work in other relevant fora, such as the World Intellectual Property Organisation Intergovernmental Committee on TK protection and the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and its implications for the national implementation of the Nagoya Protocol.

Based on very constructive exchanges, group reflections and activities, the outcomes of the workshop:

- Enhanced understanding and “common ground” between users and providers on the concept of “utilisation of GRs with regard to existing and future Biological Resources / GRs supply chains;
- Improved preparedness of African stakeholders and private sector representatives for the upcoming discussions on Article 10 during the second meeting of the second meeting of the Open-ended Ad-Hoc Intergovernmental Committee for the Nagoya Protocol in April 2012;
- Recommendations to the African Union Commission for next steps to finalise the “Gap Analysis and Review of the AML” and bringing it on to the agenda of political decision makers; and
- Identification of challenges and recommendations for future work under the ABS Initiative on the linkages between ABS, TK, and IPRs for effective national implementation of the Nagoya Protocol.

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