

Meeting of the Caribbean Steering Group 2013

30th November 2013, Pegasus Hotel, Kingston, Jamaica

Agenda

Saturday, 30th November 2013

08:30 **Welcome**

Hartmut Meyer, Secretariat of the ABS Initiative

Election of the Chair for the meeting

Adoption of the agenda

Round of introductions

09:00 **Progress Report 2013**

Presentation of activities and achievements (*Hartmut Meyer*)

Questions and answers, discussion

09:30 **Elements of the work plan and budget 2014**

Introduction by the Secretariat (*Hartmut Meyer*)

Specific topics for discussion:

- Regional capacity development priorities to be integrated into the work plan 2014
- Collaboration of the ABS Initiative with the regional and national GEF/NPIF
- Timing and topics of the 3rd Caribbean ABS Workshop considering relevant regional and international events in 2014

Coffee / tea

- Caribbean preparatory meeting before CBD COP-12 / NP MOP-1
- ABS input at CBD COP-12 / NP MOP-1 (Oct 2104, South Korea)
- ABS input at SIDS Conference (Sep 2014, Samoa)

11.45 **The way forward**

12.00 **Closure**

Meeting of the Caribbean Steering Group 2013

30th November 2013, Pegasus Hotel, Kingston, Jamaica

Minutes

The meeting was opened at 08:45 and chaired by Hartmut Meyer, ABS Initiative.

The agenda was presented and accepted.

The participants introduced themselves. Following 11 members were present:

Simone Lewis (Grenada), Stanley Malone (Suriname), Jerome Smith (Jamaica), Miguel Vales Garcia (Cuba), Sarita Williams-Peter (St. Lucia), Laurent Jean Pierre (TRAMIL), Sylvia Mitchell (University of the West Indies, Mona Campus), Gilbertha St. Rose (CAPSICUM), Hartmut Meyer (ABS Capacity Development Initiative), Valérie Normand (ABS Capacity Development Initiative), Thérèse Yarde (CARICOM Secretariat)

Item 1: Progress Report 2013

Hartmut Meyer presented briefly the work done by the ABS Initiative in the region (for details see attached presentation of the workshop).

Thérèse Yarde, CARICOM Secretariat, presented the ABS activities undertaken by the CARICOM Secretariat in 2013. On the initiative of the Agricultural Development Sub-Programme of the Secretariat, the topics of Nagoya Protocol and ABS were presented at the meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (Ministers of Agriculture) held in October 2013. The Ministers were invited to encourage ratification and implementation of the Nagoya Protocol and ABS measures in their respective Member States.

Thérèse Yarde reported briefly about the Regional Training Workshop on Drafting Legislation to Support Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol convened in June 2013 in Dominica. This workshop was convened by the CARICOM Secretariat as part of the EU/UNEP/CARICOM programme for capacity building related to multilateral environmental agreements (the ACP-MEAs programme). At this workshop the Environmental Coordinating Unit of Dominica presented its draft ABS legislation and is willing to share this draft ABS legislation with interested NFPs; it is already in contact with Antigua & Barbuda in this regard.

Item 2: Elements of the work plan and budget 2014

A) Regional capacity development priorities to be integrated into the work plan 2014

On the basis of the four priority issues identified in the draft roadmap developed by the workshop participants (see attached), the Steering Group discussed possible activities for inclusion in the 2014 work plan for the region:

- In response to the need to increase awareness to ABS and the Nagoya Protocol as well to facilitate the exchange of information at a regional level, the following activities were suggested:
 - The Sustainable Development Programme of the CARICOM Secretariat, under the ACP-MEAS programme plans to develop awareness raising materials on the Nagoya Protocol in the form of brief informative factsheets/brochures.
 - It has been recommended for CARICOM to establish a biodiversity discussion forum and/or email list. The establishment of a dedicated ABS web page for the Caribbean could also be considered

by the CARICOM Secretariat or alternatively could be established on the website of the ABS Initiative. Ms Yarde and Mr. Meyer would respectively explore technical possibilities with their respective institutions.

- To support the development of awareness-raising material adapted to the national and local context, it was suggested that a possible collaboration with Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS, St. Lucia) should be explored in light of their extensive experience in awareness-raising at the national and local level e.g. through videos and information material, also made available in local languages. The ABS Initiative would establish contacts with OECS for this purpose.
- Follow up of the Dominica workshop:
 - establish list of drafters available for short-term consultancies in the national ministry/agency by the CARICOM Secretariat
 - In order to assist countries in the development of national ABS legislative and regulatory measures, it was suggested that a package of relevant information could be put together and made available by the Initiative (e.g. relevant information on existing ABS measures, ABS agreements; ABS guidelines/codes of conduct. The ABS Guidelines being developed under the auspices of the African Union Commission could also be made available for their information once finalised.
- Under the ACP-MEAs programme, the Secretariat has prepared a draft handbook on environmental law for magistrates that includes coverage of the Nagoya Protocol, which could be distributed together with the regulatory package
- With a view to support the ratification and implementation of the Nagoya Protocol, it was recognised that awareness-raising of decision-makers was key. For this purpose relevant material with a regional focus could be developed and relevant high-level events should be targeted as opportunities for awareness-raising, through side-events or briefings, e.g. COTED, SIDS Conference. Materials developed and events organised could build on the existing materials and experiences of the Secretariat of the CBD, CARICOM and the Initiative and be adapted to and using examples from the region.
- The ABS Initiative could compile and distribute a quarterly newsletter reporting about the progress in the implementation of the roadmap as well as relevant ABS developments in the Caribbean region.

Issues under discussion / still unclear whether and how to include

- In response to the proposal in the road-map that ABS be on the COTED (Environment) agenda, Thérèse Yarde said that the Director, Sustainable Development at the CARICOM Secretariat had indicated that the CARICOM Environment agenda for 2014 would be focussed on regional preparation for the upcoming SIDS conference in Samoa, and that it was therefore unlikely that ABS/the Nagoya Protocol would be included on COTED (Environment) agenda in 2014.
- Participants discussed the possibility of a regional ABS/Nagoya Protocol focal point (RFP), following points were raised:
 - it wasn't clear from the workshop recommendations what the function of a regional focal point for ABS should be
 - the general situation with regards to regional focal points for MEAs that have RFPs is that the RFP is a representative from one of the Party countries in the region selected by the Party countries in the region

- the need for an RFP in that context is unclear as none of the countries in the region are yet Party to the Protocol
 - for some MEAs specific institutions have been set up, for example the Climate Change Centre (under CARICOM) and the Basel Convention Regional Centre (under the Basel Convention, independent of CARICOM) as centres for activity in the region
 - that not all Caribbean ACP countries are members of CARICOM and this could limit the CARICOM Secretariat's capacity to act as a regional focal point
- The development of ABS guidelines for the Caribbean was discussed and is to be further explored. The main purpose of these guidelines would be to support the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol in light of the regional context. The CARICOM Secretariat has not included such an activity in their work programme or allocation of resources for 2014. Thérèse Yarde will confer with colleagues at the Secretariat about the possibilities to include ABS into subsequent work programme of the CARICOM. The possibility for the ABS Initiative to finance (at least in part) such an activity would be explored.
- With regard to additional financial resources, Stanley Malone suggested to inquire at the RED-LAC whether regional work on ABS issues could be supported

B) Collaboration of the ABS Initiative with the regional and national GEF/NPIF

- The regional GEF IUCN ABS project will come to an end in early 2014. The ABS Initiative will explore the possibility with IUCN of making available the outcomes and documentation from the project with the Steering Group and NFPs from the region.
- So far, The Bahamas is the only Caribbean country known to apply for a GEF MSP on ABS. The elements of such a project as well as the role of the ABS Initiative are to be discussed by the ABS Initiative in January 2014 with Philip Weech, representative of the BEST Commission, The Bahamas.

C) Timing and topics of the 3rd Caribbean ABS Workshop considering relevant regional and international events in 2014

The participants discussed the format and content of the 2nd Caribbean ABS Workshop. It was agreed that a new approach should be considered for the 3rd workshop to be held in St Lucia. The following suggestions were made:

- 3 days of working sessions and 1 day of field trip, with the meeting of the Steering Group on the last afternoon of the workshop not on Saturday
- Have a stronger presentation of legal (governmental) experts, stronger focus on the development of legal frameworks
- Build upon the Roadmap 2014, report about the activities and outcomes
- Only briefly inform about basic ABS issues
- With a view to support ABS policy development, organisers are to consider using the module for the mainstreaming of MEAs of the CARICOM Secretariat (which is based on the work of IISD).
- The workshop should focus on the following topics 1) developments in the region; 2) legal frameworks, 3) value chains, 4) ABS case studies.
- It was recommended that the 3rd ABS Workshop could be tentatively scheduled for the latter half of November 2014, with the dates to be confirmed.

D) Caribbean preparatory meeting before CBD COP-12 / NP MOP-1

The CARICOM Secretariat intends to convene a preparatory meeting for CBD COP-12 in a Member State. This preparatory meeting will address ABS amongst others issues. Details will be announced in due time.

E) ABS input at CBD COP-12 / NP MOP-1 (Oct 2104, South Korea)

The Initiative will convene ABS side-events at CBD COP-12 / NP MOP-1. The CARICOM Secretariat does not usually attend CBD COPs and is unlikely to participate at CBD COP-12 / NP MOP-1. The Initiative will discuss with the CARICOM Secretariat and NFPs during the course of the year about presentations of Caribbean ABS topics and the participation of Caribbean delegates.

F) ABS input at SIDS Conference (October 2014, Samoa)

The ABS Initiative will convene ABS side events at the SIDS Conference. Thérèse Yarde informed that the main focus of the Sustainable Development Programme of the CARICOM Secretariat for 2014 would be on preparation for the SIDS Conference and on priorities as identified in the Outcome Document of the recent inter-regional preparatory meeting. The outcome document in paragraph 113 speaks to the need for additional support to SIDS to facilitate their ratification of the Nagoya Protocol, but no other specific proposals or indications of high priority are made. The Initiative will explore with the CARICOM Secretariat and NFPs during the course of the year how best to use the opportunity of this Conference to raise awareness to ABS amongst decisions makers, for example through briefings, side-events or other relevant parallel events. It was noted that Caribbean participation at the SIDS Conference will very likely come from the higher and top ranks of the ministries.

Item 3: The way forward

In light of the draft roadmap developed by the workshop participants and the outcomes of the Steering Group, a work plan is to be developed jointly by the CARICOM Secretariat and the ABS Initiative. Following the internal planning meeting of the ABS Initiative to be held on 18-19 December 2013, the draft work plan could be reviewed by the CARICOM Secretariat and then circulated to members of the Steering Group for their inputs by 10 January 2014 before wider circulation to all NFPs in the region.

In light of the momentum created by the Jamaica workshop, the possibility of organising a regional conference on the interface between science and ABS was to be explored. This event would focus on the activities of (Caribbean) science institutions in research and development utilising genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge and the necessary legal environment and would bring together scientists, economists, lawyers from public and private entities as well as regulators. The objectives could include: to enhance the mutual understanding of the needs and operations of the different actors in the value chain; to enable the creation of enabling legal ABS frameworks, and to support compliance with such frameworks by all actors. Participants in the Steering Group were generally supportive of this idea. Further discussion is necessary and should be started in a small group comprising the following members of the Steering Group: Sylvia Mitchell, Gilberta St. Rose and Laurent Jean Pierre, the CARICOM Secretariat and the Initiative.

Closure

Hartmut Meyer thanked the participants for their valuable input and closed the meeting at 12:00.