



Minutes of the Meeting of the African Steering Committee 2019

28 to 29 March 2019, GIZ, Bonn, Germany

Participants

Members of the Steering Committee:

Boukar Attari, CNEDD, Niger
Issa Bado, Institute of the Francophonie for Sustainable Development (IFDD) (via Skype)
Ahmed Birouk, University Hassan II Rabat, Morocco
Samuel Diémé, Direction des Parcs Nationaux, Senegal
Pierre du Plessis (personal capacity)
Natalie Feltman, Department of Environmental Affairs, South Africa
Matthias Krause, BMZ, Germany
Lucy Mulenkei, Indigenous Information Network, Kenya
Chouaibou Nchoutpouen, COMIFAC Secretariat, Cameroon
Hugo-Maria Schally, EU DG Environment (via Skype), on behalf of Philippe Mayaux, EU DG Development Cooperation
Jovanka Ruoss, State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, Switzerland (via Skype)
Kauna Schroder, Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Namibia

Members excused:

Mahlet Kebede, African Union Commission (AUC)

Secretariat of the Initiative:

Suhel al-Janabi
Andreas Drews
Eva Fenster (minutes)
Nadine Girard (logistics)
Hartmut Meyer

Observers:

Lesle Jansen, Natural Justice
Claudia Mayer, GIZ, Germany
Valérie Normand, SCBD
Maria Julia Oliva, Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT)
Olivier Rukundo, legal consultant
Morten Walløe Tvedt, Fridtjof Nansen Institute (FNI)

Welcome and Introduction

Matthias Krause (BMZ) welcomed everyone and apologized for not being able to chair the meeting due to unforeseen, urgent tasks at BMZ. He informed the participants that Claudia Mayer (GIZ) will chair the meeting on his behalf. He thanked GIZ for hosting the meeting and wished good discussions and deliberations. On behalf of GIZ, Claudia Mayer welcomed all participants.

After a brief round of introduction, the meeting agenda was adopted.

Status of developments under the Nagoya Protocol and relevant outcomes of the COP-MOP of relevance to ABS capacity-building

Valérie Normand (SCBD) provided the SC with an overview of the latest developments under the Nagoya Protocol, the outcomes from the UN-Biodiversity Conference (COP 14) and key activities of the SCBD related to ABS in 2019 to 2020. She presented key findings of the first assessment and review of the NP, stating that Parties are advancing in implementation but it is a lengthy process. She highlighted in particular the need for national coordination. Further, Ms Normand referred to key decisions of COP 14 and COP-MOP 3 related to supporting the implementation of the Protocol. She indicated that there is a strong need for making national information available in the ABSCH even though there has been progress in publishing information in the ABSCH since 2017. She also informed the SC about the process on DSI in 2019-2020 and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The latter will be a focus of key attention for the SCBD in the next two years. Valérie Normand concluded her presentation with a roadmap to COP 15 and COP-MOP 4.

Status of implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on ABS in the EU

Hugo-Maria Schally (EU DG Environment) presented via video conference the status of implementation of the NP in the EU, focusing on the EU ABS regulation. He shed light on the results of the first report on the implementation of the regulation, indicating that while work is in progress in most Member States, implementation / enforcement is still at early stage. Mr. Schally pointed to challenges on concrete aspects of implementation by Member States (e.g. the difficulty of identifying users, the need for additional human and financial resources) as well as challenges at policy level (e.g. the continuous need for awareness raising on ABS, the need to build capacity on ABS also in the EU as well as ongoing debates at the international level, such as DSI). He commended the work undertaken by the Initiative and highlighted the need for continuous capacity building and interaction with such initiatives. In conclusion, Mr. Schally highlighted that the Commission is committed to supporting this process, urging all Parties to work in cooperation with the Commission in order to have informed discussions in 2019/2020.

After the presentations, the discussion drew attention to the following issues:

- Globally a limited number of full-fledged ABS systems are in place. While many countries have established or revised legislative or administrative measures on ABS, the number of Parties that have established implementing regulations or institutional structures (i.e. CNAs and checkpoints) is still rather low.
- For the implementation of the EU ABS regulations risk-based assessments of users play a key role. However, the identification and mapping of users still constitutes a considerable challenge for EU CNAs as it is often not evident which actors deal with genetic resources in the sense of the “utilization” definition. Further as there is uncertainty at the end of the users what would trigger the EU due diligence obligations, some users seem to refrain from using genetic material. There is a need for more awareness-raising for institutions and building in-house capacity on this topic.
- It is in the discretion of the EU Member States to regulate access to GR or to allow for free access to and utilisation of their GR.
- There is a need for more capacity-building and a better comprehension of the concept of DSI. The ABS Initiative is currently developing a primer on DSI for a better understanding of the concept and its implications for the implementation of the NP.

- There is a need to focus on the implementation of NP provisions relating to IPLCs. Finding appropriate funding for capacity-building activities for IPLCs was identified as a key challenge. The SCBD continues to count on capacity building partners and donors for support.
- The assessment of the national interim reports reveals that there is an increased awareness of the contribution of benefit-sharing to conservation and sustainable use. The link between conservation, sustainable use and ABS needs to be further explored by the Initiative and its partners.

Progress Report 2018

Andreas Drews, supported by other members of the ABS Initiative and partners, presented an overview of the Initiative's process, activities and achievements in Africa in 2018, including the SECO co-funded ABioSA sub-project. He also shed light on activities in the Caribbean and Pacific (see presentation "ABS Initiative Progress Report" – for more details, see Progress Report 2018).

The key outcomes of the discussion are presented below:

- The political support for ABS implementation at country level is diminishing. Other issues (e.g. wildlife management) seem to be higher on the agenda of political decision-makers. In this context, it was argued that the success of the Initiative will not only be measured by the number of ABS frameworks in place, but rather how benefit-sharing has contributed to sustainable use and local livelihoods.
One platform of raising the profile of ABS as a tool to support sustainable development is the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development which will take place in July 2019. At this occasion, the Initiative's partner countries could underline in their voluntary national reports the importance of ABS for the achievement of the SDGs. It was noted that there is a danger in considering ABS in isolation (proposed narrative: biodiversity as building block, ABS as instrument).
- Some members of the SC questioned whether the Initiative is really "on track" with respect to achieving outcome indicator 2 (ABS agreements). In response, the Secretariat of the Initiative stated that the existence of legal frameworks in providing countries is generally a prerequisite for the conclusion of ABS agreements. The Initiative pointed out that quite some progress has been made in this regard (e.g. in Madagascar, Cameroon). One SC member suggested that outcome indicator 2 should also reflect the influence of the SMTA of the Multilateral System under the International Treaty for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture in Africa which had a significant impact on specifying the remedies for breach, for example.
- The SC discussed the importance of learning more from the practical experiences of contract negotiations. The experience from ABS contracts could feed into the development or amendment of national laws (as in Malawi). It was suggested that the team of the ABS Initiative addresses this issue in more detail.
- There is a continuous demand for ABS contract trainings. It is important to provide trainings to those people that are likely involved or provide advice in the negotiation of ABS contracts (more lawyers, less focal points). While some SC members thought that national committees could play a key role in the selection process, further reflection on this issue was seen as necessary. It was agreed that the region requires a core of lawyers from Africa that are able to engage in ABS contract negotiations. The AU could potentially take the lead in this process.

- The development of a mechanism that allows for the sharing of lessons learnt, in particular from ABS contracts, was considered crucial by many. Contract trainings conducted by the Initiative in collaboration with FNI have proven very useful for extracting relevant information from contracts and thus provide a new learning possibility. The SC noted the need for documentation and dissemination of lessons learnt. However, since much of the information on ABS contracts is sensitive, documentation is challenging. The ABS Initiative will reflect on how to support this process. The forthcoming contracts template developed by the Initiative and FNI covering a wide range of ABS cases and users will be most useful for provider countries. It shall be a “living document” that is regularly being updated.
- Role of BCPs: Some considered BCPs as particularly valuable for communities that lack or have lost customary laws. Participants noted that many traditional systems have been disrupted due to various factors (colonialism or other systems of repression). Some noted the need for continuous capacity building for IPLCs in order for them to become empowered in the management of their resources.
- The effective integration and involvement of IPLCs in the context of ABS implementation depends to a large extent on funding availability. Budget constraints were considered a key stumbling block. There is a strong need to reach out to communities on the ground in order to “leave no one behind”.
- The Initiative was asked to pay due regard to the interface of the NP and the International Treaty. There is a strong request for national coordination and exchange among all focal points (Treaty, CBD, NP) in preparation of relevant meetings and fora.
- A key implementation challenge relates to the relatively low number of documents that are published in the ABSCH. To address this challenge, closer cooperation between the ABS Initiative and the SCBD was seen as necessary. A suggestion arose to create a step-by-step guide on how to make information available in the ABSCH.
- The SC recommended the development of a document analyzing key implementation challenges based on the respective chapter in the progress report. This was considered helpful for the global community when designing future ABS-related projects.

The following amendments in the Progress Report were requested by the SC:

- The title in the box on outcome indicator 2 will be changed as follows: “Support to partner countries (Africa) and cooperation countries (ACP-wide), p.5.
- The Progress Report shall include an explanation why the ABS Initiative is “on track” regarding outcome indicator 2 (p. 5).
- In Malawi the negotiation of 6 ABS agreements is being supported (see outcome indicator 2, p. 5). The ABS Initiative and FNI are developing updated templates for ABS contracts on non-commercial utilization.
- With respect to outcome indicator 3 (Malawi), one ABS agreement in Malawi is in the process of being finalized. Another ABS agreement is under development (p. 6).
- Under outcome indicator 3 (Kenya) it should read “Two other ABS agreements benefit women” (p.6).
- Under outcome indicator 3 (Cameroon) it should read: One ABS agreement based on intense exchanges with and amongst the providing community feeding into a national discussion on the establishment of BCP procedures has been finalized (p.6).
- In Namibia the entire BCP process is on hold. There is a need for clarification and reflection in the Progress Report (p.30).

- Under 4.2.1 (African cooperation countries with GIZ-implemented projects addressing ABS) under COMIFAC it shall read: “The ABS Initiative provided technical support to the DRC for the elaboration of a concept note for a national GEF project proposal” (p. 30).
- Under 4.3.2.3 under section “Knowledge generation for human capacity development” (p.42) shall include two additional publications: a legal analysis of the current Multilateral System of the ITPGRFA focusing on the characteristics of the SMTA and its effectiveness and enforceability as an international contract (“Options and obstacles for the SMTA of the Plant Treaty to work as a contract”) and a factual contract analysis with a view to improving knowledge of contract negotiations (currently under review).

In addition to the amendments above, it was agreed as follows:

- Andreas Drews will directly liaise with Natalie Feltman (DEA, South Africa) regarding the process of ABS agreements in South Africa.
- Hartmut Meyer will send the Ethiopian draft ABS law to Morten Tvedt for legal review.

The Progress Report will be approved subject to the discussed amendments following a silence procedure.

Support to the African Union (AU) Commission: African coordination process

Pierre du Plessis provided participants with insight on the African coordination process on behalf of Mahlet Kebede (AUC) who apologized for not being able to attend the meeting due to an unsuccessful visa application. After informing participants about the mandate of the AUC, Mr. du Plessis stated that the AUC and the Initiative have been longstanding partners. The partnership culminated in a MoU between the Initiative and the AUC in 2015. The MoU has 6 main clusters:

- Collaboration in the coordinated and harmonized implementation of the AU Guidelines on ABS
- Support to AU Member States in the negotiations related to ABS
- Support to national Implementation and its upscaling
- Genetic resources valorization and mainstreaming into national development policies and plans
- South-South exchange
- Sustainability mechanism: Internal and external mobilization of funds

Mr. du Plessis also shed light on the Continental Coordination Committee and the online communication tool established by the AUC with support of the ABS Initiative. The aim of the online tools is to increase stakeholder participation in preparation for CBD negotiations enhancing the impact of the African Group whilst making efficient use of time and resources. The system consists of core components such as group email and messaging, document sharing and collaboration, online meeting and user support. So far, the tool has been used as a coordinating tool for negotiation purposes but in the future it could also be used for information exchange / sharing best practices, media, legal advice, or specialized advice etc. Although the tool was successfully used during COP 14 and considered very valuable by its users, there is room for improvement. In his presentation, Mr. du Plessis highlighted that exchange of information and coordination between different legal instruments and policy processes is very important (as people tend to work in silos). Support to coordination is expected to continue based on the established framework of cooperation between the Initiative and the AUC.

Support to the African Union (AU) Commission: Digital sequence information (DSI)

A peer-reviewed briefing paper or “primer” on the topic of DSI will be developed by the ABS Initiative prior to the 12th Pan African workshop, planned for September 2019; a zero draft is currently under preparation. Its purpose is to raise awareness on DSI among those actors who are responsible for briefing high-level officials and decision makers on this issue. It aims to provide its target audience with an understanding of why the use of DSI is an issue for the implementation of the NP and other ABS-related international instruments.

Discussion:

- Participants considered the advantages and disadvantages of the online communication tool: Overall, the feedback to the tool was very positive. Delegates found it very useful for exchanging information during the COP and for further integrating and involving IPLCs in the process. Further, delegates got a better understanding of the nature of the different documents that were uploaded on the tool. Participants suggested sharing best practices of BCPs via this tool. Some SC members had concerns regarding the security of the documents / content of discussions that were uploaded on the online coordination tool. A recommendation arose not to share sensitive information via the tool (as there may be security gaps as with any other Google-based system). The SC recommended to delegates to use WhatsApp for sharing confidential information.

BioInnovation Africa – a new BMZ funded project and its links to the ABS Initiative partner countries

Suhel al-Janabi presented the new BMZ funded project “BioInnovation Africa - Equitable Benefit-sharing for the Conservation of Biodiversity” and its links to the ABS Initiative. With this project the BMZ integrated for the first time (ABS compliant) BioTrade in its regional cooperation approach (Marshall Plan with Africa), focusing on supporting more private sector involvement in development processes in Africa. The objective of the project is the strengthening of European-African partnerships for biodiversity-based innovations and products with equitable benefit-sharing for the conservation of biodiversity. It primarily aims at governmental and commercial actors in four partner countries (pending final decision of BMZ so far Cameroon, Madagascar, Namibia and South Africa) and concentrates on the following fields of action:

- Improving conditions for implementing national ABS frameworks
- Establishing concepts to use the benefit-sharing concept for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use measures
- Realizing the economic potential (such as income, jobs, technology transfer) of selected biodiversity-based value chains
- BMZ is an active and visible partner for biodiversity-based cooperation with equitable benefit-sharing.

In the discussion that followed, participants queried about the country selection of this project. The Secretariat clarified that *BioInnovation Africa* is a sectoral project and can only work through bilateral GIZ projects on the ground. The SC will not have any say in the future implementation of this project; the project was presented for information purposes only.

Overall, the project was considered interesting and ambitious by the SC and complementary to the work of the Initiative. The idea of channeling investment and getting business interest was seen as a

key value addition. Engaging closely with European users with a view to learning more about the challenges they are facing was considered necessary. Participants also pointed to the importance of addressing structural challenges to conservation. It was mentioned that communities require access to land and resources and will only be in a position to conserve biodiversity if structural challenges are being addressed.

ABS Initiative partner countries: Proposed changes

Hartmut Meyer reminded participants that an outcome of last year's SC meeting in Brussels was to clarify Uganda's role as a partner country to the ABS Initiative. After several rounds of exchanges, the Secretariat and the Ugandan partners eventually agreed in September 2018 to change Uganda's status into a "cooperation country", which will receive punctual, on-demand support in selected matters. The main challenge encountered in Uganda was the lack of mandated staff to perform ABS functions.

The funds becoming available as a result open up the possibility to identify

- two new partner countries that would receive support in the Initiative's fields of work or
- one new partner country and increase the flexible budget allowing for on-demand support to cooperation countries.

In preparation for this meeting, the SC mandated the Secretariat of the ABS Initiative to prepare a shortlist of countries considered eligible for support as partner countries. For details on the selection process, please see the paper "ABS Initiative Partner Countries – Proposed Changes". Based on these selection criteria, the Initiative undertook a ranking of those countries that underwent a more thorough assessment. The following nine countries were in the final selection: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Malawi, Niger, Rwanda, Togo and Tunisia.

Based on the assessment by the Initiative, the Secretariat of the ABS Initiative recommended that the SC includes Malawi or Côte d'Ivoire in the list of partner countries and to increase the flexible budget, and asked the SC for a decision. Although neither of these countries has been benefitting from significant donor support for ABS, both have been making great effort over the last years.

Furthermore, the status of access demands and initiated negotiations with users of GR and aTK provide a good basis for the conclusion of ABS agreements, including with IPLC participation, which would contribute to important steps forward in demonstrating the functioning of ABS in practice.

Before the decision was taken by the SC, the following issues were clarified:

- All ACP countries that are not partner countries are by default cooperation countries to the Initiative, including Uganda. A GEF project in Uganda is expected to be launched this year. The ABS Initiative will be a partner in implementation if requested and depending on availability of the flexible budget.
- All countries on the list are able to receive support as cooperation countries deriving from the flexible budget line (including the countries that received 0 points in the assessment). Some SC members questioned whether enough budget is available to cover potential requests for support from cooperation countries. In response, the Secretariat stated that this will depend on the individual requests. However, until now the Initiative was able to accommodate most incoming requests.

After private deliberations among the African SC members, the Côte d'Ivoire was selected as new partner country of the ABS Initiative taking into account the regional balance of support by the ABS Initiative.

De-linking SC meetings and the Pan-African ABS Workshop

Suhel al-Janabi informed participants that the annual meeting of the SC has typically been held back to back with the ABS Initiative's Pan-African ABS Workshops. By holding these two events together, the Initiative's donors have the opportunity to attend the workshop and to meet with the Initiative's partners and other stakeholders from across Africa. In practice, coupling these two events has not led to the intended effects. For this reason, the Secretariat proposed that the SC meeting be formally decoupled from the Pan-African ABS Workshops and that all future SC meetings are to be held in Europe, possibly with the location of the meetings rotating between the donor countries and organizations. This enables the donors to attend these meetings and provides the ABS Initiative with more flexibility in terms of planning the Pan-African ABS Workshops. For further details, see paper "Decoupling the Meetings of the Regional Steering Committee Africa from the Pan African Workshop – Proposed Changes".

Following the deliberations, the SC agreed to de-linking the SC meeting and the Pan-African ABS Workshop while remaining flexible to organize the meetings back-to-back if donors are interested and able to join the Pan-African ABS workshops.

The SC also discussed the need for a mechanism that renews the African country representation on the SC. While a renewal was encouraged by some members of the SC for various reasons (retirement of members, fresh perspectives, etc.), it was at the same time pointed out that it would not be wise to replace the entire African country representation for the sake of continuity.

The Secretariat is to prepare a document regarding the renewal of the African country representation prior to the next Pan-African ABS workshop in September 2019. The SC members are invited to discuss these options (including the role and duties of the SC members) at the margins of the workshop and prepare a concrete proposal on the way forward for the next SC meeting.

Work plan and indicative budget 04/2019 to 03/2020

An overview of the work plan including indicative budget allocations for the timeframe 04/2019-03/2020 was presented by Andreas Drews (see Work Plan 04/2019-03/2020 for Africa for further details).

The subsequent discussion highlighted the following:

- Participants considered the 13th Pan-African ABS Workshop (tentatively to be held in the second quarter of 2020) as a good opportunity to get prepared for the SBI and SBSTTA meetings in June / July 2020 and to engage in discussions in preparation for COP 15/MOP4.
- With regard to the experiences made in ABS contract trainings and negotiation support, specific advice should be given to countries to include provisions in the legal ABS framework documents on the consequences in case of breach of the ABS contract.
- The relationship between the NP and the public health is attracting a lot of attention and interest, in particular from the public health community. A key concern raised by the public health community relates to the issue of accessing pathogens. There is a need for a better understanding amongst the environmental and public health communities on interlinkages

of public health concerns and the NP. The question was raised whether the ABS Initiative could facilitate national coordination. The Secretariat of the Initiative was called to embed the interface of the NP and public health in a broader capacity building approach. In response, the Secretariat stated that it will more incorporate the link to public health in its knowledge generation / management, but due to budgetary reasons it could only be more intensively addressed after the round of regional contract trainings has been completed (presumably after COP 15 when the post-2020 framework is in place). Reference was also made to learning material that emerged from two trainings.

- The timing for the development of a short video “DSI Simply Explained” was considered as possibly premature by some as there is not yet in-depth understanding of the topic. On the other hand, the video could also contribute to a better understanding of the subject matter in the negotiations. The video should however be simple (without oversimplifying the issue).
- Uganda is no longer a partner country of the ABS Initiative. From now on, activities undertaken in Uganda will be accommodated under the flexible budget of the Initiative.
- The split between implementation-related activities and management-related activities in the budget of the Initiative had been requested by the Initiative’s donors at the SC meeting in Cotonou with a view to ascertaining how much time was spent on administration (staff assessments, planning sessions, etc.) versus actual implementation.
- The distinction between the budget lines 2.3 (Knowledge Management and Transfer) and 2.4 (Knowledge Generation for HCD tools) was confusing for a member of the SC. The Secretariat pointed out that an activity may fall under either of the above-named budget lines if knowledge is being generated and disseminated.
- The documentation and dissemination of lessons learnt is to be reflected in the work on the “NP implementation options” which is currently being developed by the ABS Initiative.

The members of the SC approved the work plan and budget subject and requested the following amendments in the explanatory text of the workplan:

- In the chapter “Core Implementation Processes: Supporting Partner Countries” the sentence regarding IPLC involvement in Benin (“Based on opportunities and availability of funding, facilitation of a BCP process in the context of an ABS case”) is to be deleted because it is uncertain that funding is available. The sentence may be inserted again once funding is secured (p.2).
- The work plan is to flag that also the consideration of contract aspects will be included in the 12th Pan-African ABS workshop in September 2019 (p.7). The Secretariat is also to include the linkages of ABS and the SDGs / post-2020 framework as an element of the agenda in the upcoming Pan-African ABS workshop (p.7).
- Under 2.1.8.c (Preparation for the 13th Pan-African ABS Workshop), the Secretariat is to correct the typo “COP 14”. It should read COP 15 (p. 8).
- Under 2.2.1 (Participation in relevant international forum) the Secretariat is to change the first bullet point as follows: “Relevant meetings, including IAC on Capacity Development and Open-ended Working Group (OEWG)”. The reference to SBSTTA is to be deleted (p.8).
- Under 2.2.9 (Cooperation with the CG Centers), the Secretariat is to flag that there is a need for collaboration with the Treaty Secretariat when engaging with CG Centers.
- Under 2.4.8. (ABS process simulation) the work plan is to highlight the need for close collaboration of the ABS Initiative and the SCBD. The terms “checkpoint”, “checkpoint

communiqué” and “IRCC”) need to be clarified as different elements of the monitoring system (p. 12).

In addition to the amendments above, the following was agreed:

- The ABS Initiative is to liaise directly with the partners from South Africa regarding activities to be conducted under Work Plan 04/2019 - 03/2020. Synergies with the ABioSA project are to be identified.
- The COMIFAC is to clarify its budget situation before the end of April 2019 and inform the Secretariat as soon as possible with respect to potential activities to be conducted in collaboration with the Initiative.

The Secretariat will revise the work plan accordingly and circulate it among the SC members via email.

Any other Business

Results-oriented monitoring report: Andreas Drews informed the SC that the EU is undertaking a Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM) approximately mid-term for each of its projects with a view to taking stock of the project’s implementation progress. A ROM for the global project ABS Initiative was conducted by a consulting team from the EU in January/February 2019. Mr. Drews presented the conclusions and recommendations which have been accepted by the Secretariat of the Initiative with some minor amendments. Among the identified challenges are the following: still limited awareness of ABS; gaps in legal ABS frameworks; staff shortages; lack of quantification of benefits and lack of sufficient funding to pursue the necessary capacity development processes. A key recommendation put forward by the assessment team was to place more emphasis on documenting / quantifying the potential benefits from ABS agreements.

In the ensuing discussion it was reinforced that the quantification of benefits is necessary to convince policy makers of the relevance of ABS. Two ways of addressing this challenge were identified: (1) demonstrating linkages between ABS and the SDGs; (2) extracting relevant information on benefit-sharing from contract negotiations.

The Secretariat will share the final ROM report with the SC once available.

Contributions of ABS / the Nagoya Protocol to attaining the SDGs / post-2020 framework: Suhel al-Janabi presented on access and benefit-sharing in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. To set the context, he referred to the current Strategic Plan for Biodiversity of the CBD, highlighting that the CBD has initiated processes to facilitate the development of a post-2020 strategy. He further shed light on the state of discussion at the level of the CBD and the role of benefit-sharing in the post-2020 framework. Mr. al-Janabi emphasized the need for building national and IPLC capacity to use ABS as a tool for implementing the CBD and the SDGs and pointed to the importance of cases. Further conceptual thinking on this topic is considered necessary by the Initiative and its partners. In concluding, Mr. al-Janabi presented the structure of a discussion paper that the Initiative has started working on with a view to contribute to the discussion on an adequate reflection of ABS in the post-2020 process.

In the subsequent discussion, the following points were addressed:

- ABS has brought fairness in the North-South relationship (collaboration of private sector and IPLCs). However, a key challenge for the Initiative is the lack of quantification of benefits

from ABS agreements. A broader (less technical) view on ABS is necessary in order to convince donors and policy makers of the relevance of ABS. The development of a compendium on the linkages of ABS to the SDGs underpinned by concrete cases was suggested for proof of principle.

- The assessment and review of the NP reveals that many countries are still struggling with the national implementation process. Sharing best practices and lessons learnt is key to advance implementation. There was a strong call for documentation and dissemination of experiences and lessons learnt by the ABS Initiative.
- ABS in general and the third objective of the CBD go much further than the NP. The national reports for the assessment and review however only concern the implementation of the NP (and not of ABS as a whole, including the existing multilateral mechanisms under the ITPGRFA and WHO. The original logic of why benefit-sharing became the third objective of the CBD related to its potential to incentivize sustainable use and conservation of biological resources (e.g. CBNRM). A SC member suggested making this argument in the post-2020 process.
- The post-2020 framework has an implementation logic that outreaches the SDGs as it is just a stepping stone towards the 2050-Vision of “Living in harmony with nature”. According to one view expressed in this session, an update of the Aichi targets is insufficient.

During this session, the African SC members thanked the ABS Initiative for its longstanding support on the implementation of the NP in the region.

The SC agreed that the ABS Initiative should develop a discussion paper on ABS in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, outlining how ABS supports the SDGs followed by practical implications for the post-2020 process. The paper shall be a “living document” that is being updated on a regular basis.

Closure

Before bringing the SC to a close, Andreas Drews conveyed a message on behalf of Kent Nnadozie (FAO). According to Mr. Nnadozie, the Treaty is looking forward to continuing working with the Initiative and collaborating to raise additional funds to support mutual implementation of the Nagoya Protocol and the Treaty. On behalf of Matthias Krause, Mr. Drews apologized that BMZ was not able to attend the second day of the meeting. He highlighted that BMZ is looking forward to attending next year’s SC meeting. Issa Bado (Institute of the Francophonie for Sustainable Development) thanked and congratulated the ABS Initiative for its work on ABS, highlighting that the Francophonie looks forward to further collaboration with the Initiative. Finally, Andreas Drews thanked all participants for their time, commitment and productive discussions as well as for their guidance to the Initiative’s Secretariat on matters regarding NP implementation.