

Fourth pan-African ABS Capacity Development Workshop

hosted by the

Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA)

6th to 10th December 2009, Alexandria, Egypt

Background

This workshop is part of the ABS Capacity Development Initiative for Africa. Background information about the Initiative and full documentation of previous workshops and events is provided on www.abs-africa.info.

The ABS Initiative has so far convened three pan-African workshops, as well as a number of trainings and workshops with regional or issue-based focus. Specific issues covered in 2009 have included the interlinkage between ABS and forests, and ABS-relevant communication, education and public awareness (CEPA). Following the first two pan-African workshops held in 2006 and 2007, the third pan-African workshop, convened in Madagascar in 2008, marked the transition of what had begun as the Dutch-German ABS Capacity Development Initiative for Africa into a multi-donor initiative, as well as the move into negotiation of operational text for the international ABS regime.

As negotiations for an international regime on ABS intensify, the workshop in Alexandria will provide negotiators with an opportunity to reflect on the outcome of ABS WG-8 and prepare for ABS WG-9 before representatives from other stakeholder groups will join to engage in multi-stakeholder discussions on cross-cutting issues and the realities of ABS.

Objectives of the workshop

Building on this background the objectives of the workshop are to:

- start preparing for ABS WG-9 by, amongst others, reflecting on the outcomes of ABS WG-8;
- refine the region's stance on the interlinkage between ABS and forests, CEPA, and the role of indigenous and local communities in ABS;
- foster the development and implementation of ABS regulations at the national and local levels by drawing lessons from an Egyptian bio-prospecting case.

Programme overview

The workshop will consist of the following elements of work:

Preparation for ABS WG-9

With WGABS 9 being mandated to consolidate all operational text developed at the seventh and eighth meetings of the Working Group, the workshop will provide a timely opportunity for negotiators to reflect on the outcomes of ABS WG-8, which will have taken place a month prior to the workshop, and prepare for WGABS 9 in March 2010. At this crucial time of negotiation, there is a clear need for regional consultation. A 1.5-day session dedicated to preparing for WGABS 9, which will be open to African negotiators only, aims to address this need and contribute to the African Group's successful negotiation at ABS WG-9. Other stakeholders will subsequently be informed about the progress made by negotiators in this session, and a discussion will be facilitated.

At the forefront of cross-cutting issues with ABS

Participants to previously-held workshops under the framework of the Initiative have made remarkable progress on a variety of subjects. This pan-African workshop will draw on, and further elaborate, recommendations developed by African colleagues on: the interlinkage between ABS and forests, CEPA for ABS, and the role of indigenous and local communities in ABS. Reports from these three workshops will be discussed and next steps identified.

Towards best practices in ABS

Shedding light into bio-prospecting experiences is essential to come to practical and realistic solutions for regulating and implementing ABS. A discussion with stakeholders involved in the activities of the GEF/UNDP funded Medicinal Plant Conservation Project augmented with a field visit to the protectorate of Omayed West of Alexandria will provide insights and first hand experiences in a long-term programme aiming to link drug discovery, biodiversity research, conservation and development.

Products of the workshop

- Roadmap of steps to be taken and outstanding positions to be agreed upon by African negotiators prior to ABS WG-9 (confidential and internal document to negotiators' group)
- Identification of next steps relating to the interlinkage between ABS and forests, CEPA, and the role of indigenous and local communities in ABS
- Contributions to the compilation of bio-prospecting case studies and experience reports

Participants

Up to 80 participants including ABS National Focal Points, negotiators in the last meetings of the ABS Working Group, representatives of Competent National Authorities for ABS, relevant international institutions, NGOs, indigenous and local communities, and private sector representatives involved in bio-trade and bio-prospecting

Date and venue

The workshop will be held from 6th to 10th December 2009 in Alexandria, Egypt. Simultaneous interpretation English/French/English will be available for most of the workshop sessions.

Contact

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