

**"Getting the message across: Crafting 'CEPA' approaches
to promote successful negotiation and implementation of ABS"**

Nairobi, 9-12 March, 2009

Summary Report

Background

The need for promoting ABS communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) has been expressed on many occasions. 17 years after Rio, few people beyond a rather exclusive circle of experts know that ABS exists, let alone what it means, what it involves or why it should be important to them.

This is largely due to problems in communicating ABS in a clear and consistent way. ABS involves a broad array of complex issues, which many people find hard to grasp. ABS cannot be heard, seen or touched, and most people don't see any immediate benefits or risks involved in dealing with or neglecting ABS. To them, the matter appears rather abstract.

The pervasive lack of understanding, however, makes it difficult to create political will and momentum. It hampers the negotiation process and impedes the involvement of key stakeholders: How are people to participate if they don't understand what is at stake?

Conventional CBD CEPA approaches have proven insufficient to support more effective ABS communication. This is why renewed efforts are currently being made by the ABS Capacity Initiative for Africa to develop – in close cooperation with stakeholders – innovative ways for "getting the message across".

Objectives of the workshop

- Promote mutual understanding and cooperation between ABS and communication experts
- Develop recommendations for communicating ABS on the political and administrative level
- Plan action for ABS CEPA to take to Nagoya

Participants

60 representatives from all African Regions (> 30 countries) encompassing ABS stakeholder groups (focal points, science, administration, policy making, NGO, local and indigenous communities and private sector), communicators and journalists, SCBD, UNEP and GTZ. The majority of the participants were familiar with the negotiations of the IR.

Key outcomes

1) Impressions from the introductory speeches:

- **Balakrishna Pisupati (UNEP):** Only 15 months to go before IR-ABS. There hasn't been enough attention paid to communication relating to ABS. UNEP is keen on partnering with the ABS Initiative to improve ABS CEPA.
- **Achim Steiner, Executive Director (UNEP):** ABS is crucial to ensure that developing countries benefit from biodiversity. We need to translate ABS into how it impacts people's work, wealth and health. It is a priority at UNEP to partner with other organizations to try and bring ABS to the forefront of the CBD.
- **David Ainsworth (SCBD):** Less than a third of parties have ABS provisions and even fewer have institutions or arrangements towards this. We need clear understanding by all actors across all sectors on how ABS would work for them. This requires better communication, understanding people's interests and dialogue.
- **Ahmed Birouk (IEPF):** ABS is an economic and development tool, but it hasn't been communicated adequately in Africa. The development and implementation of ABS mechanisms needs the widest participation of all the different stakeholders. That's what makes this meeting important.
- **Suhel al Janabi (ABS Initiative for Africa):** ABS requires awareness and involvement amongst all the stakeholders. The more the international negotiations advance, the more it becomes a communication issue, where we should be able to present ABS ideas in simple terms.
- **Alice Kaudia, Environment Secretary (Kenyan Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources):** It is not possible to attain sustainable development if we are unable to communicate the idea to the people to whom it matters most. Journalists feel that biodiversity does not sell, however in Africa a rural household entirely depends on biodiversity. Communication can help contextualize ABS.

2) Setting the Scene: Dialogue between Communication and ABS Experts

Questions from communication to ABS experts:

- Benefit Sharing: who are the users, who are the consumers, who are the exploiters, who are the exploited?
- Who are the target groups?
- What is the product you are trying to sell, who is your clients, what is your reputation and can you give me an answer in the time an elevator takes to go up and down?

Questions from ABS to communication experts:

- Do we have the word ABS in your national language? If you have such words, how do you communicate it to women, who make up 2/3rd of the population?
- How do you communicate ABS without using jargon?
- Don't communicators have a responsibility to communicate the ABS idea? Why is it a problem for ABS experts? What about prioritizing and going beyond tabloid news?

3) Professional updating: Summary of training sessions

Three different sessions provided new inspiration and insights into alternative communication approaches:

a) Influencing strategies and skills

Effectively influencing others requires long-term approaches, including:

- Interpersonal awareness: Demonstrating empathy, enthusiasm, passion, authenticity, credibility, confidence; paying particular attention to the needs of others.
- Understanding cultures and their environments: Finding the right language; Understanding others' interests.
- Influencing strategies: Factual / logical persuasion; Identifying common interests; Style of presentation which is appropriate according to the other person; Psychological tools: making people think that it is their own idea; Relationship building; Empowerment; Give the other compliments / use seduction method.

b) Strategic cooperation with journalists and the media

Recommendations for ABS practitioners:

- Professional communicator dealing with ABS awareness raising and other issues
- Develop communication strategies for ABS
- Use celebrities as ambassadors for the ABS idea
- Leverage ABS with other influential stakeholder
- Prepare information packages including images and other media mediums
- Develop trustful relationships with the media
- Be careful about promoting institutions that deal with the issue of ABS
- Use familiar bioprospecting cases to highlight ABS
- Focus on benefits not on problems
- ABS matters and can be a threat
- Simplification of information
- Dissemination of information
- Use images to communicate messages
- Messages have to be short and clear
- Build confidence
- Use field trips to gather information
- Appropriate information
- Use press conference to gather and disseminate information

c) Strategic communication for sustainable development

Steps for developing communication strategies:

- Where: Map/ key elements of area and scenes
- Who: identify people and key actors and their roles and functions in the process
- Change: identify where change can occur, and what the key change objectives are with respect to knowledge, attitudes and action.
- When: When did change really occur
- How: What interventions were crucial to trigger the change
- Why: What are the reasons upon which positive impacts were generated

4) Developing effective communication: Selected Recommendations for different stakeholder groups

International science

What should this stakeholder group communicate to whom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly state the purpose and value of research to ILCs and policy makers. Need for dialogue between the science community and legislative community. "Scientists should not always be treated as biopirates". Need to feed back research results to other stakeholders, like ILCs.
What information requirements does this stakeholder group have?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on government policy on research and science. One central authority on ABS issues, with a name and phone number. We need a clear time frame for dealing with our request to this authority. This should be communicated to the legislative authorities and cabinet members.
Additional recommendations to this stakeholder group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate to providers the commercial use of research results. From the onset inform providers of the very long time it will take to reach possible commercialization and keep providers informed of progress the research is making. Communicate to regulators and ABS focal points how/if technology transfer is taking place to national scientific community. Taxonomy and other basic biodiv research needs simplified ABS procedures. Translate research results into policy briefs; Organise symposiums; Facilitate publications on GR.

National focal points

What should this stakeholder group communicate to whom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear roles and responsibilities, communicated to policy and legal decision makers. Realistic economic development and poverty relief potential of ABS to be communicated to policy and legal decision makers. Community needs to identify legitimate TK holders and access procedure and this must be communicated to TK holders. This requires a coordination mechanism. Clear ABS procedures on how to get PIC, permits etc. - hard to do if there is no law. Sustainability guidelines communicated to producers, growers, harvesters, regional and local government and GR owners (farmers). Users are in need of clear guidance how they can get legal certainty for access. Specify the need for a good legislation and what that means. Communicate to a variety of stakeholders that a national focal point exists. We need to ensure that the focal point is not a single person, but should have a structure supporting him/her. It is not possible for one person to do the entire job.
What information requirements does this stakeholder group have?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need draft MATs, to come from business, users and researchers. Who is doing what with which GR and TK? More information on TK and its holders communicated by local communities, anthropologists, ethno botanists etc.
Additional recommendations to this stakeholder group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully use and contribute to clearing house mechanism. Regular communication amongst stakeholders to facilitate information exchange. ABS bulletin to inform widely on access cases, new procedures, benefits shared etc. Info campaign targetting the judiciary; Publication of cases of biopiracy by law courts. Reinforce the focal point with a team that includes communication specialists.

Business/ Producers

What should this stakeholder group communicate to whom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ABS section of the regulation on biodiversity in SA be revised with the assistance of IUCN to help ensure practical implementation (by DEAT in SA Resource division). There should be transparency and fairness in the process.
What information requirements does this stakeholder group have?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information from government about who owns TK. Information from ILCs about who among them is keen on exploring the idea of a representative ABS body. A body that includes both ILCs and growers. There should be procedures and guidelines and examples of case studies in ABS.
Additional recommendations to this stakeholder group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private sector should keep in contact with focal points for clear procedures. To put together an exchange mechanism so that information on business opportunities related to GR can be disseminated. Publication by business and industry indicating countries where ABS has been carried out and how benefits were shared. Need clear guidelines for getting PIC and MAT. Business case for ABS: legal certainty and lower transaction costs.

Indigenous and Local Communities

What should this stakeholder group communicate to whom?	<p>With other ILC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BR used by communities should be conserved and knowledge of use passed on. • ABS is a business opportunity • ABS is about sharing knowledge in exchange for benefits to the community. <p>To the scientific community and bioprospectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic groups deserve respect for their rights and knowledge. • Ethnic groups wish to participate in the research. • Consent of the community is needed before collecting and accessing. <p>To local authorities/administration and government reps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic groups need recognition that they are the custodians of GR and TK. • Need capacity and trust to negotiate benefits and give value to the GR and their TK.
What information requirements does this stakeholder group have?	<p>From other ethnic groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If GR are being lost and where. When have ABS cases been successful and how. • When have they been approached for ABS by someone new. <p>From the scientific community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplified definitions, descriptions and simplified data on GR collected /accessed. • Results of the research (will a product be obtained, who will benefit from the product). <p>From local authorities / administration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are policies and regulations that will protect their rights. • Who to refer to in case of being approached by a bioprospector.
Additional recommendations to this stakeholder group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need fora to raise issues of biopiracy when there is no national legislation in place. • Need proactive help to turn GR and TK into income. • Engage in regular dialogue with the private sector through national focal point. • Take steps to promote, take ownership, invest, share risk, get benefits.

Developers of ABS regulations

What should this stakeholder group communicate to whom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities to understand that respect for ABS legislation will help benefit them. • Get the message to parliamentarians that we must protect our GR through legislation. • ILCs need to be better informed as to benefits that can be generated from the use of GR.
What information requirements does this stakeholder group have?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need information on all different agents dealing with GR, and need to understand who does what and what are the relationships that exist among the different actors. • Need information from academia, research, traditional healers and administration. • Need a database of all the operators and agents who deal with GR.
Additional recommendations to this stakeholder group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote within a) the scientific community b) bioprospecting community c) local authorities and administrators the need to communicate existence of regulations. • Establish a legitimate national, multistakeholder group/task team/ committee ABS. • Harmonisation: to use the certificate of origin across Africa. • Guidelines from govt to target groups to secure rights of ILCs. • Help improve the negotiating skills of ILCs.

Secretariat of the CBD

What should this stakeholder group communicate to whom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase credibility of the convention by enhancing the confidence of member states. • Need for a legal platform to avoid uncertainty, should be conveyed to providers. • Make headway in the IRABS because it is urgent, and this is a message for parties. • The general expectations will not be met in the short run but monetary and non monetary benefits can be envisioned and this is a message for stakeholders. • Convey clear, precise and updated information regarding the ABS process and this must be communicated to the focal points through the clearing house mechanism.
What information requirements does this stakeholder group have?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need clear and precise information from focal points on the latest developments on ABS nationally.
Additional recommendations to this stakeholder group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABS progress, results and implementation should be communicated regularly from focal points to the secretariat and then outward to all other focal points. • Publication of an ABS info bulletin by the SCBD (quarterly). • Effective presence of SCBD reps in all regional ABS conferences. • Updating regularly the ABS database and share information at all levels. • Create possibilities of direct communication, beyond the focal point.

5) Milestones for communication: Key Meetings

2009

April

- CBD COP Bureau
- ABS Working Group 7

May

- International Day for Biodiversity
- African Ministers of Environment (AMSEN)
- Presentation of 4th National Reports
- Commission for sustainable development

June

- World Intellectual Property Rights Organization
- Expert Meeting on TK and ABS

July

- African Union Presidents Summit

August

- World Forestry Congress

October

- World Federation of Science Journalists

November

- CBD COP Bureau
- Working Group on TK
- ABS Working Group 8

2010

March

- CBD COP Bureau
- ABS WG 9

May

- SBSTTA
- International Day for Biodiversity
- Working Group on Review of Implementation
- Commission for sustainable development

June/July

- Green World Cup- UNEP

September

- UN General Assembly

October

- COP 10

6) Messages to COP Bureau:

Task Force: Please complete list with concrete appeals for action from the COP Bureau.

- Raise cross sectoral awareness of ABS within CBD.
- Support stronger integration of ABS in CEPA activities.
- Credibility messages from SCBD should also be given to COP Bureau.
- Sense of urgency, to improve effectiveness of stakeholder participation in the negotiation process.

7) Conclusions

There can be no doubt that ABS is particularly challenging to communicate. Notwithstanding those challenges, it is of utmost importance to arrive at more effective ways and means for ABS communication if inclusive sets of national and international regulations are to be achieved and sound implementation is to be secured.

The participants of this workshop have developed a series of important and very useful recommendations, which may be summarized as follows:

- The answer to complexity is differentiation: Communication approaches need to be specifically tailored to each 'sending' and 'receiving' group.
- Most target groups require clear and simple messages which connect to their specific reality. Selection of information ("not everyone needs to know about everything") is one way to approach this challenge.
- Crafting communication approaches to individual target groups requires clear definition of the specific communication objective with this particular group: What is the desired impact of the communication, on the knowledge, attitudes and/or actions of this group?
- ABS communication requires more than "broadband" public campaigns, but must be complemented with a variety of communication channels and media, from conversations or letters, via workshops or trainings, to conferences or the media – always depending on the target group and the communication objective at hand.