

Training on Traditional Knowledge, Intellectual Property Rights and ABS for Indigenous and Local Communities

Hosted by the

African Union Commission, Ethiopia

23 to 27 September 2013, Jupiter Hotel, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Background

With the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on “Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising out from their Utilization” many countries are expected to develop new Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) frameworks or revise existing frameworks in the near future. In most countries these frameworks will not stand in isolation but are connected to other regulatory frameworks, both on a national as well as international level.

One of these frameworks is the system for the protection of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs). IPRs are relevant to ABS because most research and development based on genetic resources and/or traditional knowledge (TK) will eventually be subject to the protection of IPRs, mostly through patents. Once a patent is granted any claim contained in the patent will be of exclusive commercial use by the holder of the patent for a period of 20 years. The undifferentiated granting of patents for inventions related to genetic resources and associated TK has led to repeated cases of misappropriation of TK. At the same time certain IPRs have also been discussed as possible tools for indigenous and local communities to protect traditional knowledge against such misappropriation and/or for their own economic aspirations.

Biocultural Community Protocols (BCPs) are one of the tools currently being developed and utilized by indigenous and local communities to enact the relevant provisions in the Nagoya Protocol and to document, protect and valorize their Traditional Knowledge.

Objectives

ILCs, as the holders of traditional knowledge and in some cases also genetic resources, are in great need to familiarize themselves with IPRs and the opportunities and challenges they may pose. In this sense, the objective of this training is to provide participants with:

- a general understanding on ABS, especially as it relates to TK
- a general understanding on the IPR system and how it is linked to ABS
- a general understanding of the various laws (international and regional) to protect TK
- practical training on IPRs and relevant negotiation skills
- training on using BCPs as a methodology to document TK and access the emerging legislation
- an opportunity for dialogue where ILCs can discuss and share concrete practical experience on the interface between IPRs and ABS

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Participants

Up to 35 participants representing ILCs in Africa, partially drawn from the participants of the regional workshop for ILC representatives on Article 8j and ABS in Bujumbura in June 2012.

Simultaneous interpretation English/French/English will be available for the plenary sessions of the training.

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