



Minister Edna Molewa to address the 7th Pan-African Access and Benefit Sharing Workshop

20 February 2013

The Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, Ms Edna Molewa will on Monday, 25 February 2013, address the opening session of the 7th Pan-African Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Workshop in Phalaborwa, Limpopo. The Workshop is hosted by the Department of Environmental Affairs, together with the multi-donor ABS Capacity Development Initiative hosted by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and managed by the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

The multi-donor ABS Capacity Development Initiative was established in 2005 by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and is managed by GIZ to support partners in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific in their efforts to make Access and Benefit Sharing a reality. Since its inception, it has played a crucial role in providing financial support to the African Group for the preparatory work in the negotiation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources, and also supports the early ratification and subsequent implementation of the Protocol by the African region. South Africa, through the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) as the national focal point of the CBD and its Protocols, has participated actively in this initiative since its inception.

The Pan-African ABS workshops play a central role in the capacity-development process and bring together National Focal Points with other stakeholders, such as representatives from the research sector, indigenous and local communities, civil society and the private sector. They also provide a forum for the exchange of experiences and lessons learned in different countries by national focal points. The first Pan-African ABS Workshop was held in 2005 in Cape Town, South Africa.

During the 7th Pan-African workshop in Phalaborwa, participants will not only engage in the usual above-mentioned workshop activities, but will also be taken to view one of the bioprospecting projects that South Africa has established. The *Lippia javanica* Cultivation, Distillation and Oil-extraction Project in Giyani has applied for a bioprospecting permit as required under the National Environmental Management Biodiversity Act, 2004 (Act no. 10 of 2004) and the Regulations for Bioprospecting, Access and Benefit Sharing of 2008.

The project has a community-based production process for the extraction of oil from the indigenous plant, *Lippia javanica*, which is then used to produce mosquito-repellent products such as mosquito-repellent candles. The *Lippia javanica* oil has more effective repellent properties than similar or comparable commercial products on the market. Traditionally, the plant stems and leaves were hung in rural dwellings to repel mosquitoes to assist in prevention of contracting malaria. The project is the result of an ongoing collaboration between DEA, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Department of Science and Technology (DST), National Traditional Healers Committee and the Maswanganyi and Mabunda communities in Giyani.

As per the regulations for Bioprospecting, Access and Benefit Sharing, the National Traditional Healers Committee and the communities of Maswanganye and Mabunda are benefitting in both monetary and non-monetary forms from the commercialisation of the traditional

knowledge associated with *Lippia javanica*. The project has been a stimulus for job creation and enterprise development within the Giyani community.

The media is invited to attend the opening day of the workshop, as well as to participate in a visit to the site where harvesting and processing of *Lippia javanica* takes place and the mosquito-repellent products are manufactured.

The Minister will address the media at 12:30 on 25 February.

Date: 25 - 26 February 2013

Venue: Hans Merensky Hotel, 3 Copper Street, Phalaborwa

Time: 08h30 – 17h00

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