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Workshop on the Nagoya Protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)



Vice Ambassador Ullrich Kinne(© GIZ)

Mr. Ullrich Kinne, Vice Ambassador of the German Embassy, attended the opening session for the ABS workshop on December 3rd, 2013. Here is an extract of his opening remarks:

It's a pleasure and honour for me to welcome you to this workshop on the Nagoya Protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

I would like to welcome the elected Tosaos of Amerindian communities from all the different regions in Guyana. I also would like to laude the Justice Institute of Guyana to have taken the initiative to organise this workshop in cooperation with the ABS Capacity Development Initiative, implemented by GIZ Germany.

We are gathering here in Georgetown to contribute to implementing the CBD and specifically its Nagoya Protocol on access to genetic resources and fair and equitable benefit sharing (ABS). In the context of the German development cooperation the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity - the first and second goal of the CBD - is of high importance as securing and using ecosystem services is one key factor for sustainable development, for the reduction of poverty and of course for maintaining health and wellbeing in the environment and society. Germany is the second largest bilateral donor in the forest and biodiversity sector, with annual pledges exceeding €200 million and projected to reaching €500 million this year



Dr. Hartmut Meyer (GIZ), Melinda Janki (Justice Institute), Robert Kopecky (Ambassador of the European Union), Vice Ambassador Ullrich Kinne (© GIZ)

I am especially delighted that this workshop takes place here in Guyana as our two countries already have a long-standing and extensive cooperation in which the German development bank KfW supports Guyana's protected areas system. Germany has committed a total of 16.7 million euros for this purpose so far.

The issues around ABS are closely linked with biodiversity and indigenous peoples relying on biodiversity for their livelihood. In this context, the Nagoya Protocol is not only dealing with genetic resources but also with the traditional knowledge associated to it. Hence, the Nagoya Protocol needs to be implemented in line with the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) that establishes the right of indigenous peoples over their genetic resources, traditional knowledge and innovations. Guyana adopted fundamental principles related to indigenous ownership over genetic resources and access to them as well as to associated traditional knowledge in national legislation even before the UNDRIP and the Nagoya Protocol were concluded. The Amerindian Act of 2006 lays the foundation for granting territorial rights as well as rights over genetic resources and the right to decide on access via a free and prior informed consent to indigenous peoples and their communities.

This workshop also includes Afro-Guyanese communities recognising their rich heritage of traditional medicine, colloquially known as "bush medicine" which is based on remedies from local plants. This "bush medicine" is largely unrecognised and outside of the protection of the current laws but subject to research and - to a limited extent - local commercialisation throughout the



Caribbeans. Melinda Janki (Justice Institute), Francisco Olguín (Ambassador of Mexico), Ben ter Welle (Honorary Consul of Germany), Vice Ambassador Ullrich Kinne, Dr. Hartmut Meyer (GIZ) (© GIZ)

We are convinced that a more strategic approach to the utilisation of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge adhering to the principle of fair and equitable benefit sharing can lead to generation of more jobs and improvement of livelihoods. A strengthening of the local economy would vice-versa fosters the valorisation of natural resources. As more people directly profit from the sustainable use of natural resources the value of these resources is taken into account in economic considerations. This supports the development of a "green economy" that

preserves the high innovative potential of nature for future generations. Hence ABS is crucial for the achievement of the 3rd goal of the CBD which is the fair and equitable benefit sharing. The engagement of Germany and the other donors in the ABS Development Initiative aims at implementing this long-neglected pillar of the CBD, at supporting development opportunities and establishing a just relationship between the providers and users of genetic resources.

As the host of the ABS Capacity Development Initiative since 2005, the German government is proud to say that the Initiative successfully shifted its focus from capacity development for African stakeholders and the African Group in the negotiations of the Nagoya Protocol to supporting regional and national implementation processes of the Protocol. Further, starting as a Dutch-German initiative for Africa we saw a growing partnership of donors and supporters. Today Denmark, Germany, the EU, the Institut de la Francophonie pour le développement durable and Norway are providing financial support to the Initiative allowing the ABS Initiative to carry out its activities also in the Caribbean and the Pacific Region. I am delighted to welcome the Ambassador of Mexico, His Excellency Francisco Olguín, as we have an important project with Mexico in this area as well.

This workshop to be held in Georgetown during this week will hopefully result in building greater awareness in matters of the Nagoya Protocol and ABS principles amongst the indigenous communities and contribute to an early ratification and comprehensive implementation of the Nagoya Protocol in Guyana.
