**PROPOSALS ON KEY ELEMENTS ON DSI**

**UGANDA’S SUBMISSION TO THE**

**INFORMAL CO-CHAIRS’ ADVISORY GROUP ON DIGITAL SEQUENCE INFORMATION ON GENETIC RESOURCES**

**26 SEPTEMBER 2021**

1. Uganda wishes to acknowledge the Co-Leads of the Contact Group on Item 5 of the Third Meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, for compiling a summary of the discussion of the contact group regarding areas of potential convergence and apparent divergence on Digital Sequence Information on genetic resources (CBD/WG2020-03-CG-05-report) and the Co-leads’ summary of the discussion of the contact group regarding the linkages between DSI on genetic resources and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework (CBD/WG2020/3/CG/5/REPORT/ADD1). Uganda further commends the Working Group Co-Chairs and the Secretariat for the extensive technical information availed to support the review of the implications of the use of digital sequence information (DSI) on genetic resources under the objectives of the Nagoya Protocol and the Convention on Biological Diversity.
2. Uganda welcomes the summary paper (CBD/WG2020/3/L.1) which presents the proceedings of the first of the third meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework which was held online from 23 August to 3 September 2021, and notes the establishment of a group of “Informal Friends of the Co-Chairs” to support the work on possible DSI policy approaches, options and modalities.
3. Uganda aligns itself with the position of the African Group, the convergent view of the importance of adopting a post-2020 global biodiversity framework and **supports** the inclusion of Digital Sequence Information on genetic resources in the text of the framework. This is based on our strongly held view that genetic resources comprise both physical (tangible) and informational (utilitarian, intangible) components which include nucleotide and biochemical information.
4. Uganda therefore proposes the following with regard to additional views on policy towards digital sequence information and its inclusion in the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework under the objectives of the Nagoya Protocol and the Convention on Biological Diversity. These proposals are additional to those that were presented in the virtual meeting of the OEWG and are uploaded in the CBD website.
5. Uganda associates with the option of integrating “DSI” into the Convention and the Nagoya Protocol. In this case, DSI would be **regulated** under ABS in each country’s domesticated legislation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Nagoya Protocol. The utilization of DSI is to be regulated under the benefit-sharing obligations that will have been negotiated for access to the particular genetic resource. Those agreements that may have been concluded before the coming into force of the DSI provisions will be revised to bring the DSI associated with such GRs into the Scope of the ABS Agreements. Uganda is already including DSI within the scope of her national ABS measures.
6. Uganda proposes that *benefit sharing* can be enhanced by including **metadata** (passport information e.g. collection locality, collector, collecting date, taxonomic information) in collections of genetic resources as well as in DSI databases. This can greatly facilitate traceability of the respective DSI and source genetic resources. The user’s obligation to include metadata will be included in the PIC/MAT when accessing the genetic resource.
7. In addition to the use of metadata, Uganda proposes the use of **access and use agreements** (similar to Terms and Conditions) where users must agree before accessing the DSI. Although the DSI databases may be open access (not necessarily free or open source), this will offer the provider countries with protection (and hence possibilities for benefit sharing) and also provide for the possibility of the DSI databases remaining publicly accessible based on certain terms and conditions of use. In fact, open access in itself is not necessarily fair for all, especially the developing provider countries, since they do not have the same capacity to produce and benefit from scientific results generated from these DSI databases. The underlying inequalities in capabilities to access, analyze, use and finally publish DSI will therefore tend to undermine a fair and equitable sharing of benefits.
8. Uganda wishes to emphasize the **incentivization** of biodiversity conservation through financial benefits to provider countries (local communities, women and men whose livelihoods are affected, and who are often the stewards of genetic resources) accruing from commercialization of DSI. The incentives could be monetary benefits (through an approach such as a multilateral fund) or non-monetary benefits (through approaches such as technology transfer, in accordance with nationally identified needs and priorities through, among other things: training, provision of equipment and infrastructure development).
9. Uganda wishes to emphasize the capacity building through **awareness creation** of the potential of the utilitarian aspects of genetic resources that can be brought by current and future technological advancement e.g. DSI. Awareness will ensure that local communities, women and men benefit from the commercialization and use of their genetic resources and their derivatives, including technological innovations.
10. Given the very rapid advances in science and technology development, Uganda proposes that appropriate consideration be taken to “**future-proof**” the access to and utilization of genetic resources through yet unknown approaches from technological advances/innovations. This will address the current exponential growth in DSI, and any future technological innovation or advance in the “access and utilization of genetic resources” beyond the present DSI.