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OPEN-ENDED AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL
COMMITTEE FOR THE NAGOYA PROTOCOL ON
ACCESS TO GENETIC RESOURCES AND THE
FAIR AND EQUITABLE SHARING OF BENEFITS
ARISING FROM THEIR UTILIZATION

Second meeting

New Delhi, 2-6 July 2012

Item 4.1 of the provisional agenda*

**REPORT ON PROGRESS AND NEXT STEPS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PILOT
PHASE OF THE ACCESS AND BENEFIT-SHARING CLEARING-HOUSE**

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with annex II of decision X/1 of the Conference of the Parties, the first meeting of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Committee for the Nagoya Protocol (Intergovernmental Committee) discussed the modalities of operation of the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House (Article 14) at its first meeting.
2. In its recommendation 1/1, the Intergovernmental Committee decided that the ABS Clearing-House be implemented in a phased manner and that the first phase be a pilot phase. In the annex to its recommendation 1/1, the Intergovernmental Committee provided guidance on the development of the pilot phase.
3. In addition, recommendation 1/1 requests the Executive Secretary to report on progress in the implementation of the pilot phase of the ABS Clearing-House, develop draft modalities of operation for the ABS Clearing-House and explore opportunities for collaboration with partners and other data providers for the consideration of the Intergovernmental Committee at its second meeting.
4. Furthermore, the Intergovernmental Committee invited Parties, Governments and donors to provide additional financial support to enable the pilot phase to be implemented as soon as possible.
5. In response to this invitation, generous financial support was provided by Germany, Switzerland and the European Commission. Thanks to this support, the Secretariat recently proceeded to the hiring of staff to initiate the pilot phase.

* UNEP/CBD/ICNP/2/1/Rev.1.

6. Section II of this document provides information on mechanisms and applications to be developed for the pilot phase, section III provides a list of relevant partners and data providers as well as a short description of their work with a view to explore potential opportunities for collaboration, and section IV contains draft recommendations.

7. The draft modalities of operation for the ABS Clearing-House are presented in the annex to document UNEP/CBD/ICNP/2/9.

II. MECHANISMS AND APPLICATIONS TO BE DEVELOPED FOR THE PILOT PHASE OF THE ABS CLEARING-HOUSE

8. At its first meeting, the Intergovernmental Committee acknowledged the valuable experience of the Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) established under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety for the development of the pilot phase of the ABS Clearing-House. The following section provides information on mechanisms and applications to be developed during the pilot phase of the ABS Clearing-house based on the recommendations provided by the Intergovernmental Committee and the information exchange-system established under the BCH. However, these mechanisms and applications may need to be adapted as the pilot phase is developed to meet the particular requirements of the ABS Clearing-House and should therefore be understood as only indicative.

9. To seek feedback from Parties in the development of these mechanisms and applications, the Intergovernmental Committee may wish to consider establishing an Informal Advisory Committee to provide technical oversight and advice to the Executive Secretary. The Informal Advisory Committee could play a useful role for the development of the pilot phase and provide an informal interface to seek technical guidance from Parties during the pilot phase.

A. *The central portal and management centre of the ABS Clearing-House*

10. The ABS Clearing-House will be integrated into the existing online portal of the Nagoya Protocol and will allow users to register and find information relevant to the implementation of the Protocol. The central portal of the ABS Clearing-House, as a minimum, will allow Parties to exchange information as provided in paragraph 2 of Article 14 of the Protocol, and as much as possible, also allow the exchange of information as provided in paragraph 3 of Article 14 and in the guidance for the development of the pilot phase of the ABS Clearing-House.¹

11. The information contained in the ABS Clearing-House will be provided and published by Parties and other relevant stakeholders, and for certain categories of information, the Secretariat will also play an active role in publishing information. The Secretariat will continue to make available on its webpages information related to, *inter alia*, meetings under the Nagoya Protocol, communication materials developed by the Secretariat, number of Parties to the Protocol, the intergovernmental process etc. Information on how users may register information to the Clearing-House is provided in section B below.

12. As a preliminary structure, it is envisaged that the central portal of the ABS Clearing-House will link to three main sections: "Finding Information", "Registering Information" (Management Center) and "Resources". It is also foreseen that all search masks to find information registered in the ABS Clearing-House will be available in the "Finding Information" section. Once the ABS Clearing-House is populated with records, this section will contain a wide range of information relevant to the Nagoya Protocol submitted by Governments and other stakeholders. The "Resources" section will include a variety of tools and guidelines for users of the ABS Clearing-House in order to assist them in registering and finding information contained in the ABS Clearing-House.

¹ Annex to recommendation 1/1 of the Intergovernmental Committee (UNEP/CBD/ICNP/1/8).

13. One of the main features of the ABS Clearing-House will be its Management Center which will allow registered users to register information in the Clearing-House. The Management Center will provide an electronic, Web-based mechanism by which users with a registered ABS Clearing-House account will be able to register, modify and/or delete information to be published in the ABS Clearing-House.

14. Searching information registered in the Clearing-House will be accessible to everyone. However, all users of the ABS Clearing-House wishing to register information will need to create an ABS Clearing-House account. Once registered, users will be able to submit certain categories of information depending on their specific role (e.g. general user from the public or ABS Focal Point). However, the information submitted to the ABS Clearing-House will be subject to a validation procedure before it is made public on the central portal. The validation procedure established under the BCH is explained in section B.

15. In order to register a new record, registered users will need to choose the type of information they wish to submit by selecting an information category. Under each category, common formats will be made available to assist users to gather and organize information prior to submission. Common formats are standard forms that will be made available on the ABS Clearing-House in MS Word format for download. An online version of the common formats will be designed to allow electronic submission of information and users will be encouraged to submit online through the Management Center. However, users with limited internet access will be able to fill out the Word versions of the common formats and submit them, duly signed, to the Secretariat by mail, fax or scanned attachment to an e-mail.

B. Registering records to the ABS Clearing-House

16. In order to register information to the ABS Clearing-House, users will need to select what type of information they wish to submit based on categories of information. The type of information available for submission will depend on the designated role of the registered user to the ABS Clearing-House.

17. The types of information will be divided in two main clusters: national records and reference records. The forms under the National Records category will allow Governments to make information available relevant to the implementation of the Protocol and assist them in complying with their obligations under Article 14 of the Protocol. The forms under the reference records category will allow the submission of information relevant to the Protocol from other registered users (e.g. representatives of indigenous and local communities, academia, NGOs, research institutions, business representatives etc.) to the ABS Clearing-House.

18. To ensure that the information published on the central portal of the ABS Clearing-House is accurate and complete, it will be necessary to develop a validation procedure (i.e. approval for publishing) similar to the procedure established under the BCH before publishing the information. Under the BCH, Biosafety Clearing-House Focal Points are responsible for validating all national records and the Secretariat is responsible for validating all reference records. This validation procedure provides active clearance for publishing information registered on the BCH thereby ensuring that the information is reliable.

19. It should be noted that BCH national focal points have the possibility to delegate responsibilities of registering information in the BCH to "National Authorized Users" (NAUs). NAUs can create and manage draft records in all of the BCH's categories of information (with the exception of registering National Focal Points). However, all new records created by NAUs, as well as any modifications that they make to existing records, are subject to validation either by the BCH-NFP, in the case of National records, or by the Secretariat in the case of Reference records prior to publication in the BCH. The designation of National Authorized Users may also be useful for the submission of information to the ABS Clearing-House provided that a clear procedure for validation is established.

20. For the purposes of submitting records to the ABS Clearing-House, a simple mechanism for submitting and validating records should be established. Parties to the Nagoya Protocol may wish to delegate the responsibilities of registering information on the ABS Clearing-House to a number of national actors, however, in light of the successful experience from the BCH with respect to the validation process, it is envisaged that Parties would follow a similar procedure and nominate a single validating authority for providing active clearance of national records prior to publishing them on the central portal. This authority would need to be communicated to the Secretariat in order to attribute validation rights.

21. In addition to providing active clearance for publishing records on the ABS Clearing-House, the following roles and responsibilities have been identified in paragraph 7 of the guidance for the pilot phase² in order to manage information in the ABS Clearing-House:

(a) Communicating with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity on issues related to the ABS Clearing-House;

(b) Making information available to the ABS Clearing-House; and

(c) Facilitating networking and the building of capacity between competent national authorities, indigenous and local communities and other stakeholders that would make information available to the ABS Clearing-House.

22. According to the guidance provided by the Intergovernmental Committee, the duties of the ABS focal point could be expanded to incorporate these roles and responsibilities or a dedicated ABS Clearing-House contact could be appointed.³ In addition, paragraph 9 of the guidance provides that the duties of the competent national authorities could be expanded to include making information available on permits or their equivalent issued to the Clearing-House, where appropriate and inform their ABS National Focal Point.

23. In addition, the guidance also provides that each Party, as appropriate, could consider establishing indigenous and local community contact points for the ABS Clearing-House to facilitate effective participation of indigenous and local communities.⁴

24. Parties may wish to allow different authorities to submit national records to the ABS Clearing-House. However, as explained in paragraph 20, to ensure that the records are complete and accurate, it may be preferable that only one authority be responsible for providing active clearance for publishing records.

25. During the pilot phase and pending the entry into force of the Protocol, it is envisaged that the National Focal Points to the Intergovernmental Committee for the Nagoya Protocol will be responsible for liaising with the Secretariat with respect to the development of the pilot phase.

C. Common formats

26. Recommendation 1/1 of the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee provides the following list of information to be incorporated in the pilot phase of the ABS Clearing-House:

(a) Mandatory information to be incorporated on a priority basis in accordance with Article 14, paragraph 2 of the Protocol:

(i) Legislative, administrative and policy measures on access and benefit-sharing;

² Ibid.

³ Paragraph 8 of the annex to Recommendation 1/1 of the Intergovernmental Committee (UNEP/CBD/ICNP/1/8).

⁴ Paragraph 10 of the annex to Recommendation 1/1 of the Intergovernmental Committee (UNEP/CBD/ICNP/1/8).

- (ii) Information on the national focal point and competent national authority or authorities; and
 - (iii) Permits or their equivalent issued at the time of access as evidence of the decision to grant prior informed consent and of the establishment of mutually agreed terms;
- (b) Additional information to be incorporated, as appropriate, in accordance with Article 14, paragraph 3, while also noting Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Protocol:
- (i) Relevant competent authorities of indigenous and local communities, and information as so decided;
 - (ii) Model contractual clauses;
 - (iii) Methods and tools developed to monitor genetic resources; and
 - (iv) Codes of conduct and best practices;
- (c) Other information identified as particularly valuable to provide where available during the pilot phase, in accordance with paragraph 4 of the annex to recommendation 1/1:
- (i) Explanatory information about the legislative measures, such as explanatory memoranda, or flow charts that describe the national access and benefit-sharing processes;
 - (ii) Information about any checkpoints established under Article 17 of the Protocol;
 - (iii) Capacity-building measures and activities;
 - (iv) Information currently available in the Access and Benefit-sharing measures database of the Convention on Biological Diversity;
 - (v) Provision for information on the contribution made by access and benefit-sharing measures to sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity, poverty alleviation, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG);
 - (vi) Information on third party transfer arrangements where it is available to be incorporated into the internationally recognized certificate of compliance;
 - (vii) Affiliation of Parties to other agreements with regard to genetic resources at the sectoral, regional or subregional level.

27. In order to operationalize the exchange of this information in the pilot phase of the ABS Clearing-House, common formats need to be developed which will allow the development of online forms and databases. The information categories will be divided in two main clusters: national records and reference records, based on the explanations provided in paragraph 17 above.

28. The Secretariat has worked on developing a number of common formats to allow information exchange during the pilot phase. As a priority, the Secretariat is working on the development of common formats to collect the information in accordance with paragraph 2 of Article 14 of the Protocol and will endeavour to develop additional common formats to collect information as provided in paragraph 3 of the same Article and in the guidance for the pilot phase.

29. It is envisaged that after the entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol and as per past practice under the Biosafety Protocol, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol will approve the final versions of the common formats prior to their implementation of the ABS Clearing-House. However, prior to the entry into force, an Informal Advisory Committee, as presented in paragraph 9 above, could assist the Executive Secretary in the development of the common formats for their implementation during the pilot phase. The Intergovernmental Committee may therefore wish to consider the usefulness of an Informal Advisory Committee with respect to the development of the common formats.

D. Mechanism for non-electronic or non-internet exchange of information

30. In order to increase the accessibility of the information contained in the ABS Clearing-House, it is envisaged that non-electronic copies of the ABS Clearing-House will be produced. Users of the ABS Clearing-House will therefore be able to download the information directly from the ABS Clearing-House central portal and Governments will be able to request CD-ROMs containing the information.

31. The CD-ROMs could include all records that are stored in the ABS Clearing-House databases, including the search functions required to access the records. It will be of most use to users who have limited or expensive Internet access, but would like to access the extended search functionality provided by the ABS Clearing-House Central Portal.

32. Under the BCH, the Secretariat produces offline copies of the BCH on a quarterly basis and ships the CD-ROMs to the BCH Focal Points of countries that have limited internet access and have requested to receive a copy. A similar procedure could be used for the ABS Clearing-House.

E. Encouraging national participation in the ABS Clearing-House

33. Effective participation at the national level will be important for the successful implementation of the ABS Clearing-House. To ensure an effective flow of information, the ABS Clearing-House should be designed to allow data to be shared between country databases and the central portal of the Clearing-House.

34. Under the Biosafety Clearing-House, interoperability solutions were developed to encourage national participation in the BCH. For example, a simple application can be downloaded on the BCH central portal and allows governments to develop national biosafety clearing-houses which are completely interoperable with the BCH. This application is a subset or scaled-down version of the BCH that has a similar interface, but downsized to display and search country BCH records. The application runs on SCBD servers and allows countries to personalize and manage the content it wishes to display.

35. Another application that has been developed for the BCH allows information registered on the BCH to appear on an existing national web page and/or national clearing-house and allows users to register and manage records. These simple applications increase interoperability between national systems and the BCH and provide means for countries with limited resources to develop national BCH information-exchange systems.

36. In light of the experience of the BCH with regards to interoperability with national databases, similar applications could be used for the ABS Clearing-House.

III. OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION WITH PARTNERS AND OTHER DATA PROVIDERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ABS CLEARING-HOUSE

37. The Intergovernmental Committee, in recommendation 1/1, requested the Executive Secretary to explore opportunities for collaboration with partners and other data providers in the development of the ABS Clearing-House. Paragraphs 12 and 13 of the guidance for the pilot phase set out in the annex to the recommendation addresses possible partnership opportunities in support of the ABS Clearing-House.

38. In accordance with paragraph 12 of the guidance, the development of the pilot phase could include investigation of partnership opportunities with other data providers where these opportunities clearly support the objectives of the Protocol. These could include the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, the World Conservation Monitoring Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP-WCMC) and taxonomic databases such as the Catalogue of Life and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility. In addition, enhancing collaboration with the World Intellectual Property Organization could be considered.

39. Paragraph 13 of the guidance provides that the ABS Clearing-House could also provide access to other information resources, such as systems already making use of material transfer agreements to exchange biological resources (e.g., microbial culture collections), gene banks, legal information databases, and other aggregators of relevant information such as the UNU Bioprospecting Information Resource databases and that a list of such websites should be prepared to allow evaluation of their utility during the pilot phase.

40. The mechanisms of collaboration with different partners will depend primarily on the type and purpose of information to be shared. This could consist, *inter alia*, in incorporating actual data to the ABS Clearing-House, adding simple links to relevant information, informing the development of the ABS Clearing-House, supporting some aspects of the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol, or contributing to complementary developments in other fora.

41. As a first step and pursuant to the request by the Intergovernmental Committee, the following includes a list of relevant partners and data providers which have been identified in the guidance for the pilot phase, as well as in the document prepared for the consideration of the expert meeting⁵ and the expert meeting report.⁶ Their relevance to the ABS Clearing-House and possible partnership opportunities need to be further explored.

A. *Collaboration with other international instruments and mechanisms*

International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)

42. The Multilateral System of Access and Benefit-sharing of ITPGRFA places 64 of the most important crops into an easily accessible global pool of genetic resources that is available for research, breeding and training for food and agriculture. All material within the Multilateral System is transferred from Providers to Recipients all over the world under Standard Material Transfer Agreements. To support the users of the Multilateral System, the ITPGRFA has developed a specific Information Technology System⁷ that allows the online reporting at accession level for all crops covered under the Multilateral System. The system also contains a data store with details of shipments of germplasm sent under the SMTA. The content of this database is not publicly accessible.

⁵ Issues for consideration in the establishment of the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House (UNEP/CBD/ABS/EM-CH/1/2)

⁶ Report of the expert meeting on the modalities of operation of the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House (UNEP/CBD/ICNP/1/2)

⁷ See: <<http://mls.planttreaty.org/itt/>>

43. In addition, ITPGRFA, in partnership with Bioversity International and the Global Crop Diversity Trust, is also working on the further development of Genesys, a web portal on plant genetic resources providing breeders and researchers a single access point to information on about a third of the world's genebank accessions.⁸ Genesys adds value to these accessions by providing more than 11 million records about phenotypic characteristics, as well as 19 environmental parameters to the 625,000 of these accessions that are geo-referenced in the database.

44. At the tenth Conference of the Parties, the Secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity and of the International Treaty signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to further enhance collaboration in areas of mutual interest within their mandates. In addition, a joint initiative further expands this collaboration with a view to ensuring that both the Nagoya Protocol and ITPGRFA are implemented in a mutually supportive manner. Joint activities will include coordination and sharing of expertise on information management for access and benefit-sharing to support the implementation of the ABS Clearing-House.

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

45. The World Intellectual Property Organization has developed several resources and databases as part of its work on the use of intellectual property that could be useful to support the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. The following provides a short description of those databases.

46. As part of the work of the Intergovernmental Committee on Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore (IGC), WIPO has developed the following databases:

(a) A database on Access and Benefit-Sharing Agreements and related information, with a particular emphasis on the intellectual property aspects of such agreements. The database currently includes 39 records;⁹

(b) Database of Existing Codes, Guidelines and Practices, which comprises examples of codes, guides, policies, protocols and standard agreements relating to the recording, digitization and dissemination of intangible cultural heritage, with an emphasis on intellectual property issues;¹⁰

(c) Database on Legislative Texts on the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Cultural Expressions (Expressions of Folklore) and Legislative Texts relevant to Genetic Resources. It provides a selection of national and regional laws, regulations and model laws on:

- (i) Traditional knowledge;¹¹
- (ii) Traditional cultural expressions;¹² and
- (iii) Genetic resources.¹³

47. In addition, WIPO has developed a search tool called *Patentscope*¹⁴ that allows to search around one million published International Patent Applications (PCT) and to view the latest information and

⁸ See: <<http://www.genesys-pgr.org/>>

⁹ See: <<http://www.wipo.int/tk/en/databases/contracts/search.html>>

¹⁰ See: <http://www.wipo.int/tk/en/databases/creative_heritage/>

¹¹ See: <<http://www.wipo.int/tk/en/laws/tk.html>>

¹² See: <<http://www.wipo.int/tk/en/laws/folklore.html>>

¹³ See: <<http://www.wipo.int/tk/en/laws/genetic.html>>

¹⁴ See: <<http://www.wipo.int/patentscope/search/en/search.jsf>>

documents available to the International Bureau. This also includes access to information on patent collections from 27 countries and other organizations, such as ARIPO, EPO, and LATIPAT.

48. This facility features a service providing a quick visualization of developments in selected technologies. The technologies have been selected on the basis of public interest or relevance to prominent areas of public policy, and currently include traditional medicine and alternative energy.¹⁵

49. The service developed in relation to traditional medicine provides a unique overview of the most recent global patenting activity in the field of traditional medical knowledge.¹⁶ It allows browsing through published international patent applications under the newly introduced International Patent Classification (IPC) main group for traditional medicine based on natural products (A61K-36),¹⁷ including a search on medicinal preparations based on a specific class of biological material.

50. Patentscope also provides links to national and organizations databases in its external database.¹⁸

51. WIPO has developed a number of relevant databases that could support the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol and could contribute to the development of the ABS Clearing-House. The ABS Clearing-House could provide access to some of those databases.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

52. CITES has recently completed several pilot programmes that enable the electronic exchange of permits.¹⁹ The outcomes of these trials, as well as recommendations on the development and implementation of electronic documentation can be found in the CITES e-permitting toolkit.²⁰ The CITES toolkit provides guidance to Parties which have developed or are developing electronic permitting systems. This guidance facilitates interoperability of information among national electronic permitting systems and ensures compliance with international standards.

53. The development of the internationally recognized certificate of compliance could benefit from the experience of CITES and lessons learned on e-permits.

B. Other data providers

54. The relevance of the information contained in the following databases and how it could support the development of the ABS Clearing-House should be further explored.

1. Taxonomic databases and other biological information facilities

The Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF)

55. The GBIF was established by governments to encourage free and open access to biodiversity data, via the Internet. The GBIF Data Portal²¹ provides access to 321,064,406 data records organized in different sets of information:

¹⁵ See: <<http://www.wipo.int/patentscope/en/dbsearch/analysis.html>>

¹⁶ See: <http://www.wipo.int/patentscope/en/technology_focus/traditional_medicine/search.html>

¹⁷ Note that since this is a new classification group, it only applies to patent documents published since its introduction in January 1, 2006.

¹⁸ See: <http://www.wipo.int/patentscope/en/dbsearch/national_databases.html>

¹⁹ CITES Secretariat (2010), "CITES Electronic Permits and Certificates: Lessons Learned for the Development of a Permit or Certificate to Regulate Access to Genetic Resources".

²⁰ See: <<http://cites.org/eng/prog/e/e-permitting-toolkit.shtml>>

²¹ See <<http://data.gbif.org/welcome.htm>>

- (a) Information on species, including species occurrence records, as well as classifications and scientific and common names;
- (b) Information on the species recorded in each country; and
- (c) Information on the data publishers, datasets and data networks that share data through GBIF.

*The Catalogue of Life*²²

56. The Catalogue of Life is planned to become a comprehensive catalogue of all known species of organisms on Earth. The current Catalogue of Life edition contains 1,313,864 species (slightly over 2/3 of the world's known species) compiled from 115 taxonomic databases from around the world.

57. Each species is listed with an accepted scientific name, a cited reference and its family and/or position in the hierarchical classification. Additional common names and synonyms may be provided, but these data are not complete, and for some species none may exist.

*The World Conservation Monitoring Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP-WCMC) Species Database*²³

58. The UNEP-WCMC Species Database contains comprehensive nomenclatural, distribution and legal data for species of conservation concern throughout the world by country.

2. Legal information databases

*ECOLEX*²⁴

59. ECOLEX is an environmental law database operated jointly by FAO, IUCN and UNEP. It includes information on treaties, international soft-law and other non-binding policy and technical guidance documents, national legislation, judicial decisions, and law and policy literature. Users have direct access to the abstracts and indexing information about each document, as well as to the full text of most of the information provided.

3. Systems that are already making use of Material Transfer Agreements in the exchange of biological resources, such as microbial culture collections

*CABI's Genetic Resource Catalogue*²⁵

60. CABI is a non-profit international organization. The organization manages one of the world's largest genetic resource collections, the United Kingdom's National Collection of Fungus Cultures. Its Genetic Resource Collection which contains over 28,000 strains that can be order on an online catalogue and is transferred through a material transfer agreement.²⁶

²² See: <<http://www.catalogueoflife.org/search/all>>

²³ See: <<http://www.unep-wcmc-apps.org/isdb/Taxonomy/>>

²⁴ See: <<http://www.ecolex.org/>>

²⁵ See: <<http://cabi.bio-aware.com/>>

²⁶ See: <<http://www.cabi.org/Uploads/File/CABIDotOrg/grconditionofsalewebform.pdf>>

*The American Type Culture Collection (ATCC)*²⁷

61. ATCC is a private, non-profit biological resource centre and research organization whose mission focuses on the acquisition, authentication, production, preservation, development and distribution of standard reference microorganisms, cell lines and other materials for research in the life sciences. The biomaterial contained in its collection can be ordered and transferred through a material transfer agreement.²⁸

*The BIOTEC Culture Collection (BCC)*²⁹

62. The BIOTEC Culture Collection is managed by the National Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (BIOTEC) in Thailand. The primary objective of BCC is to collect and maintain microorganisms and their relevant data for BIOTEC's in-house research. Currently, BCC has in the collection more than 43,000 strains of bacteria, yeasts and filamentous fungi. Whenever strains are requested for their use in other countries, a transfer is done through a material transfer agreement.³⁰

*Belgian Coordinated Collections of Micro-organisms (BCCM)*³¹

63. The BCCM contains seven complementary research-based service culture collections,³² including 47,500 strains of bacteria, filamentous and yeast fungi. The transfer of this material is done through material transfer agreements.³³

4. *Gene banks and other networks for the exchange of biological material**Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) System-wide Information Network for Genetic Resources (SINGER)*³⁴

64. The System-wide Information Network for Genetic Resources (SINGER) is the germplasm information exchange network of the CGIARs and its partners. Together, the members of SINGER hold more than half a million samples of crop, forage and tree diversity in their germplasm collections. SINGER provides access to information on the samples held in trust and the possibility of ordering samples online.

*The Botanical Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) International Plant Exchange Network (IPEN)*³⁵

65. The IPEN network is managed by Botanical Gardens Conservation International and is meant to facilitate the non-commercial exchange of plant material between the member botanic gardens while respecting the Access and Benefit-Sharing principles.

²⁷ See: <<http://www.atcc.org/>>

²⁸ See: <<http://www.atcc.org/MTATransferReportingForm/tabid/2056/Default.aspx>>

²⁹ See: <https://homes.biotech.or.th/bcc/?page_id=11>

³⁰ See: <<https://homes.biotech.or.th/bcc/wp-content/uploads/Material-Transfer-Agreement.pdf>>

³¹ See: <bccm.belspo.be/index.php>

³² See: <<http://bccm.belspo.be/db/>>

³³ See: <http://bccm.belspo.be/services/bccm_mta.php>

³⁴ See: <<http://singer.cgiar.org/>>

³⁵ See: <<http://www.bgci.org/resources/ipen/>>

66. The IPEN includes a documentation system, the so-called IPEN numbers. All plant material supplied within IPEN needs to be accompanied by an IPEN-number that remains connected with that material and its derivatives through all generations to come. With the aid of this number it is possible to trace back where and under which conditions the plant material entered IPEN.³⁶

5. *Bioprospecting databases*

*United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS) Bioprospector*³⁷

67. The database is maintained by the United Nations University in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme and the Belgian Federal Ministry of Environment. It provides access to four web-based databases to assist in assessing and documenting the extent of bioprospecting in Antarctic, Pacific, Marine and Arctic environments. The database provides details on research and commercialized products arising from biological samples that were sourced in the different areas.

68. In 2011, the database was further developed to enable companies and research organizations to upload information directly making the Bioprospector inter-operable with other relevant databases, such as international patent libraries and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, providing species location mapping through the use of Geographic Information Systems technologies.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

69. In light of the above and in order to make further progress on the development of the pilot phase, the Intergovernmental Committee may wish to:

(a) *Take note* of the suggested mechanisms and applications to be developed for the pilot phase of the ABS Clearing-House,

(b) *Urge* the Executive Secretary to expedite the implementation of the pilot phase of the ABS Clearing-House;

(c) *Request* the Executive Secretary to further explore opportunities for collaboration with partners and other data providers in the development of the ABS Clearing-House;

(d) *Establish* an Informal Advisory Committee to provide technical oversight and advice to the Secretariat in the development of the pilot phase of the ABS Clearing-House. The Informal Advisory Committee shall be constituted and coordinated by the Executive Secretary in a transparent manner, with a particular focus on providing guidance with respect to resolution of technical issues with the ongoing development of the pilot phase of the ABS Clearing-House;

(e) *Invite* Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to provide financial support for the organization of a meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee.

³⁶ See : < http://www.bgci.org/resources/Description_of_IPEN/ >

³⁷ See: <<http://www.bioprospector.org/bioprospector/>>