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27 April 2016

NOTIFICATION

New improved version of the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House

Madam/Sir,

I am pleased to provide an update on the recent release of new functionalities and improvements to the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House (ABS Clearing-House). I would also like to take this opportunity to invite you to make relevant information available to the ABS Clearing-House, in accordance with the Nagoya Protocol, and to provide feedback to the Secretariat on its operation and implementation.

Following guidance provided by the Informal Advisory Committee on the ABS Clearing-House, improvements have been made to the ABS Clearing-House to make it more intuitive and user-friendly. We now hope to stabilize the layout and functionality of the ABS Clearing-House in order to advance our work on other priority issues such as translation and engaging with Parties, as well as non-Parties and others, to populate and use the ABS Clearing-House. The main improvements and changes made to the ABS Clearing-House are as follows:

Improvements to the central portal and databases of the ABS Clearing-House

- (a) Enhancements to address compatibility issues for the most used modern browsers;
- (b) Optimization for speed and efficiency in loading webpages;
- (c) Implementation of responsive design to improve how information is displayed on smaller screen sizes for mobiles and tablets;
- (d) Improvements in webpage design to make it more user-friendly, including changes to the layout, branding elements and navigation, with a view to enhancing visual integration and ensure consistency in the user experience across CBD websites;
- (e) New search functions: Changes have been made to the search function with a view to make the search faster and improve the retrieval and sorting of results more efficiently. In the coming months, the ABS Clearing-House will be moving to a new and more powerful search engine. This search engine will bring in a more intelligent way of mapping information, including the ability to search inside attachments such as PDF and Word documents. This more powerful search engine will enable us to move towards a simpler and smarter way of searching that puts more emphasis on a user's input (like Google) rather than a list of predefined set of keyword filters; and
- (f) Changes to the search page and filters: The layout of the search page has been updated to allow for searches to retrieve information from national, reference and SCBD record categories simultaneously while maintaining visual distinction between different categories of records. The improved and flexible search filters allow for searches by any combination of record type, Party status, keywords, countries, regions and date of publishing of the record.

To: ABS National Focal Points, CBD National Focal Points (where ABS focal points have not yet been designated), international and non-governmental organizations, indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders



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Progress on common formats for making information available to the ABS Clearing-House

Progress has been done in the implementation and review of common formats for making information available to the ABS Clearing-House. In particular, some changes have been made to the common format for submission of ABS legislative, administrative or policy measures with a view to enhance clarity and certainty in the display of information on ABS measures in the country profile. The Secretariat will soon be contacting Parties and non-Parties that have already made this information available to ensure that their records are adapted to the revised format.

New online designation of publishing authorities (PA) and national authorized users (NAUs)

Another major development is the implementation of the facility to designate or make changes to the designation of the PA and/or NAUs online. The national focal point can now login to the ABS Clearing-House and directly designate the PA and one or more NAUs through the user management page (<https://absch.cbd.int/register>). The PA can also assign and make changes to the NAUs for the country.

The offline process of sending the appropriate designations to the Executive Secretary by fax to +1 514 288 6588 or by e-mail as an attachment to secretariat@cbd.int is also still available.

The Secretariat provides technical support through various mechanisms to ensure effective contribution to the ABS Clearing-House. More information is available in the help section of the ABS Clearing-House (<https://absch.cbd.int/about>). For any questions or assistance regarding the ABS Clearing-House, please contact us at absch@cbd.int. In order to receive immediate technical support, a live chat help desk service has been installed on the website that allows interaction with Secretariat staff for technical help and guidance.

More information on the ABS Clearing-House and its new functionalities will be provided during a side-event on 4 May at lunch time, in the margins of the first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) to be held from 2 to 6 May 2016, in Montreal, Canada. In addition, a training event on the ABS Clearing-House targeted to national users of the ABS Clearing-House will also take place on Sunday, 1 May 2016, prior to SBI, in Montreal, Canada. For further information on these events, please contact the Secretariat at absch@cbd.int.

Please accept, Madam/Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias
Executive Secretary