



Convention on Biological Diversity SBSTTA 14

Nairobi, Kenya
10-21 May 2010

ICIMOD Event, 17 May 2010

Status of CBD Implementation and Development of ABS Regional Framework in the Hindu Kush- Himalayan Region

Venue: Room CR – 11, Roof Top Floor at UNON

Time: 13:15 to 14:45

The Hindu Kush Himalayas (HKH), the working area of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), is significantly rich in biodiversity. The HKH countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan) are all parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) but are at different stages of implementation. The seventh meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP 7) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), held in 2004, selected mountain biodiversity as a theme for in-depth consideration and adopted the 'Programme of Work on Mountain Biodiversity' (PoW-MB) with the goal of significant reduction of mountain biodiversity loss by 2010. However, until now there was no clear picture available of the implementation status or key challenges of the PoW-MB in the HKH region. ICIMOD has carried out a comprehensive analysis of the status of and key challenges for the implementation of the PoW-MB in the HKH countries.

The genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge systems in the region have a great potential for reducing poverty among mountain communities, but are being appropriated by corporations and research institutions which do not adequately share benefits with the communities and countries of origin, and even appropriate without their knowledge. There is also insufficient flow of information among the HKH countries on genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, and existing or planned bioprospecting activities within each national territory. Developing a regional framework for access and benefit sharing becomes more urgent when surveillance of access to genetic resources is difficult. Therefore, ICIMOD has prepared a draft regional framework on Access and Benefit Sharing from Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge for the HKH countries.

The event aims: (1) to raise awareness within the regional and international community about the implementation status of CBD in the HKH region, specifically keeping in view the Programme of Work on Mountain Biodiversity (PoW-MB); (2) to understand how the HKH country governments are confronting the challenges in meeting the goal; (3) to share and discuss the draft regional framework on ABS prepared for the HKH region; and (4) to solicit suggestions for a regional initiative on research needs and regional cooperation for further developing, accepting, and implementing an ABS framework in the region.

This side event is being organised by ICIMOD in partnership with the HKH countries to discuss the outcome of the analysis of the Programme of Work on Mountain Biodiversity (PoW-MB) and the draft regional ABS framework.

Provisional Agenda

Theme Presentation by ICIMOD

'Challenges in the implementation of the Programme of Work on Mountain Biodiversity (PoW-MB) in the HKH region'; and 'Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Regional Framework in the Hindu Kush Himalayan Region' presented by
Bharat H. Desai, ICIMOD
Krishna Prasad Oli, ICIMOD

Panel presentation by the HKH countries

Focal Points from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan on ICIMOD's CBD implementation analysis report and draft ABS regional framework for the HKH region

Discussion

Questions from the public

Regional needs

Various needs have been identified for action in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region by using special lenses and sensitivity. Some of the important needs in the region are summarised below for discussion.

1. **Help to identify the key challenges in the implementation the CBD, specifically the Programme of Work on Mountain Biodiversity (PoW-MB):** Poor, marginalised, indigenous and local mountain communities are dependent on biological resources. Many biological resources and associated traditional knowledge systems in the mountains have great potential for reducing poverty. The analysis will identify the key challenges in the implementation of the PoW-MB and come up with the recommendations that can be of value to the contracting parties in the HKH countries. Such analysis is needed to feed into the emerging policies of the contracting parties and to empower mountain communities to adapt to the new challenges.
2. **Ensuring sustainable ecosystem services along the transboundary areas:** The HKH region contains all or part of four of the 34 Global Biodiversity Hotspots and a large number of high altitude wetlands. The region supports both ecosystems, and cultural services to mountain people, downstream populations, and beyond. Ecosystems and production functions of transboundary natural landscapes need to be conserved and managed to ensure their sustainability such as the availability of biodiversity resources for food and medicines, and environmental regulation. Developing regulatory mechanisms for access and benefit sharing from genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, protecting traditional knowledge, and support to access resources for mountain biodiversity conservation by mountain communities may create conducive conditions for sustainable development. The analysis will bring some of the major challenges for discussion and future direction.
3. **A regional initiative:** As part of the CBD implementation, many countries in the HKH region are engaged in the development and implementation of country specific ABS mechanisms (policies and laws) to benefit the local communities. Despite these important policy and legal developments, there is little awareness in policy making circles about the nature and extent of trade in and movement of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge throughout the region and across countries. There is also insufficient flow of information among states concerning genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, and existing or planned bioprospecting activities within each national territory. Ensuring fair access and benefit sharing and a stable supply of biological resources requires cooperation between countries sharing the same ecological landscape. This has been understood by many countries in the region. A regional ABS framework can provide a mechanism for such cooperation. Another advantage of such a framework is its capacity to safeguard the rights of indigenous and local communities and to ensure a fair sharing of benefits with the original stewards of biological resources and holders of associated traditional knowledge. The framework would help promote conservation and sustainable use of biological resources in the region, and provide a mechanism to exchange experience and information, and coordinate measures, in a regional transboundary setting, thus helping to address the needs created by the high interdependence in mountain areas.

For further information please contact

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Front photo: Yi Shaoliang

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