

Biodiversity conservation for poverty alleviation in Asia Pacific APFED showcase experience: Operationalising Nagoya Protocol in South Asia

Executive summary

Introduction

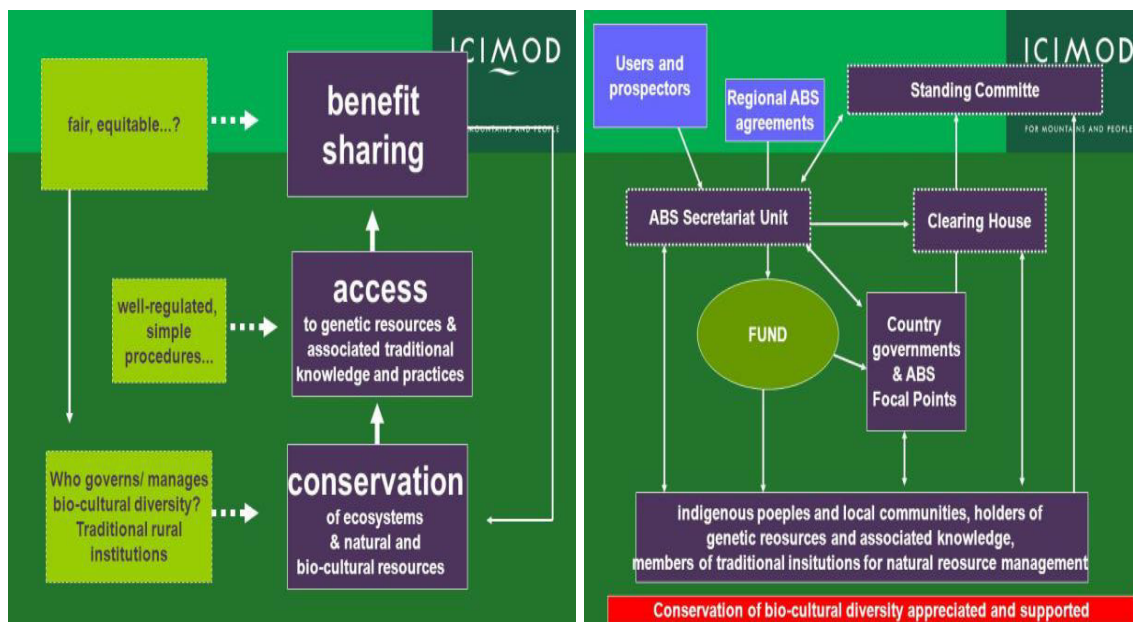
The mountain region of Hindu-Kush Himalaya is a unique habitat for snow leopards and its prey species. Similarly, Sundarbans of India and Bangladesh remain a unique mangrove habitat. Island nations like Maldives and Sri Lanka share significant coastal and marine biodiversity in Indian Subcontinent. In all these countries there is a lot to share and offer to the global community in terms of biodiversity resources. At the same time these countries have capacities to influence the policies and practices of conservation of biodiversity, its sustainable use and equitable sharing of benefits from the commercial and non-commercial use of the biodiversity. In order to discuss the issues related to the implementation of the third objective of the CBD – equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the commercial utilization of the biological resources, this side event was organized during Conference of Parties meeting at Hyderabad on 17th October 2012. In the context of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS), the transboundary sharing of the biodiversity and the associated knowledge assumes special importance in South Asia. To understand various aspects of such transboundary co-operation for operationalization of the Nagoya Protocol this side event was organized by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), New Delhi, India and International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Kathmandu, Nepal.

Presentations and discussions

Dr Archana Negi from Jawaharlal Nehru University, India discussed the process of historical free usage of genetic resources to the current international regime under Nagoya Protocol. She also mentioned about the importance of rights of indigenous communities, protection of human rights especially in the context of access to the genetic resources and the associated traditional knowledge. She also highlighted the need of compliance processes in place for obtaining Prior Informed Consent (PIC), active role of national repositories for depositing the specimens, etc.

Dr Yogesh Gokhale from TERI, India elaborated the ecological and socio-cultural affinities in South Asian region. He mentioned that the population in the South Asian region largely depends on natural resources and for the region - (1) Climate Change, (2) Food Security, (3) Water Security, (4) Energy Security, and (5) Managing Urbanization remain important issues. He highlighted the fact that only two countries in the region namely India and Bhutan have the legislation on biodiversity and its implementation is faced by various national and international limitations.

Dr. Krishna Prasad Oli from ICIMOD, Nepal provided a detailed perspective on the transboundary ABS mechanism. He highlighted the Article 10 of Nagoya Protocol on the Global Multilateral Benefit sharing mechanism and Article 11 of transboundary mechanism along with associated articles in the protocol. He explained possible ABS mechanism as depicted below:



Mr. Tahir Rasheed from SULI, IUCN, Pakistan mentioned that food security is important along with food sovereignty. He emphasized the importance of the traditional knowledge holders such as pastoral nomads, graziers for conserving the germ plasm, seed banks and the animal breeds. Dr. G A Kinhal from Madhya Pradesh Forest Department, India mentioned that Nagoya Protocol should be used as a platform by the user and provider countries for equitable sharing of benefits. He mentioned that the sustainability of the resources was paramount and he quoted some of the experiences where natural resources been threatened in process of commercial exploitation.

Mr. Kabir Bavikatte from Natural Justice currently associated with National Biodiversity Authority of India suggested to experiment with smaller set of species with pre-agreed resources for developing the regional mechanism. He also mentioned about the diverse set of strategies at the national level. Dr. L M S Palni from G B Pant IHD, India emphasized that capacity building is the paramount need in the region. He also suggested developing an academic course on Access and Benefit Sharing through organizations such as South Asian University based in New Delhi. Dr. Scott Perkin, IUCN, Bangkok highlighted the efforts made by IUCN by developing the resource material on Nagoya Protocol. Dr. Pramod, SACON India mentioned the importance of decentralized governance in Indian context for equitable benefit sharing.

Conclusion

The important points flagged in the side event for further considerations are:

1. Need to build capacities by generating resource materials, case studies, conducting training programmes at local, national and regional levels.
2. Regional ABS mechanism can be thought at initial level by identifying small set of pre-agreed shared species.
3. Regional and national organizations would be of importance for the regional implementation of Nagoya Protocol in South Asian Region.