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SPREP Circular

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To: SPREP National Focal Points

Subject: **Access and Benefit Sharing Meeting, 19-22 March 2012, Nadi, Fiji**

SPREP in partnership with the ABS Capacity Development Initiative wishes and the Australian Government wishes to invite your ABS focal point to the above-captioned meeting. This meeting follows on from an ABS workshop held in October 2011, also in Nadi. It is envisaged to hold 2 further meetings this year and it would be beneficial if the same person can attend.

Background

The ABS Capacity Development Initiative – a multi-donor initiative hosted by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) – has been implemented by GIZ (German Development Cooperation) since 2006. Following the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol in 2010, the European Union tasked and funded GIZ to expand the ABS Initiative beyond its focus on Africa to include the Caribbean and the Pacific countries of ACP Group of States. The Australian Government has generously agreed to provide parallel funding in 2012 to the activities of the ABS Initiative in the Pacific region.

An initial assessment of ABS implementation and related capacity development needs in the Pacific region highlighted the important role of the regional organisations in providing support to national implementation of international treaties and agreements. Marine bioprospecting and cutting edge research on marine genetic resources are highly relevant for the region. Food security depends on safeguarding the genetic diversity of relevant crops such as taro in gene banks as well as in situ. Coherent implementation of the Nagoya Protocol and the International Treaty for Plant Genetic resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) at the national and regional level is therefore of importance to ensure on the one side the sharing of benefits from the utilization of genetic resources and on the other side allow for the exchange of germplasm in the case of emergencies as well as for the adaptation of varieties/breeds in light of climate change induced environmental changes, such as salinity, heat, droughts and floods.

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Objectives of the workshop

The first workshop under this new partnership will be introductory, on the provisions of the Nagoya Protocol, trends in biodiversity based research and development, and existing approaches to implement the Nagoya Protocol on ABS. Specific objectives are to

- support informed regional participation in the Second Meeting of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Committee for the Nagoya Protocol on ABS (ICNP-2), 2-7 July 2012,
- discuss approaches for addressing the transboundary nature of many biological and genetic resources (Art.11 of the Nagoya Protocol) with a special focus on the role of regional organisations, and
- discuss and elaborate on the national implementation challenges vis-á-vis bioprospecting trends in the Pacific region and the interlinkages of ABS with other international agreements and processes.

Participants should come prepared to discuss their local situation.

Expected Outputs

- Improved preparedness of Pacific stakeholders for the upcoming discussions on transboundary genetic resources and compliance during the 2nd meeting of the ICNP in July 2012.
- Enhanced understanding of the concept of "utilization" of genetic resources with regard to existing and future BR / GR supply chains.
- Identification of challenges and capacity development needs for the future work under the ABS Initiative on the linkages between ABS, TK and IPR for effective national implementation of the Nagoya Protocol.

Logistical arrangements

Funding will be provided for the attendance of one representative per country. Countries are kindly requested to fill in the attached form return and send to Theresa Fruean-Afa (theresaf@sprep.org) no later than 2 March 2012 in order for travel to be arranged. For enquiries please contact Clark Peteru (clarkp@sprep.org).

Yours sincerely

David Sheppard
Director General