

Agricultural Biotechnologies in Developing Countries: Options and opportunities in crops, forestry, livestock, fisheries and agro-industry to face the challenges of food insecurity and climate change (ABDC-10)



1-4 March 2010
Guadalajara, Mexico



ORGANIZATION OF PARALLEL SESSIONS (Cross-cutting issues)

ABDC-10 will take place in Guadalajara, Mexico from 1 to 4 March 2010 and is expected to be attended by approximately 600 participants. It is hosted by the Government of Mexico and co-sponsored by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), the World Bank and the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) are major partners in this initiative.

A tentative layout of the conference program has now been developed (<http://www.fao.org/biotech/abdc/prog/>). For the first three days, the conference programme comprises plenary sessions in the morning followed by parallel sessions (that are sector-specific, regional or dealing with cross-cutting issues) in the afternoon and a “knowledge share fair” (with information booths, videos, posters, etc.) in the evening. The fourth and final day of the conference comprises plenary sessions only and is dedicated to the issue of moving beyond “business as usual”, with discussions on options for developing countries and on Priorities for Action for the international community.

Each parallel session is expected to have 100-150 participants, and should be organized to encourage open discussion. A session is envisaged to have 2-3 speakers/panellists, each of whom would speak for 15 minutes (providing a brief background on the topic and setting the scene) followed by an open discussion moderated by a facilitator. An important role of the facilitator would be to encourage meaningful involvement of the participants and to summarize the key points, issues raised and insights at the end of the session. To elicit the most productive discussion and to ensure that a wide diversity of perspectives are represented, some factors to be taken into account while proposing the speakers should be their degree of relevant expertise, geographical origin, stakeholder group, experience in one or more food and agricultural sectors, etc. The conference will be attended by various stakeholders, including farmers and policy-makers and the emphasis of the sessions should be on effective communication to facilitate involvement of attendees from across-the-board backgrounds (e.g. avoidance of technical jargon).

The expected output from each parallel session would be to summarize the information available on the given topic in developing countries, and identify the gaps and needs in that area, as well as options for the future. A rapporteur will prepare a short report for each session to be presented together with those from the other parallel sessions at the beginning of the plenary session on the following day. These reports could contain recommendations that could be considered while dealing with discussions on options for developing countries and on Priorities for Action for the international community on the last day of the conference.

The organizers of each session also have the possibility of contributing an Issue paper (not to exceed 5 pages) focussing on the key topics to be discussed during the session. The papers will be made available on the conference website. Please note that these Issue papers will not be FAO papers and will be the responsibility of the relevant organization.

With regards to funding, financial resources for the conference are limited and additional financial support is actively being sought to ensure wider participation from developing countries. As such, it

would be much appreciated if the relevant organizations could at the very least fund participation of the facilitator, speakers and the organization representatives at their respective sessions. To reduce costs for the session, for potential speakers please also take into consideration the 74 people included in the international Steering Committee (<http://www.fao.org/biotech/abdc/sc/>), who were chosen because they represent key stakeholders or because of their individual expertise in certain biotechnology areas.

For further information and future updates about the conference, please visit <http://www.fao.org/biotech/abdc/>.

<u>Section 1: Session Details</u>	
Proposed title of the session	Enhancing Human Capacities: Training and Education in Agriculture Biotechnology
Organization	International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB)
Contact person for session organization (title and affiliation)	Decio Ripandelli, Director, Administration and External Relations ICGEB Trieste - Italy
Facilitator (title and affiliation)	Prof. Roger Beachy Director, National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Washington DC – USA
Speaker 1 (title and affiliation)	Prof. Jorge Allende, Vice-President for Research and Development Universidad de Chile
Speaker 2 (title and affiliation)	Prof. Idah Sithole-Niang Head, Department of Biochemistry University of Zimbabwe
Speaker 3 (title and affiliation)	Prof. Godelieve Gheysen Department of Molecular Biotechnology Ghent University – Belgium
Speaker 4 (title and affiliation)	Prof. Sudhir Sopory, Group Leader, Plant Molecular Biology ICGEB New Delhi - India

<u>Section 2: Session Abstract</u>
In today's ever-changing world, the relentless progress of scientific knowledge is coupled not only to the growing influence of the economic, scientific and technological capabilities of some “developing” countries, but also to the increasing social and cultural divide with those left behind. Serious thought is urgently needed to define the most effective methods to train future generations of scientists, in particular those from the developing world, to ensure that they are able to both anticipate and

assimilate future trends in agricultural biotechnology and molecular biology, and thus provide their countries with all the ensuing potential benefits. ICGEB has operated since 1987 as a centre of excellence for research and training in biotechnology, with a major focus on building capacities in the developing world; it has been entrusted by its Board of Governors to develop this side event to consider the future challenges of scientific training and education. The session, which foresees an active interaction between the facilitator, speakers and participants, will be articulated along specific broad and intra-sectorial themes such as:

- re-positioning the younger generation of scientists in a changing world;
- new strategies to be adopted by the international scientific community to take into account the influence of some "developing" countries;
- changes in the relationship of science and society;
- the need to develop new PhD curricula that take into account the above-referred changes, as well as the relationship between research centers and universities and the requirements of interdisciplinary training;
- teaching students in assessing the reliability and quality of the data produced and/or analysed;
- teaching the teachers: prepare for curricula changes at all levels;
- the need to consider the development of science managers and entrepreneurs in the biotechnological industry;
- the role of biosafety considerations to effect regulatory oversight and market entry.

Keywords	Future trends of science, new generations, biotechnology, capacity building, developing countries, ICGEB, curricula, data assessing, interdisciplinary training, teachers, biotech industry, biosafety.
-----------------	---