

ABS as a tool in the global development agenda: African experiences

**BioTrade and Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS)
in Support of the SDGs**

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The origins and logic of ABS

- Objectives of the CBD:
 - Conservation of biological diversity
 - Sustainable use of its components
 - Fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access, technology transfer and funding, respecting all rights
- Order of objectives results from negotiating history – it was never intended as a hierarchy, although it is often treated as such
- For implementation purposes the order only works if reversed: benefit sharing incentivizes sustainable use, which leads to conservation

Development and biodiversity:

African perspective

- Economic development and poverty alleviation are the predominant policy objectives of African countries rich in biodiversity
- Historically, economic development is usually achieved at the expense of biodiversity
- “Gorillas don’t vote” – political imperative
- Biodiversity occurs in the territories of communities with traditional lifestyles – evidence suggests such lifestyles create diversity
- Most development decreases diversity (land clearing, monocropping, urbanization, mining, industrialization, ...)

Development and/or conservation?

- Nagoya Protocol objective: benefit sharing contributes to conservation, sustainable use
- African efforts to implement ABS focus on securing benefits for local communities, technology transfer and human capacity
- Where significant benefits are shared biodiversity is conserved and encouraged:
 - Namibian CBNRM programme: +400% game count
 - PhytoTrade Africa sustainable biotrade: valuable species protected, sustainable livelihoods created, gender empowerment, landscape conservation
 - South Africa: National Biodiversity Economy Strategy to redress past injustices
- **"If it pays it stays"**

Sustainable development – a new global paradigm

- Global awareness of the unsustainability of current economic models – very recent, enabled by technology, full impacts at socio-economic and political levels not realised yet
- But good progress nevertheless, e.g.:
 - Rio Conventions
 - Common but differentiated responsibilities
 - Fair and equitable benefit sharing
 - Sustainable production and consumption
 - Sustainable and inclusive industrialisation
 - Millenium Development Goals
 - **Sustainable Development Goals (leave no-one behind)**

Benefit sharing to the rescue?

- Consumer support/market demand for value chains and products that benefit biodiversity
- Entrepreneurs want to do well by doing good
- Commercial partnerships between primary producers and downstream value chain actors
- Incentives for conservation at local level
- Respect and empowerment for traditional knowledge, rights, lands
- Focus expanding from value chains to ecosystem restoration, transformative change
- Can multilateralism take this promising momentum into the economic mainstream?