

# *ABS is Genetic Resources for Sustainable Development*

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# FOREWORD

*The power of innovation, derived from traditional knowledge, science and technology, has transformed genetic resources into medicines, food, beverages and many other products which are indispensable for human existence on this planet. In fact, it can be argued that both genetic resources and innovation underpin sustainable development.*

For millennia indigenous peoples and local communities have managed genetic resources and today, they continue to be essential to sustain the livelihoods of communities. About 75% of the world's population relies upon – largely plant-based – traditional treatments for primary healthcare. Old and new agricultural varieties that can anticipate the impacts of climate change need to be maintained to sustain a growing population. The biotechnology industry is constantly harnessing living organisms to develop pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and crop protection agents that can be used as substitutes for harmful chemicals that pollute rivers and oceans. The energy and manufacturing sectors are also using micro-organisms to degrade pollutants and clean up polluted sites, to provide energy, and to help make paper and detergents.

The publication “ABS is Genetic Resources for Sustainable Development” unveils the potential of genetic resources to develop novel products for the agriculture, crop-protection, pharmaceutical, personal care and food/beverage industries. The collection of chapters from

27 countries provides a glimpse into the intricacies of biodiscovery stories, their contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the role of local stakeholders in the development of national laws and policies that facilitate access to genetic resources and ensure that benefits are shared between the users and providers of these resources.

This book illustrates efforts supported by the Global Environment Facility and UNDP, carried out by governments, local communities, and the private sector to implement the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity; namely, the conservation of biological diversity, its sustainable use and the equitable sharing of benefits derived from the utilization of genetic resources. While not all the countries showcased in this publication are Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS), all of them have signed the Protocol and have been inspired by the Protocol to develop or strengthen their ABS policies, laws and institutional capacity at all levels.

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