

The Convention of Biological Diversity has attracted the major attention of several environmental research institutions, which are playing significant role at international and inter governmental level in the policy formulation, planning and advocacy. We provide here a list of select websites of such organizations working on biosafety and international cooperation.

— Editor

<http://www.biodiv.org/>

The Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) is an international biological diversity treaty that plays a major role in the proper implementation of biosafety policy and planning to the member countries. Its secretariat is based in Montreal, Canada. CBD agreement was signed by 150 nations at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and dedicated to promote the sustainable development of biodiversity. This Convention recognizes that biological diversity is about more than plants, animals and microorganisms and their ecosystems, but also people's need for food security, medicines, fresh air and water, shelter, and a clean and healthy environment in which to live. The Convention establishes three main goals: the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources.

<http://www.gefweb.org/>

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is an independent financial organization of United Nation established in 1991, based in Washington, DC, USA. It provides assistance to developing countries in the form of fund, projects, programmes that protect the global environment and

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promote sustainable livelihoods in local communities. GEF grants support projects related to biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer, and persistent organic pollutants. GEF projects are managed by GEF implementing agencies like the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. The GEF Council is the main governing body of the GEF and comprised of 32 members who represent GEF member countries. The GEF Council is the only executing and implementing agency, which is responsible for creating project proposals and for managing GEF projects.

<http://www.arcbc.org/>

The ASEAN Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation (ARCBC) is based in Philippines and serves as the central focus for networking and institutional linkage among ASEAN members countries and European Union (EU) partner organizations. It plays enhanced role in building the capacity of ASEAN in promoting biodiversity conservation and establishes regional network via the National Biodiversity Reference Units to link scientific knowledge through the promotion of information exchange and synergies on biodiversity. It is a platform for ASEAN member countries in developing a framework for improving technical and institutional approaches through regional cooperation for managing biodiversity conservation.

<http://www.cites.org/>

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is an international agreement between Governments of different member states of UNEP. The CITES secretariat is based in Geneva and provides service to the Parties to the Convention. Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. CITES plays an important role in the regulation of wildlife trade for conservation purposes and the trade, ranging from live animals and plants to a vast array of wildlife products derived from them, including food products, exotic leather goods, wooden musical instruments, timber, tourist curios and medicines. Many wildlife species in trade are not endangered, but the existence of an agreement to ensure the sustainability of the trade is important in order to safeguard these resources for the future.

<http://www.roap.unep.org/>

The Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), the regional office of United Nation Environment programme (UNEP) is based in Bangkok, Thailand. The activity of ROAP is to coordinate the role of UNEP in promoting international cooperation in the field of environment. The Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific reflects the functional areas and divisional structure of the United Nations Environmental Programme. Its main areas are environmental assessment, policy development and law, policy implementation, technology, industry and economics, international conventions, support for ozone networks and communications and public information. The Regional Office for Asia and Pacific assists in the process of identifying and implementing solutions to global and regional environmental problems.

<http://www.agbios.com/>

AGBIOS is a Canadian company dedicated to providing public policy, regulatory, and risk assessment expertise for products of biotechnology. AGBIOS has worked with federal departments and agencies on issues of policy and regulation pertaining to genetically modified and other novel foods, crops, and forest tree species. The Company also provides experience and expertise to commercial enterprises seeking regulatory approval of biotechnology products, and to other public and private sector groups seeking clarification of issues associated with the development and utilization of biotechnology processes and products. AGBIOS provides the safety information of genetically modified plant products that have received regulatory approval, information on the implementation of biosafety systems, including case studies for food and environmental safety assessments, and a searchable library of biosafety-related citations in key topic areas.

<http://www.sacep.org/>

South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) is an inter-governmental organization responsible for the promotion and support of protection, management and enhancement of environment in the South Asia. It was established in 1982 and its head quarters based in Colombo, Sri Lanka. SACEP has three major role: recognition of environmental degradation caused by factors like poverty, over population, over consumption and wasteful production threatening economic development and human survival, integration of

environment and development as essential prerequisites to sustainable development, and importance of co-operative action in the South Asian region. It also works towards economic, social development and environmental management and vice versa to support the conservation and management of natural resources of the region. SACEP also works closely with all national, regional, and international institutions, governmental and non-governmental, as well as experts and groups engaged in such co-operation and conservation efforts.

<http://www.biodiversityasia.org/biosafety/MainPage.htm>

The Regional Biodiversity Programme, Asia (RBP) was established in 1996 and based in Colombo, Sri Lanka to assist countries in Asia for the implementation of Convention on Biological Diversity. It works with 14 countries in Asia, creating environment in the region through partnership with governments, NGOs, community based organizations, donors and other stakeholders on technical as well as policy issues. It provides support for development, implementation and review of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. The RBP is also currently implementing an initiative on Capacity Building to Implement the Biosafety Protocol in Asia. This activity is part of a larger project funded by the German Federal Agency for Economic Cooperation and Development and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. Its aims to help countries in Asia to implement national and international regulations concerning biosafety and build capacity to integrate provisions of international and national level regulations.

<http://asiabionet.org/about2.htm>

The regional office website of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for Asia and Pacific project on capacity building in biosafety of GM crops in Asia. The office is based in Bangkok, Thailand and is responsible for the formulation of the policy to assist countries in the region in safe harnessing of the benefits of biotechnology in accordance with global agreements on biosafety. Asia bionet is envisaged to establish and strengthen technical cooperation and capacity building of Asian countries to ensure safety in the introduction and use of GM crops, based on transparent and science based approaches. This includes the development and harmonization of an appropriate regulatory framework to deal with biosafety concerns relating to GM crops and the collection, analysis, dissemination and exchange of information

on biotechnology. It also works on GM-related biosafety standards through inventories, databases and decision-support systems.

<http://biosafety.biotec.or.th/>

The Thailand Biosafety Information Network is a part of the biosafety programme of National Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, Thailand. It is responsible for the testing of genetically modified organisms (GMO) and information network on biosafety for modern biotechnology. It has been established in order to gather all data and information on GMOs and its content. The main data and information contained in the information database consist of data of GMO seed importation, research and development on GMO risk assessment, GM Food and labelling and grain importation for industrial used of some crops. Moreover, it is responsible for providing policy recommendation and regulatory information to establish the co-operation among the biotechnology agencies or institutes in Thailand.

http://www.ielrc.org/research_biosafety.php/

The International Environmental Law Research Centre (IELRC) is an independent, non-profit research organization. It is based in Geneva (Switzerland), Nairobi (Kenya), and New Delhi (India). IELRC provides a unique forum for collaborative research between researchers in the developed and developing countries. Its main aim is to contribute to the establishment of legal and institutional frameworks, which foster sustainable environmental management in developing countries in an equitable international context. IELRC provides policy-relevant research at the international level given its strong network of competence in two significant regions of the developing world. Its biosafety programme focuses on several related aspects of biosafety and is generally involved in research concerning the legal instruments for biosafety at the national and international levels, in particular concerning the development of instruments based on the precautionary principle. It has also been closely following the development of the Biosafety Protocol and actively participating in the development of a liability regime.