

Abstract

Waymarks of Opportunity: The Challenge and Promise of Capacity-Building and Technology Transfer Related to Marine Genetic Resources¹

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This presentation will focus on the context in which the many issues surrounding capacity-building and technology transfer related to marine genetic resources may be usefully examined -- with a view to identifying the potential challenges and opportunities which lie ahead.

An important arching context for genetic resources -- including marine genetic resources (MGRs) -- is the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Articles related to technology transfer, S&T co-operation, financial resources, and the financial mechanism may have varying relevancy to the issue at hand, as clearly does the Treaty's specific article on genetic resources. As well, many other instruments and fora are relevant to the discussion at hand.

The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation also appears pertinent to MGR capacity building and technology transfer questions including, notably, in areas related to biodiversity aims (ref Para 44) and marine and coastal ecosystems (ref Para 36).

Participants are reminded of the CBD's ABS Action Plan which offers guidance and direction to States Parties and stakeholders alike regarding the design and implementation of national, regional/sub regional and international plans and strategies.

A brief overview of the current environment for marine "biodiscovery" is provided, with a particular emphasis on the nature of such activities and the obvious pitfalls and promises (in the context of capacity building and technology transfer) associated with current practices -- from developed and developing country perspectives.

On the basis of the above, and having reviewed a number of constraints long associated with such initiatives, the presentation turns its attention to the many and growing opportunities afforded to both address the relevant challenges and arrive at opportunities surrounding capacity building and technology transfer. Opportunities include, inter alia, enhancing awareness of ABS amongst the marine science research community, ensuring national, regional and international governance structures adequately address capacity and technology issues, improving developing country

¹ The views herein are solely that of the presenters.

participation in international marine collaborations, identifying sources for new funding for MGR capacity-building, studying mechanisms to better support technology/know-how transfer, improving methods for the valuation of MGRs and enhancing understanding of MGRs, their value and use.
