

Key Terms Used

(**Note:** Some of the definitions below are taken from the Biological Diversity Act 2002, and adapted to suit the NBSAP. Terms, that have been given their own separate definitions here, but are also used within the definition of another term, have been italicised.)

Access: The process by which genetic or *biological resources* are obtained or made available for use; in common usage relating to the Convention on Biological Diversity, this refers primarily to availability between countries, but for the purposes of this action plan it has been used in its wider sense of availability to any sector within or outside India.

Agricultural Ecosystem: *Ecosystem* used for agriculture; also, small geographic units which are the components of an agricultural/farming landscape, and the interactions between people and food-producing resources within a farm, or even a specific field.

Alien Invasives: Species or varieties of plants, animals, or micro-organisms, that are introduced into an *ecosystem* to which they do not originally belong, and which proliferate to the detriment of indigenous/local species or varieties. These could be introduced accidentally or deliberately. The species/variety need not necessarily be alien to India, but could be alien to a particular ecosystem, e.g. Spotted deer that are native to mainland India, but alien invasives in Andaman Islands. Genetically modified organisms would also constitute alien invasives.

Benefit-Sharing: The distribution of benefits arising from the use of a genetic or *biological resource* once it has been *accessed*; in common usage this refers to financial gains, but for this action plan it has been used to denote any kind of benefit being generated from the resource.

Biogeography: The branch of biology which deals with the geographical distribution of animals and plants. It is also the study of the distribution of different species of organisms around the planet and the factors that influenced that distribution.

Biogeochemical Cycle: Natural processes that recycle nutrients in various chemical forms from the non-living environment to living organisms, and then back to the non-living environment, e.g. carbon cycle, nitrogen cycle.

Biogeographical Region or Bioregion (Ecoregion): A land and water territory whose limits are defined not by political boundaries but by the geographical limits of *ecosystems*.

Biological Diversity or Biodiversity: The variability among living organisms from all sources and the ecological complexes of which they are part. It includes:

- diversity within species or between species (including populations) and diversity of *ecosystems*;
- wild and domesticated plants and animals, and micro-organisms

Biological Resources or Bio-resources: Plants, animals and micro-organisms (individual components of *biodiversity*) or parts thereof, their genetic material and by-products, excluding value-added products with actual or potential use or value.

Biopiracy: The appropriation of the knowledge and genetic resources of indigenous and local communities by individuals or institutions seeking exclusive monopoly control (usually patents or plant breeders' rights) over these resources and knowledge.

Biosafety: A term used to describe efforts to reduce and eliminate the risks resulting from *biotechnology* and its

products.

Biotechnology: Any technological application that uses biological systems, living organisms, or derivatives thereof to make or modify products or processes for specific use.

Carrying Capacity: The maximum number of individuals of a given species, or the maximum amount of usage, that can be supported by a particular environment without degradation taking place.

Climate Change: A change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.

Common Property Rights: Collective ownership or control of the *community*. This is distinct from private ownership.

Community: see *Local Community*

Community Conserved Area: Natural and modified ecosystems, containing significant *biodiversity*, ecological services and cultural values, voluntarily conserved by indigenous and local communities through *customary laws* or other effective means.

Conservation: Protection and/or *sustainable use* of nature and natural resources, that helps to sustain ecosystems and species

Criteria and Indicators of Sustainability: Parameters to assess if ongoing resource harvest methods and other factors are hampering future yields, or adversely affecting the long-term sustainability of the ecosystem in which the resource exists (see *sustainable use*).

Customary Law: Norms of behavior observed by communities over time, which they consider to be akin a legal requirement. Customary law is not normally documented in the written codes.

Customary Rights: Rights built up over long-standing usage and access.

Domesticated Biodiversity: Diversity in which the evolutionary process has been influenced by humans to meet their own needs. This includes crops, livestock (including poultry), and domestic pets.

Ecological Security: The maintenance of the diversity of *ecosystems* and habitats, the diversity of species and populations, the integrity including biological productivity of *ecosystems* and taxa, the evolutionary potential of nature, and critical ecosystem benefits.

Ecoregion: see *Biogeographical Region* or *Bioregion*

Ecosystem: A dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities, interacting as a functional unit with the non-living components including sunlight, air, water, minerals and nutrients. The term implies a partly bounded system, with most interactions inside it. An ecosystem can be small and ephemeral, e.g. water-filled holes in trees or rotting logs on a forest floor, or large and long-lived, e.g. forests or lakes.

Ecotourism/Sensitive Tourism and Pilgrimage: Tourist and pilgrimage activities that are respectful of the ecological, social, cultural, and other attributes of the ecosystems and communities being visited, do not degrade these attributes, affirm the rights of communities, and contribute positively to their livelihood security. Any form of tourism that takes place in ecologically interesting areas is therefore not automatically ecotourism; conversely, ecotourism could be considered to be practiced anywhere that tourists go, if it confirms to the above principles.

Equity: Fairness and justice in conservation and use, including equitable access to and decision-making control over biodiversity as well as equitable distribution of costs and benefits associated with *conservation* and *sustainable use*. In particular, it includes creating democratic spaces for the voices of underprivileged women and men in defining *conservation* and use priorities. **Equitable benefit-sharing** is the distribution of benefits in accordance with this definition of equity.

Ex Situ Conservation: Conserving life forms away from their natural habitats, in a zoo, botanical garden, aquarium, gene bank or other similar facility.

Extinction: The death of a species, which occurs when the last individual of the species dies.

Genetic Diversity: The variation of genes within a species.

Genetic Engineering: Technique of altering the genetic make-up of an organism to suit a specific purpose.

Genetically Modified Organism: A product derived by genetic modification or engineering using recombinant DNA and other transgenic techniques.

Indigenous: Native or belonging naturally to a place.

In Situ Conservation: Conserving wild plants and animals in their natural habitat, or domesticated plants and animals in their areas of domestication or cultivation and use.

Intellectual Property Rights: Property rights assigned to persons over original products of their intellects. These products include inventions, industrial designs, literary, artistic and scientific works, symbols, names and images, and plant varieties.

Livelihood Security: The security of communities and individuals critically dependent on *biological resources*, including guaranteed *access* to, and control over, such *biological resources* and related knowledge.

Local Community (or 'Community'): A socially and geographically defined group of people living near, and/or dependent on, biodiversity or *biological resources*. This term does not imply that the group is internally homogenous. It includes panchayats, gram sabhas, tribal village councils, etc., but more often than not denotes the gram sabha or equivalent village assembly consisting of all adult inhabitants.

Monitoring and Evaluation: *Monitoring* refers to an ongoing process of assessing whether the process of planning and implementation is proceeding on target; evaluation, usually done at the end of a specified phase or at the end of the project/process, is an assessment of whether the various goals and objectives have been met.

Multilateral Environment Agreements: Treaties or agreements signed by more than two countries, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, or the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.

Organic Agriculture: A system that attempts to provide a balanced environment, in which the maintenance of soil fertility and the control of pests and diseases are achieved by the enhancement of natural processes and cycles, with only moderate inputs of energy and resources, while maintaining optimum productivity.

Patent: The sole right for a term of years to the proceeds of an invention.

Prior Informed Consent: Consent given after full and appropriate information has been provided to the person/agency from whom consent is sought, and before commencing the action for which consent is sought; this could entail consent in writing or in some other formal manner.

Protected Area: A geographically defined area which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific *conservation* objectives, primarily the *conservation* of wildlife.

Statutory Law: Legislation passed by the recognised statutory body of a territory, such as a national or state government.

Sustainable Development: Development that meets the needs and aspirations of the current generation without compromising the ability to meet those of future generations.

Sustainable Use: The use of components of biological diversity in such manner and at such rate as does not lead to the long-term decline of the biological diversity, thereby maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations. In practical terms, this denotes restraints on levels of yield, methods of harvest/use, and other such considerations while using a resource.

Taxon (plural Taxa): Any group of organisms or populations considered to be sufficiently distinct from other such groups to be treated as a separate unit.

Traditional Community: A *local community*, which has practices, beliefs, kinship systems, and other cultural and economic attributes passed down through generations, in the same form or in modified forms.

Traditional (or Indigenous) Knowledge/Practices: *Local community* knowledge/practices that have been inherited, or built on knowledge/practices that are inherited, through generations. This would include recent and continuing innovations that *community* members make, based on or linked to such knowledge/practices.

Wild Biodiversity: Organisms, captive or living in the wild, that have not been subject to breeding to alter them from their native state.