

Media Workshop on Communicating Science and Biosafety

August 20th, 2015

New Delhi

A Brief Overview

Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), New Delhi, a premier institution in mass communication education, training and research in collaboration with Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MOEFCC), Govt of India, Global Environment Facility (GEF) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has conducted a series of media workshops on 'Communicating Science and Biosafety' across the country. The workshops are a part of a project, 'Capacity Building Project on Biosafety (Phase II)' undertaken by MOEFCC that aims at strengthening the biosafety management system in India to ensure adequate protection of human health and biodiversity from potential risks arising from all LMO-related activities in agriculture. The 9th and final workshop of the series was held at Seminar Hall, First Floor, New Teaching Block, IIMC on 20th August 2015.

The Delhi National Workshop brought together participants from diverse media units viz. PTI, UNI, Business standard, Financial Express, Hindustan Times, Hindustan Samachar News Agency, Amar Ujjala to name a few. Two Community Radio representatives from Apna Radio, IIMC also attended the workshop.

To provide a holistic perspective on a wide range of topics related to biosafety in agri-biotechnology and its communication, learned speakers and research scientists actively involved in the field of plant/crop plant-biotechnology and associated organizations/institutes like Department of Biotechnology (DBT), University of Delhi, Punjab Agricultural University, Biotech Consortium India Limited (BCIL), and Vigyan Prasar were invited to address the issue.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WORKSHOP



Introduction and Technical Session I: Innovations in Agri-Biotechnology: New Frontiers in Science & Agriculture The workshop started with a brief overview on project aim, objectives, and anticipated outcomes of this novel initiative. The succeeding technical session gave an epigrammatic introduction to biotechnology and explained some basic concepts of the discipline. It familiarized the participants with some of the important innovations that have taken place in the field of

biotechnology. The session broadly discussed about the process of production of Genetically Modified food and cleared some of the misconceptions regarding GM crops.

Technical Session II: From Green to Gene Revolution In the session on safety assessment of GM crops the revered speaker detailed out the rigorous process of biosafety assessment covering environmental safety assessment, food and feed safety assessment and laboratory stage development of GM crops prior to its commercial release. He extensively discussed about the safety parameters, stringent safety standards to be maintained during the



release of GM crops.

Technical Session III: Developing Regional capacities in GMOs: South East Asian Perspectives

Third talk of the session provided an overview of Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. It highlighted various capacities building systems, regulations, guidelines available in South East Asian region and shed



light on several valuable and reliable information sources on GMOs/LMOs.

Technical Session IV: Technologies for Local Solutions

This session explained various important aspects related to communicating science and technology. It addressed several facets of scientific/agri-biotech communication needs to be considered for an effective scientist-communicator interface.



Valedictory session

Two days workshops culminated with a formal valedictory session, advanced through an address by Dr.SR Rao, Advisor, DBT followed by certificate distribution to participants. Dr. Rao gave an overview of agricultural technologies with a special emphasis on GM crops. He further explained the food security issues relevant to GM crops and shed some light on Indian Biosafety Regulatory Framework. Feedback/suggestions were invited from the participants through a structured questionnaire for the performance evaluation of the current workshop. It is expected that the feedback and suggestions from the workshops would enrich the national discourse on biosafety at various levels and would contribute in effective policy making in the field of agribiotechnology.



Round-up report presentation



Certificate distribution to participants

