OFFICE ORDER

Sub: Reconstituted Expert Committee on Agrobiodiversity

1. In exercise of powers conferred under Sub-Section (1),(2) of Section 13 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, read with Rule 11 of Biological Diversity Rules, 2004 the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) has constituted a committee to deal with agro-biodiversity. Explanation to Sub-Section (1) of Section 13 the agro-biodiversity means biological diversity of agriculture related species and their wild relatives.

2. The tenure of the Agrobiodiversity Expert Committee reconstituted vide office order has expired. In supersession of this office order No.2/82/Admin/EC/09/13-14/1661 dated 10th August, 2016, the Expert Committee on Agrobiodiversity is reconstituted for a period of one year from the date of issue of this order. Chairman and members of the reconstituted EC is as under:

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<th>CHAIRMAN</th>
<th>Dr. R.S. Rana, Chairman, Bio-Links, Former Director, NBPGR, New Delhi</th>
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<td>CO-CHAIR</td>
<td>Dr. Krishnakumar, Bioversity International, New Delhi</td>
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<th>MEMBERS</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Chairperson Protection of Plant Varieties &amp; Farmers Rights Authority (PPV&amp;FRA), NASC Complex, New Delhi</td>
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<td>2. Secretary Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, New Delhi</td>
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<td>3. Deputy Director General ICAR, Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi (Crop Science)</td>
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- Dr. B. Andrews, Project Consultant, UNEP-GEF-MoEF&CC ABS Project, NBA (Member Convenor).

3. The Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Committee shall be as under :-

(i). Undertake an assessment of issues, identify gaps, synthesize lessons learned and propose future research and development areas on agro-biodiversity issues ranging from conservation, management and use of genetic resources to policy and legal aspects within the framework of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 and Biological Diversity Rules, 2004.

(ii). Develop specific measures for the conservation, management and sustainable use of all biotic factors related to agriculture, such as, plants, animals and microbes to
ensure that agro-biodiversity activities and plans are effectively integrated into the national biodiversity strategies, plans or programmes, as a priority activity in line with Article 6 of the CBD.

(iii). Develop a guidance paper detailing the linkages between the provisions of the Act and that of other existing legal, institutional and international frameworks (e.g. Nagoya Protocol, PPV&FRA, Patent Act, CITES).

(iv). Develop a set of advisory papers, as required under section 18(3) of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 and Rule 12 of the Biological Diversity Rules, 2004 focusing on emerging issues. Suggest ways and means for institutional linkages between NBA and other national agencies, including various Ministries on issues related to agrobiodiversity.

(v). Evolve suitable mechanisms and suggest implementable methodology for the legal protection of landraces/traditional varieties and develop specific policy/guidelines on conventional breeding practices in agriculture and allied areas; economic valuation of local varieties of agriculturally important species, and develop plans for long term conservation of wild relatives of crop plants and suggest action plan to conserve native animal breeds.

(vi). Develop a standard format including declaration/undertaking for the International Collaborative Research Project under Section 5 of the BD Act with special reference to monitoring of the adherence to the stipulations contained in the Notification dated 08.11.2006 of MoEFCC.

(vii). Make an assessment on the adverse effects of invasive alien species on agrobiodiversity and suggest appropriate measures to prevent the introduction, control and eradication of such species, which threaten ecosystems, habitats and landscape diversity, in tune with Article 8(h) of the CBD.

(viii). Identify various researchable issues relating to agro-biodiversity, which could be pursued through active involvement of the stakeholders and the farming communities and specific areas, practices, systems and species for promoting in situ on-farm conservation of traditional cultivars/landraces.

(ix). Evolve better agronomic practices to reduce the use of fertilizers and pesticide, to increase organic inputs and to deploy new varieties of crops to mitigate the ill-effects of the modern technologies aiming at improvement of people’s well-being and food and nutrition security.

(x). Undertake a study to identify distinct adaptation measures to take up the challenges posed to agro-biodiversity by climate change such as altering the topography of land,
changing farming systems, using different crop varieties and researching new technologies.

(xi). Evolve suitable mechanisms for the legal protection of landraces/traditional varieties while recognizing the ownership of the farming communities, private or public breeders. Develop strategies for minimizing the loss of biodiversity due to shrinking of private agricultural lands/ecosystems on account of unchecked urbanization.

(xii). Suggest measures for creating awareness about agro-biodiversity conservation and management issues, amongst the public and stakeholders on PGR policy issues such as, plant variety protection, breeders’ rights, farmers’ rights, sui generis system, etc. Also suggest inputs for literacy campaign on conservation and sustainable management of agro-biodiversity needs at the grass roots level, starting right with the school and gram sabha/panchayat levels.

(xiii). Evolve simple, effective and practicable mechanisms for prospecting agro-biodiversity and monitoring, giving high priority to the conservation of available breeds/strains of animals and microbes.

(xiv). Suggest ways and means to safeguard the traditional practices of tribes, particularly women, who have a long tradition of preserving plant species and the agro-ecosystems and learn from the available local wisdom. To revisit some of the vital issues of contemporary dialogue on genetic resources.

(xv). Suggest ways for better coordination between the SBBs, BMCs, KVKs with NGOs and Government agencies at local levels for management of agro-biodiversity.

(xvi). Identify suitable areas for designation as agro-biodiversity heritage sites under Section 37 of the Biological Diversity Act and develop guidelines for their management, to supplement the existing guidelines on Biodiversity Heritage Sites.

(xvii). Any other issues referred to it by the NBA.

This has the approval of the Chairman/NBA.

(T.Rabadan

Secretary, NBA

GUIDELINES FOR THE EXPERT COMMITTEE

The following guidelines are issued for proper conduct of the meeting to achieve the expected outcomes.

1. The Expert Committees are being constituted mainly to advise NBA on technical, techno-legal, administrative, scientific, statutory and miscellaneous matter as NBA does not require in-house expertise and experience in various disciplines.
The role of expert committee is more or less similar to that of ‘Amicus Curiae’ in the Court of Law.

2. The Chairman and members are requested to kindly make it convenient to attend the meeting at the fixed venue and time. The NBA will arrange transport from Airport/Railway station/Bus stand to and from the venue of the meeting.

3. The travel cost by Air (Air India - Economy class)/train/road mileage etc., incurred by the Chairman and the members/invitees will be reimbursed on production of the tickets/boarding pass along with bills in the prescribed format provided by NBA. The lodging and boarding will be provided by NBA. As NBA is functioning with skeletal staff, all are requested to arrange their travels themselves.

4. The Chairman and Co-chair of the committee are entitled for an amount of Rs.3000/- as sitting fee per day. Members and other invitees are entitled for an amount of Rs.2000/- as sitting fee per day. As per the OM issued by Ministry of Finance, GoI, the employees of Govt/Govt funded institutions/organisations will not be entitled to draw Sitting Fee.

5. The Chairman and members may preferably arrive at the city of venue one day in advance before the scheduled date of meeting.

6. The committee is requested to submit the proceedings/minutes to the NBA duly authenticated by all the members. In order to finalize and submit proceedings/minutes of the meeting on the same day, outstation members are requested to plan their return journey on the next day of the meeting. Under exceptional circumstances the Chairman may get the proceedings/minutes finalized at later dates and send the document to NBA duly authenticated by all members who were present in the meeting. In such case, a lump sum of Rs.2000/- will be paid to the Chairman to meet the postal expenses, mobile, internet charges and cost of secretarial assistance at his place of stay on request. For payment of lump sum, self-declared certificate to the effect that the expenditure has been incurred for the above purpose has to be furnished by the Chairman.

7. The NBA shall provide secretarial assistance and stationery etc., if minutes/proceedings of the Expert Committee is finalized at Chennai.

8. Whenever a member is not in a position to attend the meetings, he/she may inform the convenor well in advance.

9. In the absence of Chairman, the Co-Chair will conduct the proceeding of the meeting. In case, both Chairman and Co-Chair are absent, NBA shall appoint another person as Chairman or select one among the members present to officiate as Chairman to conduct the meeting in consultation, with Focal Point for EC and Chairman, NBA.

10. The members are requested to kindly go through the subject area and refer BD Act, 2002 and Rules, 2004 made thereunder, relevant laws, scientific articles, and books, browse Internet to facilitate lively and useful discussion on the subject.
11. The Chairman, Co-Chairman and members may kindly exchange notes and views through internet on the subject area to be discussed during the meeting. The points discussed in the EC will remain confidential with NBA.

12. The committee is valid for one year from the date of issue of this order.

13. The Chairman, Co-Chairman and Members of the EC on Agrobiodiversity are requested not to share information/recommendations, discussed and/or suggested in the EC meeting either to media or to any person(s) in any form.

14. Chairman of the reconstituted Expert Committee may constitute sub-committees in consultation with members of the committee.

15. The Secretary, NBA is authorised to participate and express his opinion in the meetings and will be the Focal Point for the Expert Committee.

(T.Rabikumar)
Secretary, NBA

To:

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(T. Rabikumar)
Secretary, NBA

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