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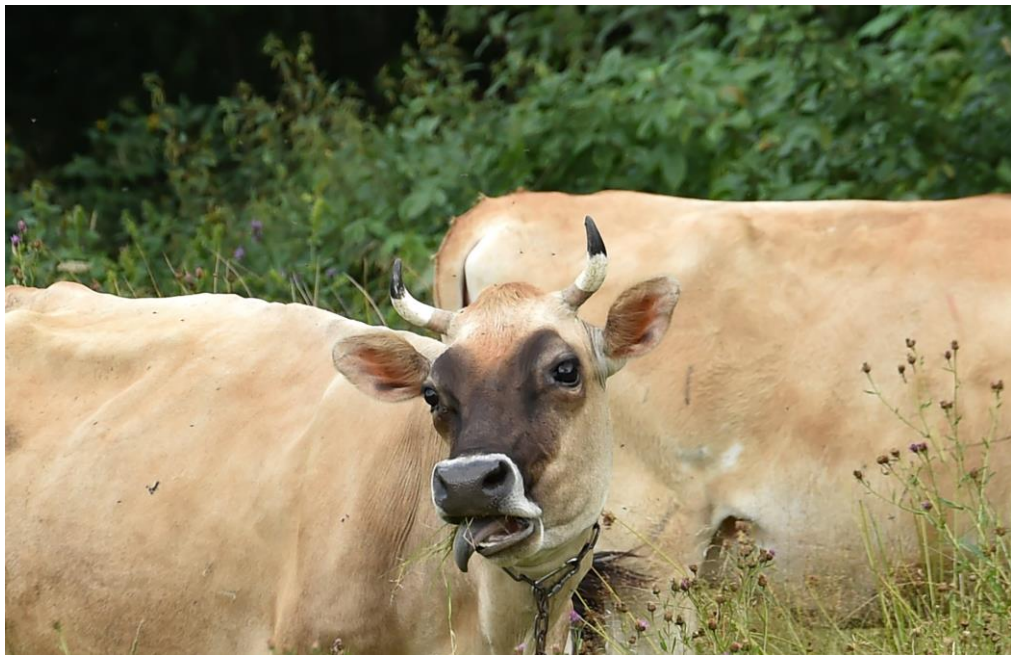
Nagoya Protocol Bolsters Belarus to Better Manage its Resources

Belarus is number one out of 24 countries to wrap up its part of the Global Project on the Nagoya Protocol. The Project “Strengthening of human resources, legal frameworks and institutional capacities to implement the Nagoya Protocol” with a total budget of \$350,000 US was the first major initiative to assist the country in enhancing its national legislation so that the Nagoya Protocol could start yielding results in the country and to generate economic and scientific capacities to monitor genetic resources efficiently.

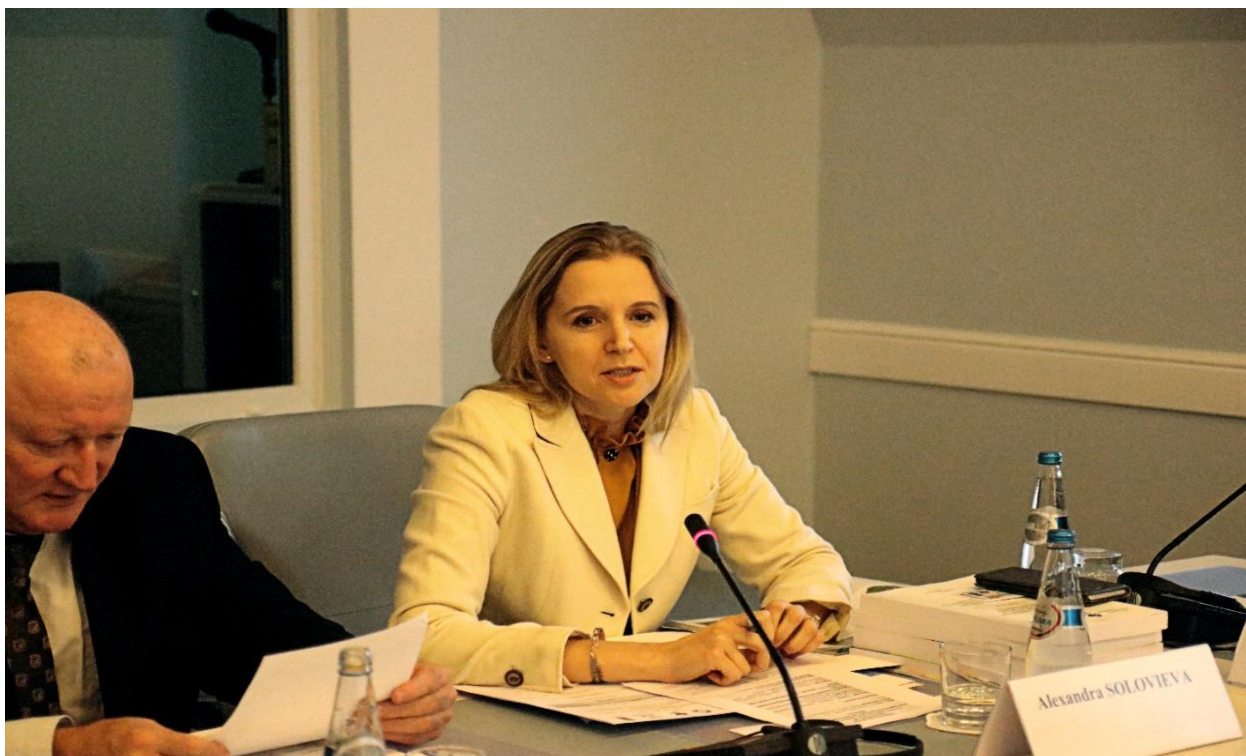
The key project objective is to support the development of a national framework for access to genetic resources in compliance with the Nagoya Protocol and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity.



“Our goal was to scrutinize national legislation, identify possible ways of improving it in terms of genetic resources’ management,” Elena Makeyeva said, Project Manager, PhD, Associate Professor, Head of the National Coordination Centre on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-sharing, Institute of Genetics and Cytology, NAS of Belarus. “We have involved very qualified experts: lawyers, biologists, ethnographers, folklorists and linguists. They have prepared proposals and submitted them to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection with a view of their integration in normative legal acts next year.”



Another challenge was to build trust between providers and users of genetic resources using advanced DNA identification techniques.



Alexandra Solovieva, UNDP Resident Representative in Belarus, and Alexander Kilchevsky, Deputy Chairperson of the Presidium of NAS of Belarus, Academician, National Project Coordinator

Equitable sharing of benefits arising from transferred genetic resources is instrumental in the development of human potential and related technologies in provider countries; in boosting investments to support research potential and develop biotechnologies. This positively contributes to the socio-economic development and helps address complex environmental issues – the requisite conditions to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The study of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources was a unique milestone during the project implementation.



“The Nagoya Protocol aims to manage not only genetic resources, but also traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources,” explained Elena Makeyeva. “Traditional knowledge hasn’t been thoroughly studied yet in Belarus. There are traditional knowledge holders across the generations in our country and they can impart such knowledge. For example, in the village of Strelnya, Ivanovo District, there is Dom of Travnik (Herbalist’s House) initiated by its local resident, a biology teacher in the past, by the way.”

According to the Project Manager, the issue of traditional knowledge, including the rights to such knowledge, is not regulated by legislation yet. And this continues to be a challenge.



Another striking direction we think we will continue our work in under the Nagoya Protocol is the relationship between traditional knowledge and longevity. In Belarus, there are approximately 400 local residents who have put their foot over the centenary threshold. Almost 90% out of them are women and many of them live in rural areas and use traditional knowledge to maintain their own health. Today, Belarus is developing a concept of active longevity, which is proposed to be associated with traditional knowledge.

The Project was implemented in 2018-2019 by the Institute of Genetics and Cytology, NAS of Belarus, through the national execution modality with financial support from the Global Environment Facility and in partnership with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection and the UN Development Program in Belarus.