

## **Side Event Summary**

### **SHARING THE HARVEST: A LOOK AT CURRENT BENEFIT SHARING PRACTICES AMONG THE COMMUNITY OF USERS OF GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE**

US Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Service sponsored a successful side event on existing benefit sharing practices among food/agriculture stakeholders during the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Working Group (WG) – 9 meeting held in Cali, Colombia on March 26, 2010. More than seventy delegates to the meeting attended, with more than half of the attendees from emerging market economies. Shakeel Bhatti, the Executive Secretary of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (IT), served as the discussion moderator. Three panelists drawn from the basic science (industry/university), biological control, and international agriculture research communities presented information on the range of benefit sharing practices currently in use by food and agriculture researchers. The presentations demonstrated that existing local, national, regional, and sector-based ABS systems are effective in promoting both access and benefit sharing internationally. Panelists articulated the broad range of public and private benefits that accrue to stakeholders at all levels, the interdependencies that exist across stakeholders, and the variation across ABS systems and sectors. The session also provided insights on the potential impact of an International ABS Regime on the movement and use of genetic resources of relevance to food and agriculture (GRFA). Following the presentations, the moderator summarized the common themes among the presentations and fielded questions from the audience. There was significant interest in the information provided and the discussion touched on a range of themes such as how the IT benefit sharing mechanism is working and the factors that contribute to an effective ABS system. Panelists were also asked what specific advice they would give to the delegates on ABS as they continued deliberations, based on their experience and perspectives. Since the CBD ABS WG 9 will continue to meet this summer and fall, the side event provided important detail on ABS that could help ongoing discussions. Thus, the side event was a relevant and timely occasion to illustrate concrete ways in which benefit sharing is conducted under current norms and standards.