



National Biodiversity Authority Reconstitutes Agrobiodiversity Expert Committee; Padma Shri Dr P L Gautam Appointed Chair

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The National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) has reconstituted the Expert Committee on Agrobiodiversity under Section 13(1) of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, for a period of one year to provide expert guidance on the conservation, sustainable use and access and benefit-sharing (ABS) of agricultural biodiversity and related matters.

The Committee has been reconstituted with Padma Shri Dr. P. L. Gautam, a renowned agricultural scientist and former Chairperson of the National Biodiversity Authority and the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority (PPVFRA), as its Chair. Dr. Gautam was recently conferred the Padma Shri in recognition of his distinguished contributions to agricultural science. The Chairperson of PPVFRA will serve as the Co-Chair of the Committee.

The Expert Committee on Agrobiodiversity has been an important advisory body of the NBA since 2005 and has been reconstituted periodically to address emerging issues concerning agricultural genetic resources. Over the years, the Committee has been led by eminent agricultural scientists and experts and has comprised distinguished representatives from leading agricultural, research, academic and policy institutions across the country.

The Committee has played a significant role in supporting the implementation of the Biological Diversity Act by providing expert recommendations on a range of issues relating to agricultural biodiversity. These include matters concerning the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), access and benefit-sharing issues arising from the export of seeds of crop varieties and embryos of farm animals, clarifications relating to conventional plant breeding activities and the format of approvals issued by the concerned Ministry for collaborative research projects involving biological resources as required under Section 5 of the Biological Diversity Act.

The Committee's recommendations have contributed substantially to balancing biodiversity conservation objectives with agricultural research, innovation and the sustainable utilisation of biological resources.

The reconstituted Committee comprises eminent experts and senior representatives from key institutions, including the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, National Bureaus of Plant, Animal and Fish Genetic Resources, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, National Innovation Foundation, NALSAR University of Law and other leading research and academic organisations.

The Committee will advise the NBA on integrating biodiversity considerations into the agriculture sector and promoting sustainable agricultural practices. It will examine issues relating to the seed sector under the Biological Diversity Act, review guidelines for international collaborative research involving biological resources and recommend measures for the conservation and sustainable use of threatened

native crop varieties and livestock breeds. The Committee will also provide technical and policy inputs to support India's engagement with international agreements relating to agricultural biodiversity, including the ITPGRFA.

The reconstitution of the Expert Committee on Agrobiodiversity reflects the Government of India's commitment to conserving agricultural biodiversity, safeguarding genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge and promoting sustainable and climate-resilient agricultural systems.

The Committee will support the achievement of India's updated NBSAP Targets 4 and 13 and contribute to the realization of SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 15 (Life on Land) through the conservation and sustainable use of agricultural genetic resources, native crop varieties and livestock diversity.

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