

Media Workshop on Communicating Science and Biosafety

July 14th and 15th, 2015

Bhopal

In collaboration with Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), UNEP and GEF, Indian Institute of Mass Communication is organizing a series of workshops across the country on 'Communicating Science and Biosafety' as part of the Phase II Capacity Building Project on Biosafety. There has been close collaboration between IIMC and various universities from diverse regions of India for the strategic and systematic organization of these workshops.

In keeping with the paradigm of this initiative, the sixth workshop was organized in Bhopal at the Conference Hall of Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism & Communication on July 14th & 15th, 2015. The workshop aimed at sensitizing media professionals/journalists/communicators on key issues/concerns about communicating science and biosafety to the public as the latter's take on this issue significantly influences public perception and reception of a technology like GM and in turn its acceptance or rejection on the level of implementation. The workshop facilitated a common platform for both the practicing science journalists/communicators and the scientists wherein they got an opportunity to interact and exchange their views and opinions regarding the challenges and prospects for effective communication on emerging sciences and biosafety.

There was active participation from various genres of media viz. print journalism, television journalism, radio and online journalism. The workshop had participants from Newsroom 24x7.com, United News of India, The Hitavada, Dainik Bhaskar, MetroMirror.com, Hindustan Times, Rashtriya Hindi Mail, The Pioneer, Central Chronicle, Peoples Samachar, News Express, Press Information Bureau, Times of India, Doordarshan News and representatives from community radio stations like AIR and Radio Azad Hind. The themes of the workshop



presentations centered around Status of biotech innovations in India and abroad, Safety assessment of food and feed derived from GMOs, Biosafety Regulatory Framework in India with special reference to the challenges and prospects while in panel discussion the focused area was regional media and its role in communicating science and technology, laying emphasis on the need and the content of biosafety communication. The final stages of the workshop had the

participants partake in group presentations based on the range of issues related to agri-biotechnology and biosafety covered during the workshop.

The panel of resource persons comprised renowned scientists and media personnel viz. Dr. Sharad Tiwari, Director, Biotechnology Centre, Jawaharlal Nehru Agricultural University; Mr. Rakesh Dixit, Former Editor of DNA; Dr. Ranjini Warriar, Director, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change; Mr. Alok Mishra, Resident Editor, Patrika; Dr. Milind B. Ratnaparkhe, Senior Scientist, Directorate of Soybean Research, Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR); Dr. S. C. Dubey, Former Joint Director, National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (HSADL), IVRI; Professor Gita Bamezai, Head, Department of Communication Research, IIMC and Dr. Anand Pradhan, Associate Professor, IIMC.



The workshop was a success in terms of sharing key information in the field of Agri-biotechnology and biosafety communication, linking participants from different sectors to uphold bilateral flow of information and providing a forum to discuss possible ways to maximize effective collaboration and achieve precise dissemination of facts and figures relevant to the concerned field.