

## Media Workshop on Communicating Science and Biosafety

July 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015

Ahmadabad

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 seventh workshop was organized at Seminar Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Department of Communication Journalism, Gujarat University on July 22-23, 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 Doordarshan, Times of India's Navgujarat Samay, Sandesh, Abhiyan Magazine, Gujarat Samachar, OneIndia.com, ETV, TV9, ETV Urdu, Radio Guruvani, Tapobhumi Gujarat, The Hindu Business Line, Paryavaran Mitra, Atut Samachar, Gujarat Niti Daily and Dainik Jagaran, to name a few. There were also representation from Go Green Mechanisms Private Limited, HeyHI, Studio Pixel, DNA, MSL Group, Indian Institute of Management and UNICEF (Urban Voice).



The workshop presentations facilitated extensive discussions on status of biotech innovations in India and abroad, an insight into GMOs/ LMOs and their applications in agriculture productivity, regulatory regimes in the country for ensuring Bio-safety standards in application of innovations in agri-biotechnology: lab to land, information databases and other sources on biosafety, safety assessment of food and feed derived from GMOs, detection methods and monitoring mechanism of GM crops 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 covered during the workshop. The final stages of the workshop had the participants partake in group presentations based on the range of issues covered during the workshop.

The panel of resource persons comprised renowned scientists and media personnel viz. Prof. Vasant P. Gandhi, IIM Ahmedabad; Dr. Milind B. Ratnaparkhe, Directorate of Soybean Research; Prof. Binod C. Aggrawal, Taleem Foundation; Mr. Pradeep Mallik, DNA Newspaper; Mr. Rajendra Singh, Editor, Rajasthan Patrika, 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.