Embassy of Italy
Canberra

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT:
THE ROLE OF BIOTECHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

16th September, 2015
Embassy of Italy, Canberra

Background and Rational

Science and technology, at large, and biotechnology, in particular, have been recognised as essential tools to foster the economic, industrial and social development of the developing world. Through its wide array of down-stream products and processes, since the mid-Eighties of the last century, modern biology and biotechnology have been recognised as powerful instruments to address some of the most pressing problems of these countries in the fields of health, nutrition, agriculture, industrial development and environmental protection. On this basis, the international community established the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB), an international intergovernmental organisation hosted by Italy that, since 1987, operates within the United Nations common system as a centre of excellence for research and training, with a special focus on the needs of the developing world. Through a comprehensive set of activities, including, inter alia, advanced basic and applied research projects, long and short-term training programmes, assistance to Governments in the elaboration of their regulatory systems and the collaboration with the industrial sector, as well as through the dedication of over 500 professionals, operating in the Centre's sites of Trieste (Italy), New Delhi (India) and Cape Town (South Africa), ICGEB provides a decisive and stimulating environment to the scientific communities in its current 64 Member States, duly recognised by the General Assembly of the United Nations, which, through Resolution A/RES/60/205 approved in December 2005, emphasised the contribution of ICGEB in the area of biotechnology, encouraging it to enhance effectiveness in the implementation of programmes designed to assist developing countries in building capacity in all areas of biotechnology.

As such, ICGEB is well placed to stimulate a dialogue among various stake-holders, aimed at identifying adequate means to further enhance international development through scientific research, as well as to foster the translation of that same scientific research into products and processes that could enter the markets of the developing world. The symposium gathered a number of these stake-holders from within Australia and have them interact with a few of the ICGEB scientists and officers: through an ample debate, sharing experiences and success stories, the symposium defined possible common actions, also on the grounds of the intense collaborations existing already between Australian institutes and institutions and ICGEB Groups, with a view to the possible interest of the Australian Government to establish a formal partnership with the Centre. Benefits of such a partnership would include:

- Strengthening of ties with some of Australia's major trading partners that are also members of ICGEB, such as China and India, as well as important SE Asian partners such as Viet Nam, Malaysia and Bangladesh.
- Assisting in a global shift in the acceptance and adoption of biotechnology, serving as a springboard for developing new markets and new trading opportunities by Australian entrepreneurs, farmers, medical specialists, who are well placed to bring Australia's world leading research to the market place.
- Act as a conduit to showcase and adopt Australia's growing leadership in the regulation of biotechnology.
- Provide opportunities of substantial funding for Australian entrepreneurs and researchers by joining major international initiatives to harness the benefits of biotechnology.
- Providing for future trading opportunities by forging of close contacts with emerging government leaders, researchers and entrepreneurs in developing countries.
- Medical research is an area where Australia's scientific prowess is well recognized. A close partnership with ICGEB would enhance Australia's global reputation and influence in this sector.

PROGRAM

9:00 Registration and coffee

9:15 Welcome
Ambassador of Italy to Australia *HE Pier Francesco Zazo*

9:30 I. Round Table: Science for Global Development
Chair: Prof. Oscar *Moze (Embassy of Italy, Canberra)*
Prof. Mauro Giacca, *Director General ICGEB*
Chief Scientist of Australia, *Prof. Ian Chubb*
Jane Urquhart, *Head of Science and Commercialisation Policy Division, Department of Industry and Science*
Prof. Anne Kelso, *CEO, National Health and Medical Research Council*
Prof. Alan Finkel, *President, Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering*

11:00 Coffee

11:30 II. Regulatory Aspects of Agricultural Biotechnology
Decio Ripandelli, *ICGEB – Trieste*
Paul Keese, *Office of the Gene Technology Regulator, Department of Health*

12 :15 III. Malaria
Dr. Chetan Chitnis, *ICGEB – New Delhi & Institut Pasteur, Paris*
Prof. Alan Cowman, *Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research – Melbourne*

13:00 Lunch

14:15 IV. Regenerative Medicine
Prof. Mauro Giacca, *ICGEB-Trieste*
Dr. Enzo Porrello, *University of Queensland – Brisbane*

15:00 V. Structural Biology
Dr. Amit Sharma, *ICGEB – New Delhi*
Dr. Stuart Ralph, *University of Melbourne*

15:45 Coffee

16:15 VI. Synthetic Biology and Biofuels
Dr. Shams Yazdani, *ICGEB – New Delhi*
Prof. Sagadevan Mundree, *Deputy Director, Centre for Tropical Crops and Biocommodities, Queensland University of Technology*

17:00 VII. Discussion: opportunities for Australian engagement with ICGEB
Co-Chairs: Prof. Prof. VijayRaghwan and Prof. Mauro Giacca
Prof. Ananda Chakrabarty, *University of Illinois, Chicago and member of the Council of Scientific Advisers for ICGEB*
Prof. Ahmed Azad, *Bangladesh University of Health Sciences, Dhaka, Bangladesh*
Prof. Steve Swain, Breakthrough Genetic Breeding Technologies, Agriculture Flagship, CSIRO
Dr. Krystal Evans, *Australian Academy of Science*

19:00 Reception hosted by Ambassador of Italy