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TITLE

Benefits of New Tools in Biotechnology to Developing Countries in South Asia: A Perspective from UNESCO

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South Asia, once considered a laggard in economic terms, has grown at about 6 % on average over the past two decades and the current growth outlook is much brighter. However, this growth is not always well distributed and the challenges of institutionalising policies and mechanisms to ensure inclusive growth are now being seriously considered by these countries governments.

The targets set by south Asian countries are primarily based on the investments in infrastructural sector with an objective to generate educated and skilled human resources. The other most important inclusive growth area is the core public services; Agriculture, Health, and Energy, which are increasingly becoming technology driven. Biotechnology has been increasingly seen now to be an area of technology that holds the greatest new potential to address problems arising from low productivity, overburdened health systems, high-cost unsustainable energy supplies and the need for developing new materials for industrial and environmental applications.

Most developing countries in south Asia are still in the early stages of technological learning, where access to patented technologies is essential for industrial development. One such good institutional arrangement is the Open Source Drug Discovery (OSDD) initiative. This is an open source initiative for developing drugs to treat diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria and HIV. OSDD's aim is to make available affordable medicines for deserving populations by supporting open collaborative research for the entire spectrum of processes in drug discovering. In addition the Indian government set up a Regional Centre for Biotechnology Education, Training and Research, within the framework of UNESCO's International Basic whose aim is to further drug discovery and bioentrepreneurship in the region

Biography

Ahmed Fahmi has a PhD in Molecular Biology from Cambridge University in the UK. He is currently program specialist in Science and Technology at the UNESCO South Asia office. He has more than 15 papers in reputed journals