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Looking back at COP-8

A newsletter on business and biodiversity by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

Believing in business and biodiversity

The eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-8) put an unprecedented focus on business. This reflects the importance attached by Parties to engage with business and the belief that business can and should be part of the fight against biodiversity loss.

The importance of engaging major groups, including business, also comes as a corollary of the shift towards the implementation phase of the Convention. As stated by the newly appointed CBD Executive

realisation that business “possesses biodiversity-relevant knowledge and technical resources, as well as more general management, research and communication skills” (see article p.5). Additionally, there is a clear ‘business case’ for aligning corporate policies and practices with the objectives of the Convention (p. 2).

Burgeoning opportunities

In most sectors and most markets, biodiversity is at the heart of a successful business. In Curitiba, the International Finance Corporation

Call for contribution

The Secretariat is inviting business, Parties and others, pursuant to decision VIII/17, to submit:

- (1) evidence of the **business case** for biodiversity (e.g. case studies, reports), and
- (2) examples of **good biodiversity practice** for business (e.g. guidelines, benchmarks, certification schemes, reporting tools and standards). These could be at the company, industry or cross sectoral level.

Submissions should be sent to secretariat@biodiv.org.

B&B newsletter launched

The launch of *CBD Business News* marks the six month anniversary of COP-8, where Parties decided to engage more prominently with business.

The newsletter provides a voice to people -- in large and small organizations, privately and publicly owned companies, business and trade associations, business schools, environmental groups, labour organizations, the UN System, and government -- interested in the articulation of business and biodiversity under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

It is an informal platform primarily dedicated to helping the ‘business and biodiversity community’ better prepare CBD meetings and, more generally, follow and contribute to the implementation of decision VIII/17.

Themes for future issues will be in line with the agendas of SBSTTA-12, SBSTTA-13, and COP-9 in particular. Over the course of the next two years, themes could include agribusiness, financial services, offsets, reporting, and tourism. Suggestions and contributions are welcome and should be sent to the editor.



HAVING THEIR SAY: THE BUSINESS AND BIODIVERSITY MINISTERIAL BREAKFAST (28 March 2006), co-chaired by the governments of Brazil and the UK [1].

Secretary, Ahmed Djoghlaif, “business and industry have a crucial role to play in all aspects of sustainable development, including the biodiversity component. [The Secretariat] is committed to working with business and industry to minimize negative impacts on biodiversity, promote good biodiversity practice, facilitate

(IFC) stated that “businesses that are able to integrate biodiversity protection with better overall business management are rewarded with improved performance, a better reputation, better access to finance, reduced production and supply chain risks, reduced costs and access to new markets” [4]. The IFC’s *Guide to Biodiversity for*

“From cleantech, to renewables and ecosystem services, the growth industries of the 21st century are emerging at an accelerated pace” - Achim Steiner



knowledge-sharing and technology transfer, and mainstream biodiversity” [2].

The rationale for such an engagement stems from the influence that business holds in most economies - as recently opined the *Financial Times*, “business is at the heart of a successful society” [3]. It also comes from the

the Private Sector, launched in Curitiba, explains how to manage biodiversity issues to “improve business performance and benefit from biodiversity” [5].

More generally, UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner, recently observed that “the mainstream investment community is waking

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The need for unity of purpose across all sectors

On 28 March, Brazil and the UK co-hosted the Business and Biodiversity Breakfast on the margins of the High-Level Segment at COP-8. The event, which was held at the Graciosa Country Club, convened 300 guests including ministers, heads of delegations and business leaders. In what follows, we reproduce the full speech of Minister JIM KNIGHT MP (UK).

“ COP-8 is not just the chance to make progress on over 50 issues, many of them technical. It is also about exchanging ideas and adding momentum. We all know that far from slowing, the decline in biodiversity is accelerating. As things stand we are not going to meet our 2010 target but we must not give up.

The full engagement of business

My political values are informed by the idea that we achieve more collectively than individually and I don't think that unity across government is enough. We need unity of purpose across all sectors - public, voluntary and private. Put bluntly, we cannot hope to achieve our aims without the full engagement of business. We could carry on trying to name and shame those that seek to exploit unsustainably, and hope that has an effect.

We can regard all corporations as intrinsically evil and try and regulate them to achieve the public good. I don't think either approach will work, they provide little incentive to do the right thing, and we simply don't have time.

In the minds of profit makers

No, we should do the opposite. We should seek to engage putting ourselves in the minds of the profit making sector. This is



At the Breakfast, the Vice-Minister of the Environment of Brazil, Cláudio Langone, presented the results of the São Paulo 'Business and the 2010 Biodiversity Challenge' meeting [1]

about asking not what business can do for biodiversity but what biodiversity can do for business.

I believe that by understanding supply chains, understanding how brands like Fair Trade have added value for producers, by understanding the commercial drivers, we can develop some currency in then asking

business to do more for biodiversity. I am pleased to report that I have found a growing number of business people willing to sit down and talk about the importance of biodiversity.

One example of this willingness is the Business and 2010 Biodiversity Challenge, which my government co-sponsored during 2005. I would like to thank our partners in the London and São Paulo meetings: the CBD Secretariat, the Government of Brazil, Insight Investment, IUCN and the Brazilian Council for Sustainable Development; as well as all of the participants in both meetings.

These meetings highlighted an increasing recognition by companies of the business case for managing their impacts on biodiversity as part of their management of risks to their companies' operations, performance and reputation.

The potential impact of business on biodiversity is huge: as a user of vital

This is about asking not what business can do for biodiversity but what biodiversity can do for business

ecosystem services but also as a contributor to ecosystem change.

We realise this potential by harnessing the drivers for business.

Engaging the public

Their customers are my voters. We need the public to continue to be engaged in this area and demand action from politicians and demand sustainable products from their retailers - as they are now demanding fair traded products in UK supermarkets.

Similarly, in 2003, a survey by an online

recruitment agency [Totaljobs.com] found that 43% of jobseekers would not work for a company that did not have environmental or ethical policies. That is almost half of the workforce who expects better performance by their employers. Business managers know that a committed and healthy workforce make for a productive



Minister Jim Knight MP (UK) and CBD Executive Secretary Ahmed Djoghlaif at the Business and Biodiversity Breakfast.

business environment.

I would like to thank you all for coming here today to talk about how we can help each other reach our mutual aims for biodiversity and for business. I hope I have been a little challenging but we don't have time for niceties.

Globalisation has made international business and global markets the fastest and most flexible force for change there is. Our challenge is to make that progressive change for the good of biodiversity.

I look forward to hearing your views.”

In March 2006, Jim Knight MP was Minister for Rural Affairs, Landscape & Biodiversity at the UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

www.defra.gov.uk

This speech is also available online at www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/ministers/speeches/jk060328.htm.

Minister Barry Gardiner MP, the new minister for Biodiversity, is keen to continue to work on business and biodiversity and will contribute an article to the forthcoming issue of the CBD 'Gincana' magazine.

[1] The reports of the London (January 2005) and São Paulo (November 2005) "Business and the 2010 Biodiversity Challenge" meetings are available at www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=B2010-01 and www.biodiv.org/doc/meeting.aspx?mtg=B2010-02, respectively.

Mobilising business on biodiversity in Brazil

FERNANDO ALMEIDA, Executive President of the Brazilian Business Council for Sustainable Development, explains the organization's role in fostering interest amongst the Brazilian business community in biodiversity and COP-8 in particular.

The Brazilian Business Council for Sustainable Development (CEBDS), also representing the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), and its member companies represented a significant and enthusiastic segment of the business participants in Curitiba.

The present and the future of companies will be shaped by sustainable development issues like water, poverty and, of course, biodiversity

CEBDS member companies, including Companhia Vale do Rio Doce (CVRD), Natura Cosméticos S.A. and Petróleo Brasileiro S.A. (PETROBRAS) arranged elaborate booths and actively participated in side events. They also attended the Business and Biodiversity Breakfast, where I had the pleasure of making introductory comments.

Many other companies were also present in Curitiba to showcase recent conservation initiatives and get a better understanding of the business and biodiversity interface.

Biodiversity fails = business fails

Business cannot succeed on a society that fails - be it on social, economic or environmental grounds. The present and the future of companies will be shaped by sustainable development issues like water, poverty and, of course, biodiversity.

As highlighted by the statement of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) Board -- which I used to belong to -- we are living beyond our means. The trends and signals from nature are clear. The MA identified that 15 of the 24 ecosystem services are degraded or used in an unsustainable way.

CEBDS was also involved in the preparation of the MA synthesis for business, which spelt out the relevance of biodiversity for large and small companies.

I believe that there is a real sense of urgency. There is a need to speed up the negotiations among Parties, companies' decision making processes and getting actions now and results in 2010.

CEBDS responded positively to the invitation of the government of Brazil

and the Secretariat of the Convention, to co-organise the London and São Paulo 'Business and 2010 Biodiversity Challenge' meetings which took place in 2005.

Meeting the 2010 challenge

Many of our member companies contributed to the successful outcome of these meetings. These discussions helped pave the road towards consensus and a common understanding on biodiversity.

This commitment was demonstrated again, when many company executives participated in the Curitiba meetings.

As part of the preparation to the London

meeting, CEBDS commissioned a survey on business and biodiversity in Brazil. This recommends actions for fostering the engagement of business towards the 2010 target to significantly reduce the rate of loss of biodiversity.

The report, which was also distributed at COP-8, showed that, in a range of segments, companies associated with CEBDS have demonstrated, in practice, how investment in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity can offer economic and institutional gains. Ethical and transparent management guarantees not only business efficiency, but its very survival in more demanding markets, contributing this way to the 2010 target.

We need to better communicate the message that biodiversity conservation should be recognized as a major business success.

In the run up to the Curitiba meetings, CEBDS also featured a special report on business and biodiversity in its flagship magazine *Brasil Sustentável*.

Partnering for biodiversity

During the COP, CEBDS -- in partnership with WWF-Brazil, The Nature Conservancy and Instituto Internacional de Educação do Brasil (IEB) -- launched *What on earth is biodiversity?* Sponsored by CVRD, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Bank, the book assembles a series of articles from civil society, media and business, showing their experience on contributing to the implementation of the Convention.



Photo © IISD/ENB, Franz Dejon

A statement was also delivered on behalf of CEBDS and WBCSD during the negotiations on business engagement.

We are sometimes faced with a dilemma. While business has to assume its role on the historical degradation of biodiversity, it is, at the same time, increasingly seen as part of the solution.

I think there is a need to get past the historical bias that envelopes the three major actors in the biodiversity scenario - business, governments and organized civil society.

I believe we shall get nowhere without the effective, democratic and transparent articulation between these three major actors. To this effect, CEBDS organized in Curitiba a side event on partnerships for biodiversity.

More generally, CEBDS is open to deeper action and results with government, NGOs, civil society and stakeholders as a whole. These efforts have been recognized by CBD Executive Secretary Ahmed Djoghlaif who, in a recent letter, congratulated the organization's "continued support to the Business and 2010 Biodiversity Challenge initiative".

The way forward

CEBDS fully supports the decision on business engagement which was approved at the COP and is now firmly committed to help in its implementation. This includes, for us, the sharing of good biodiversity practice, encouraging Brazilian companies to align their policies and practices with the 2010 target, and exploring ways to better measure company biodiversity impacts.

Although the MA Board statement painted a dire picture of the world's ecosystems, it also concluded that we still have time. I trust that leaders in the business community will use it wisely!

The Brazilian Business Council for Sustainable Development (CEBDS) is the Brazilian chapter of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD).

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Monitoring decisions that might affect us

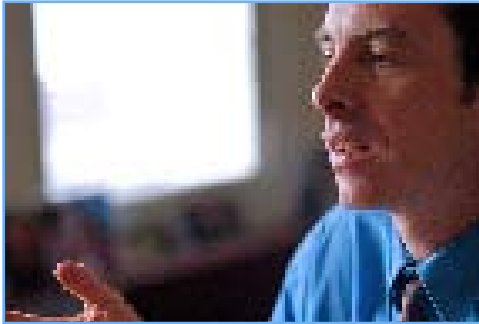


Photo © ICMM

The International Council on Mining & Metals (ICMM) sent its Programme Director, **ANDREW PARSONS** to COP-8. He reflects on his time in Curitiba and evaluates the importance of this meeting for the industry.

Why was it important for the mining and metals industry to be at COP-8?

Mining has the potential to affect biodiversity throughout the life cycle of a project. The potential for significant impacts is greater when mining occurs in remote, environmentally or socially sensitive areas. There is a great deal that companies can do to minimize or prevent such impacts. There are also many opportunities for companies to enhance biodiversity conservation within their areas of operations.

Biodiversity management is thus a critical issue for our industry and ICMM has done much to assist our members to improve their performance, notably through our dialogue with IUCN. Foremost among these is the recent release of our *Good Practice Guidance*.

It is important that we attend CBD meetings to seek opportunities to describe what ICMM members are doing and monitor and influence decisions that might affect us.

My primary reason for being at the COP was to interact with governments and NGOs and that's where I focused my energies

Was the ICMM delegation present during the entire meeting?

The ICMM delegation was me! I was present until the conclusion of the High-Level Segment as two weeks was more than I could afford to spend out of the office.

Were you involved in any side events?

I helped to organize a side event and a pre-

COP meeting, both on biodiversity offsets. They were very useful opportunities to debate some of the complex issues surrounding offsets with a multi-stakeholder audience. The COP was obviously a particularly good forum for engaging a diverse array of government representatives.

I also participated in other side events and these were excellent for debating leading topics, telling others about what we're doing and learning about initiatives in other sectors. The side events were the most useful aspect of the COP for me.

What about the High-Level Segment?

These discussions, especially the breakfast, were excellent opportunities for business to interact with ministers and senior government representatives on issues of interest to us. They weren't nearly as formal as the negotiations, and this was a strength. I'd recommend that, in future, there is a more diverse array of business leaders present.

Were you able to interact with other industry associations?

We have much in common with the oil and gas sector, so I found myself on the same podium as IPIECA [the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association] on several occasions. The International Chamber of Commerce co-ordinated business meetings and common messages. But my primary reason for being at the COP was to interact with governments and NGOs and that's where I focused my energies.

What take-home messages did you report back to your members?

- There's a lot of scepticism about multinational companies on the part of governments and NGOs.
- ICMM's proactive stance has been well received, but we need to keep delivering.
- The business decision has opened a window of opportunity which we must

"ICMM members are committed to improving their performance in this area, and also to taking a role in educating governments and the public about the benefits that the mining and metals industry can play in biodiversity conservation" -- ICMM Secretary General PAUL MITCHELL, foreword, Good Practice Guidance for Mining and Biodiversity.



make the most of.

- The formal negotiations can appear very slow!

What do you see as key priorities for ICMM leading up to COP-9?

We need to ensure that our good practice guidance is implemented across the membership and encourage uptake by other companies too. Implementation of the guidance will contribute to achieving the 2010 target. I expect that we'll be seeking input from governments at COP-9 on how to improve it and asking them how they can use it in their countries.

We'll continue to work with UNESCO and others on landscape level planning as an approach to reconciling conservation priorities with developmental needs.

We'll be talking to the Conservation Commons participants about sharing biodiversity information to improve decision-making. Companies need good information and also hold large amounts of biodiversity information themselves.

We hope that the offsets debate will make good progress and we will continue to contribute to that debate. In preparation for COP-9 itself, ICMM will encourage its members to work actively with governments in the revision of NBSAPs and attending the CBD's technical meetings.

ICMM was formed to take forward the agenda identified in the Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development project's 2002 'Breaking New Ground' report. It brings together large companies and commodity associations.

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Solving the biodiversity data paradox

A COP-8 side event provided an update on efforts to establish a platform allowing conservation groups, the scientific community, and companies to share non proprietary data, an important contribution to “share information on biodiversity status and trends” in decision VIII/17, says TOM HAMMOND.

There seems to be a paradox. On the one hand, conservation groups and scientific organizations are chronically short of resources to effectively generate the biodiversity data and information we need to support conservation success. On the other hand, many of the largest corporations in the world, with revenues in some cases dwarfing many countries, are in urgent need of these assets.

The need for biodiversity data represents a very real business proposition and operating requirement for many companies

The value proposition

Comprehensive data, information and knowledge on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are essential to reverse environmental degradation and species loss trends. Accessing biodiversity data and sharing conservation knowledge are, unfortunately, not simple tasks.

Much of the data, information and knowledge is fragmented, difficult to find, or simply not accessible. This challenge is considerably magnified in many developing countries, where the consequences of the ‘digital divide’ present enormous challenges.

Increasingly, businesses have begun to recognize the value proposition of integrating information on biodiversity into their decision making processes.

Many have made pledges for mainstreaming the conservation of biodiversity into new developments, and further commitments to the principle of ‘no net loss’. A basic prerequisite for meeting these commitments is effective, on-demand access to the best available biodiversity data, information and knowledge.

Forestry, mining, oil and gas, and agri-

business operators are reaching out to the conservation and scientific communities to help fill this gap. This is not philanthropy, nor should it be. Rather, the need for biodiversity data represents a very real business proposition and operating requirement for many companies.

Companies, unfortunately, face the same challenges in accessing the biodiversity data they need - poor accessibility, fragmented sources, and in many cases a lack of clear standards to facilitate integration. Many investment decisions are thus taken with an incomplete picture of potential impacts to biodiversity.

Unlocking biodiversity data

In some cases, companies are taking steps to build internal expertise for gathering, integrating and interpreting biodiversity

data in their operating structures. Despite the fact this is often tangential to their core business.

Around the world, conservation and scientific organizations are working against time to close critical gaps in our knowledge in order to preserve species, habitat, and life support systems of the planet. Within the current funding paradigm, however, these organizations simply do not have the resources to develop the data and information assets we urgently need, and are even less well positioned to deliver these assets in ways relevant to business.

A consensus of the need to work together to solve fundamental problems limiting our understanding of biodiversity is beginning to emerge.

By bringing together scientists, conservationists and business people, the Conservation Commons hopes to address these challenges head-on. Launched in 2004, and convened by the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the initiative helps unlock biodiversity data and information. It promotes conscious, effective, and equitable sharing of knowledge resources to advance conservation.



Photo © IUCN

Initial business partners include energy companies BP plc, Chevron Corporation, and Shell Exploration & Production; mining company Rio Tinto plc; Linux and open source provider Red Hat, Inc.; and GIS and mapping software supplier ESRI.

Starting this fall, the Conservation Commons is opening a dialogue with companies and industry associations which have led the way in incorporating biodiversity into their business models and decision making systems.

A venture for joint solutions

The dialogue will explore joint solutions to improving access to data and information and will address: principal biodiversity data/information needs, and challenges of the companies in accessing these assets; the role of business in supporting open access to biodiversity data and information; and contributions from business of biodiversity data collected in their operations.

A ‘joint venture’ between business and the conservation community to dramatically improve access to biodiversity data and information - a partnership rooted in common needs - represents an important way forward to address these challenges and the spirit of Decision VIII/17.

Advance announcement

Biodiversity data and business dialogue hosted by the Conservation Commons March 2007, Switzerland.

Covering: Global biodiversity data standards that would facilitate the integration and use of, site-level biodiversity data collected from field operations; Disclosure barriers that companies face in providing access to biodiversity data collected in operations; Partnership ways in which the conservation community and business can work together more effectively to improve access to and use of data.

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Celebrating the power of community-based commercial ventures



SEAN SOUTHEY and **GABY TOBLER** reflect on efforts in Curitiba to profile sustainable, community-based, enterprises.

Hosted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Equator Initiative, the 'Community Taba' dialogue space invited grassroots organizations from around the world to exchange their experience and best practices in biodiversity conservation and development.

Set aside in a unique dialogue space in front of the main convention centre, the Community Taba demonstrated that local communities, their intrinsic knowledge and interest in conserving natural resources within their immediate environment are a driving force for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the 2010 Biodiversity Target. These

local conservation efforts are frequently enriched by the sustainable practices of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) as has been recognized by Decision VIII/17 of the Convention.

A space for dialogue

On the Community Taba's Business & Biodiversity Day (21 March), representatives of diverse community-based businesses demonstrated their active engagement in local biodiversity conservation [1].

The Union of Rural Cocoa Organizations of Ecuador (UNOCACE), for instance, explained how it switched to organic farming techniques in its production of cocoa and coffee. Today, UNOCACE ●●

- exports its products successfully to Europe and ensuing profits have vastly improved the livelihoods of the Union's small-scale farmers and their families. Medicinal and cosmetics producer Associação Vida Verde da Amazônia - AVIVE highlighted how it has developed techniques

sustainable use of biodiversity.

Bringing capital, using local skills

In 2005, the Equator Initiative launched the Equator Ventures facility to promote SMEs that help conserve biodiversity in the equatorial region. In partnership with



VITALIANO SARABIA -- Union of Rural Cocoa Organizations of Ecuador (UNOCACE) and BARBARA SCHMAL -- Green Life Association of Amazonia (AVIVE) participated in the Community Tabá Business Day.

for the sustainable extraction of medicinal and aromatic native plant species from the Brazilian Amazon. The community-based enterprise, which was a winner of the 2002 Equator Prize, sells its products in stores, catering to local consumers and tourists, as well as online and abroad, thus generating economic alternatives for local women, youth, and people with disabilities. The organization leads an environmental education programme and produces seeds for the replanting and recovery of regional forests, where extractive activities threaten biodiversity.

Cananéia Oyster Producers Cooperative (COPC), a 2002 Equator Prize finalist, is reconciling oyster harvesting with the conservation of mangrove forests. To ensure that local harvesting activities are sustainable, the cooperative launched

Conservation International's Verde Ventures programme, it provides grants, loans and capacity development support to local businesses. While the Equator Initiative's promotion of local entrepreneurs involves the transfer of financial capital and business skills, it also recognizes the potential of the domestic business sector to contribute to development through local resources and expertise.

The Community Tabá in Curitiba demonstrated the power of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises to conserve biodiversity and provide for sustainable economic development.

The discussions showed, however, that there remain considerable barriers for SMEs in developing countries to create lasting sustainable livelihoods for local communities. Restrictions created by

The collection and sharing of successful business practices through dialogue spaces, peer-to-peer learning activities, and related research publications expands the Convention's business focus to the local level

intense efforts to promote community enforcement of legal regulations. The commercial entity established its own brand, skipped sales intermediaries and, as a result, tripled the price it receives for oysters. Profits are reinvested into the community by training women and youth in sewing and craftwork. Visits to their oyster farm provide a basis for local ecotourism. A group of Community Tabá participants visited the cooperative's nearby oyster farm in Cananéia, in the state of São Paulo.

The Equator Initiative, a partnership that brings together the United Nations, civil society, business, governments and communities, builds capacity and raises the profile of grassroots efforts to reduce poverty through the conservation and

trade regulations, lack of access to markets and credit, lack of recognition of property rights, and political isolation as they relate to communities working to find economically-viable, biodiversity-based livelihoods need, increasingly, to be addressed.

Participants also stressed the need to encourage neighbouring producers and businesses to value and conserve biodiversity, as failing to do so could limit the effectiveness of a company's environmentally proactive policies and practices.

The Equator Initiative recently presented its experience in working with SMEs and diverse partners on the local level. Together with the Global Environment Facility's Small Grants Programme,

small business scene

In this section also: Lucas Assunção, Mareike Hussels and Derek Newberry highlight the contribution of UNCTAD and WRI to the Curitiba small business scene.

the Equator Initiative published a book detailing 30 Latin American Case Studies of local initiatives.

Spices, eco tours and handbags

Entitled *Community Action to Conserve Biodiversity: Linking Biodiversity Conservation with Poverty Reduction*, the publication describes community-based organizations, as well as commercially-viable enterprises, that actively advance the conservation of natural resources. Successful business stories range from the sustainable production and marketing of natural latex handbags in Brazil (Couro Vegetal da Amazônia SA) and organic spices and medicinal plants in Colombia (Red de Mujeres Productoras y Comercializadoras de Plantas Medicinales y Aromáticas), to the provision of rainforest expeditions in Peru (Ese'ēja Community Ecotourism) and eco tours for fly-fishing and kayak fans in Belize (Toledo Institute for Development and Environment).

For COP-9, not only the inclusion of mainstream business topics will be relevant but, also, the input from small-scale companies that directly rely on natural resources and have a direct interest to protect the natural habitat of their immediate living environment. The collection and sharing of successful business practices through dialogue spaces, peer-to-peer learning activities, and related research publications expands the Convention's business focus to the local level.

The active involvement of SMEs supplements CBD Decisions with biodiversity-related knowledge from local entrepreneurs and surrounding communities. At the same time, communities benefit from exposure to outstanding business ideas and practices that lead to the conservation of natural resources and provide valuable income alternatives.

[1] Report available at www.undp.org/equatorinitiative/equatorialogues/events/CommunityTaba/Documents/DR_March_21_English.pdf#search=%22business%20and%20biodiv

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A Union for biotrade



Photo © IISD/ENB, Franz Dejon

UNCTAD's BioTrade Initiative is recognised by Decision VIII/17 as a vehicle for promoting good biodiversity practice. LUCAS ASSUNÇÃO reviews the Initiative's work on market differentiation, market access and market promotion.

Biodiversity is increasingly making the headlines. As the wider public gains awareness of the value of biodiversity, the issue is gradually becoming the object of consumer interest. Some predict a future mega-trend towards 'biodiversity-sensitive' business and forward-looking companies are getting prepared. Launched by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 1996, the BioTrade Initiative works to promote trade and investment in biodiversity-sensitive products in line with the CBD objectives -- 'biotrade' thus refers to those activities of collection, production, transformation, and commercialisation of goods and services derived from native biodiversity under the criteria of environmental, social and economic sustainability.

The pivotal role of small business

The BioTrade Initiative works alongside governments and businesses, providing support and guidance on implementing BioTrade Principles and Criteria which are inspired by the Convention [1]. As a platform for dialogue among stakeholders and decision-makers, the Initiative helps identify business needs and facilitates the emergence of viable solutions. It provides technical assistance to businesses to improve the quality of their products in the supply chain by developing company-specific management plans for species, facilitates communication along the links of the chain, and brings company representatives to international events and trade fairs. At COP-8, the Initiative organised a number of events for small and medium-sized en-

terprises (SMEs) aimed at highlighting the pivotal role of the private sector in achieving the CBD objectives and the challenges faced in engaging businesses in responsible biodiversity practices. Discussions around the 2010 Biodiversity Target, for instance, led representatives from the Peruvian Institute of Natural Products (IPPN) and Brazilian company Natura Cosméticos SA to call on Parties to (i) support the integration of biodiversity into existing ethical certification processes; (ii) strengthen the role of trade promotion initiatives in support of biotrade; (iii) finance much-needed biodiversity product development; and (iv) build greater consumer awareness of biodiversity-benefiting businesses. By making trade work for biodiversity, bio-entrepreneurs can become key actors in conservation and poverty alleviation. Decision VIII/17 was, in this regard, very opportune. In Curitiba, UNCTAD also organised a roundtable on biodiversity and SMEs. PhytoTrade Africa's Gus Le Breton emphasised that biotrade makes a difference "by creating opportunities based on local, indig-

By making trade work for biodiversity, bio-entrepreneurs can become key actors in conservation and poverty alleviation

enous, species which survive during years of drought and by creating markets and creating commercially valuable products". Aurandina SAC's Alfredo Menacho stressed that whilst biotrade businesses are financially self-sufficient, there is also an urgent need for market differentiation.

Towards market differentiation

Issues such as consumer awareness, market differentiation and the verification of the sustainable use of biodiversity came up time and again during the discussions. The need for market recognition for private sector efforts towards compliance with BioTrade Principles and Criteria and the CBD was reaffirmed in later discussions. At a May 2006 roundtable organised by UNCTAD at the Vitafoods International Trade Fair in Geneva, importers and exporters exchanged views on the potential of biodiversity for business development

and the opportunities it offers to generate income for remote, rural communities. These benefits, however, depend on businesses receiving the necessary guidance to ensure efforts are resulting in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and in the markets acknowledging these efforts. The idea of a Union for Ethical BioTrade as a way to improve international recognition, as well as to provide a range of services to companies involved in biotrade activities, was born at this roundtable and developed in further meetings. For like-minded companies seeking to comply with BioTrade Principles and Criteria, membership would validate and support their progress towards such compliance. Their products and services could thus be verified and effectively differentiated by consumers and other companies. Membership would imply gradual adherence to the Principles and Criteria and a move towards the verification of products and practices. The Union would also allow consolidating already existing characteristics of BioTrade companies, such as working with new and

exotic natural ingredients of consistent and superior quality. Since the inception of the idea, important steps have already been taken to develop the Union. A Private-Sector Steering Group has been created to provide input into strategic decisions during the formulation phase. This Steering Group will be facilitated by the BioTrade Initiative with contributions from other relevant stakeholders, such as BioTrade National Programmes, governmental and non-governmental organisations, and labelling institutions. The next few months will see the creation of the Union as an independent, non-profit organisation. We invite interested business to join us.

[1] See www.biotrade.org/Intro/Principles/bti-principles.htm for more information. Lucas Assunção is Chief, Climate Change and Biodiversity Section and Coordinator, BioTrade Initiative www.biotrade.org biotrade@unctad.org

Helping small entrepreneurs with big ideas build an ecological future

MAREIKE HUSSELS and DEREK NEWBERRY recall how COP-8 witnessed the engagement of government, civil society and entrepreneurs to address some of the specific needs of small businesses.

With the increasing global challenge of ecosystem degradation, it has become clear that governments alone have been unable to prevent the loss of biodiversity on which functioning ecosystems and local communities rely. At the same time, private businesses with grassroots connections to the regions in which they operate are becoming increasingly aware of the opportunities associated with the fostering of biodiversity beyond the requirements of government regulation. Responsible enterprises play an especially crucial role in places where large scale informal activity, such as deforestation, is difficult to control from central government offices.

Common agendas

Within this context, New Ventures - an enterprise development programme of the World Resources Institute (WRI) - was pleased to participate in COP-8 as the event brought together leaders from government, civil society and business who understand the importance of developing common agendas to address this complex problem.

We witnessed this engagement firsthand as co-organizers of a two day event exploring the role of the business in biodiversity conservation hosted by the Fundação Brasileira para o Desenvolvimento Sustentável (FBDS). The workshop presented a range of business endeavours that are beneficial for biodiversity [1].

Linax Extração de óleos essenciais Ltda, has developed a process for extracting essential oils used for perfumed products from the basil plant, a sustainable alternative to the harvesting of the endangered Pau Rosa (Rosewood) from the Amazon Forest. Linax is one of over 100 'green' Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) supported by New Ventures in Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and Mexico. The programme provides professional mentoring and investor contacts.

In Brazil in particular, New Ventures has observed the steadily rising pressure on the country's exceptional biodiversity resources, on one hand, but also the creativity and innovative thinking of the country's small business entrepreneurs, on the other.

Entrepreneurial talent

Having witnessed the potential of this entrepreneurial talent, New Ventures believes that the SME sector can be a driving force for business that operates in harmony with the environment and local communities. While there is much to be learned about small enterprises and their environmental impacts, we know that in emerging economies, they are heavily involved in the ecological future of their countries. The pervasiveness of SMEs means they can be a powerful force in damaging or protecting the environment.

A real solution to the biodiversity challenge as a global issue must include contributions by all stakeholders, from big government agencies to small businesses

The small size of these companies means that they often bypass environmental standards created with larger companies in mind. At the same time, SMEs lack the support to tackle environmental issues at a scale appropriate to their business.

Decision VIII/17 agreed in Curitiba reflects the importance of engaging local entrepreneurs to conserve biodiversity, noting that SMEs need assistance to ensure that their processes and operations are designed with an element of sustainability. New Ventures has worked with a number of small companies that are driving a local conservation agenda and would greatly benefit from additional support.

Primar, an organic shrimp company from Brazil, is establishing a network of local farmers who adopt sustainable aquaculture practices. Jiangyou Xun Pai Organic Agriculture Co., a Chinese producer of organic roses, has independently trained hundreds of farmers in organic agricultural methods.

Many 'biodiversity based' businesses are relatively small enterprises, often in



Photo © WRI

the start-up phase and are not yet fully self-sufficient. Efforts to promote these businesses have yet to achieve scale. They tend to focus on assisting individual businesses rather than nurturing entire supply chains or markets.

Achieving scale

We therefore commend Parties for inviting organizations to develop and promote business models focused on biodiversity. The need for more of these scalable models has led WRI to consider complementing its enterprise development services with a biodiversity business incubator that would provide support specifically to start-ups in biodiversity based sectors.

There is a plethora of anecdotal evidence available showing that small companies can be important drivers of innovation

in finding ways to profitably practice biodiversity conservation. As a supporter of sustainable SMEs, New Ventures houses dozens of such examples. For us, one of the highlights of attending COP-8 was seeing that so many other public and private sector representatives, as well as the development and not for profit communities, agree that a real solution to the biodiversity challenge as a global issue must include contributions by all stakeholders, from big government agencies to small businesses.

Such a multi-pronged approach helps build sustainable markets and ensure the conservation of the species we all depend upon, whether as potential medical cures or local food sources.

[1] The agenda is available at www.fbds.org.br/article.php?id_article=292.

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List of COP-8 side events, statements and papers on business



Photo © IISD/ENB, Franz Dejon

We share a common interest in greater participation by business in the Convention's substantive work.

We believe that this participation will enrich the work of the CBD and allow business to share its expertise and knowledge

Alix Heywood, on behalf of the International Chamber of Commerce

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the calendar

Upcoming meetings

16-17 October, Ottawa, Canada. Biodiversity Workshop. Mining Association of Canada ●● 26-27 October, Paris, France. 23rd UNEP Consultative Meeting on Business and Industry. Contact: Cornis van der Lugt (cornis.lugt@unep.fr) ●● 31 October - 1 November, Ottawa, Canada. Second National Conference of BIOCAP Canada, www.biocap.ca/index.cfm?meds=section§ion=67&category=24 ●● 7-8 November, Rome, Italy. Responsible Business, Values and Profitability, www.esomar.org/web/show/id=66457 ●● 23-24 November, Curitiba, Brazil. Latin American Tropical Forest Investment Forum: Issues and opportunities for investment in natural tropical forests, www.itto.or.jp/live/PageDisplayHandler?pagelid=223&id=1643 ●● 29 November, London, UK. Green Awards for Creativity in Sustainability, www.greenawards.co.uk ●● 29 November - 2 December, Porto Alegre, Brazil. Destinations2006, the 3rd Annual Summit of the World Tourism Forum, www.worldtourismforum.org/summits/plonearticle.2006-02-16.2606268127 ●● 5 December, Mumbai, India. Mainstreaming Sustainability in Indian Financial Institutions, www.unepfi.org/events/2006/mumbai ●● 6 December, Blair Atholl, UK. Biodiversity and Business. Scottish Natural Heritage Sharing Good Practice Event, www.snh.org.uk/www/sharinggoodpractice/sgp2006/sgp-1st24.asp ●● March 2007, Switzerland. Biodiversity data and business. Contact: Tom Hammond (tom.hammond@iucn.org)

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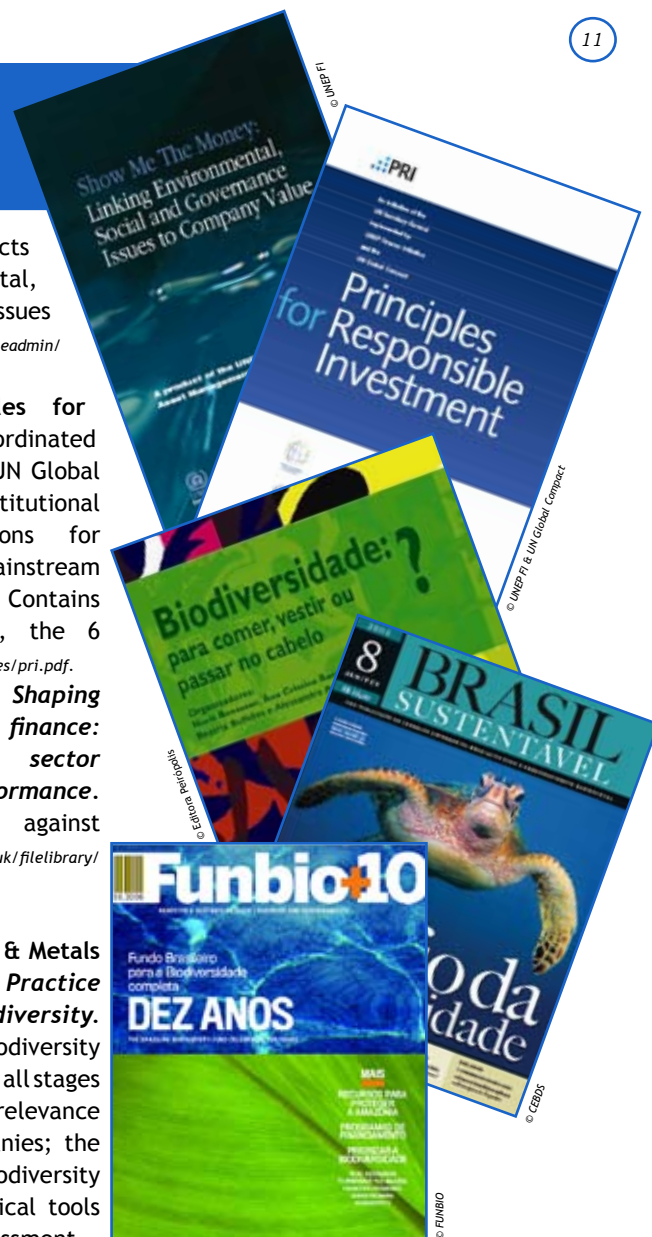
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Please send information on new titles and upcoming events to the editor.



Today's entrepreneurs are showing more interest. The sustainable use of biodiversity has achieved market value, becoming important to the small and medium-scale productive sector such as cooperatives, NGOs and even communities and tribes. Large companies are also increasing their investment in renewable natural resources

Pedro Leitão, FUNBIO Secretary General

Believing in business and biodiversity

●●● continued from page 1

to the burgeoning opportunities associated with sustainability promoting companies, technologies and investment funds. From cleantech, to renewables and ecosystem services, the growth industries of the 21st century are emerging at an accelerated pace” [6]. In the mainstream business press, increasing space is devoted to conservation issues, as illustrated by the recent cover story of *Fortune* on the ‘greening’ efforts of retailer Wal-Mart. Similar examples abound, in numerous sectors and countries [7]. While most companies are still unaware of the linkages between biodiversity and their operations, scores of initiatives, in many sectors and markets, are emerging to help integrate biodiversity into corporate decision making. COP-8 also provided an opportunity to profile good practice tools and examine cross sectoral issues, such as biodiversity offsets, landscape level planning, and biodiversity in sustainability reporting (see list of events, p. 10).

Increased participation
COP-8 witnessed a significant increase in the number of business participants (see graph above), another clear indication of a growing business interest in biodiversity. Approximately two hundred business individuals from transnational corporations; state-owned enterprises; global, national and local business organizations; international industry associations; as well as small and medium sized companies were in attendance. As such, agribusiness, automobile, biotechnology, cosmetics, financial services, mining, oil and gas, pharmaceuticals, and the tourism sector were all represented.

Brazilian companies were particularly well represented, some of them also operating booths at the exhibition hall. The Brazilian Business Council for Sustainable Development (p. 3), the Brazilian Foundation for Sustainable Development (p. 9) and many other organizations are to be credited for successfully mobilizing the Brazilian business community at this event.

Deciding to engage

Decision VIII/17-- the first in the history of the Convention focusing exclusively on business [8] -- emerged after a year long consultation, organised by the governments of Brazil and the

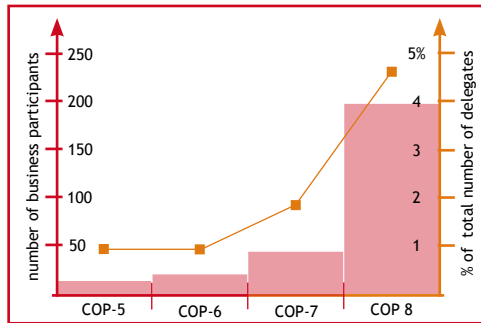
UK, the World Conservation Union, the Brazilian Business Council for Sustainable Development, Insight Investment, and the CBD Secretariat. An informal brainstorming session organised in London in January 2005 examined ways to strengthen business engagement in the implementation of the Convention as a means of working towards the 2010 target to achieve a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss.

In September 2005, a recommendation was formally tabled at the first meeting of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on the Review of Implementation of the Convention and a second meeting was held in São Paulo in November. This recommendation became Decision VIII/17 in Curitiba. Discussions are now underway regarding follow-up activities.

The Decision unambiguously calls for greater business engagement and thereby complements earlier references to business in the Convention Text

itself, past Decisions, and in the 2002 Strategic Plan. Noting this shift, the IFC’s Director of the Environment and Social Development Department, Rachel Kyte, observed that “the question was no longer what is the role of the private sector in advancing the goals of the Convention, but how. The debate shifted from philanthropy and fundraising to the business of biodiversity” [9]. The Decision, whilst emphasizing that “responsibilities for implementation of the Convention rest primarily with Parties”, promotes (1) governments’ engagement with business in the development and implementation of biodiversity strategies and action plans, (2) greater participation of business in CBD meetings, (3) the articulation and dissemination of the ‘business case’ for biodiversity, and (4) the compilation and development of good biodiversity practice (see “call for contribution” on p. 1).

As highlighted by Ahmed Djoghlaflaf, “the Convention will not be implemented by governments alone; the participation of all civil society actors is needed. Private sector participation is vital if we want this Convention to translate into reality” [10]. The Secretariat will work with the UNEP Division of Technology, Industry, and Economics (DTIE), and others, to help businesses better participate in CBD meetings, implement Decision VIII/17, and become key players in translating the Convention into reality. This newsletter is, we hope, a first step in this direction.



ON THE RISE: BUSINESS PARTICIPATION, FROM COP-5 TO COP-8. Approximate numbers, including participants registered as ‘Industry’, ‘Observers’ and in government delegations.

References: [1] From left to right: Rachel Kyte (Director, Environment and Social Development Department, IFC), Ahmed Djoghlaflaf (CBD Executive Secretary), Cláudio Langone (Vice-Minister of the Environment, Brazil), Luis Eduardo Assis (COO, HSBC Brazil), Maurício José Lima Reis (Environmental Director, Companhia Vale do Rio Doce), Tamir Iqbal (Minister of Environment, Pakistan), Y.B. YB Dato’ Haji Azmi bin Khalid (Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Malaysia), Rejoice Mabudafhasi MP (Deputy Minister, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, South Africa), Leal Guilherme (Chairman of the Board, Natura Cosméticos S.A.), Humberto Delgado Rosa (Secretary of State for the Environment, Portugal); Carlos Manuel Rodriguez (Minister of Environment and Energy, Costa Rica). [2] Ahmed Djoghlaflaf, 3 February 2006. “Message to business and industry” (www.biodiv.org/doc/speech/2006/sp-2006-02-03-cbd-en.pdf). [3] “Believing in Business”, *Financial Times*, 7 September 2006. [4] IFC statement to COP-8 (see full reference p. 10). [5] International Finance Corporation, March 2006. *A Guide to Biodiversity for the Private Sector. Why Biodiversity Matters and How It Creates Business Value* (www.ifc.org/biodiversityguide). [6] Preface, UNEP Finance Initiative, July 2006. *Show Me The Money* (see full reference p. 11). [7] “The Green Machine”, *Fortune*, Vol. 154, No.3, 7 August 2006. Other recent examples in the business press include Amy Bernstein, “Janine Benyus: The Thought Leader Interview” (*strategy+business*, Autumn 2006); Hervé Juvin, “Le triomphe du corps et l’économie de la rareté” (*L’Expansion*, July 2006); Achim Steiner, “Environment key to Africa’s prosperity” (*Business Day*, 30 August 2006). [8] Decision VIII/17, Private sector engagement, www.biodiv.org/decisions/default.aspx?m=COP-08&id=11031&lg=0. [9] Rachel Kyte, 5 April 2006. “The Business of Biodiversity”, World Bank Private Sector Development Blog (http://psd.blog.worldbank.org/psdblog/2006/04/chevrons_recent.html). [10] *Objectif Terre*, Volume 8, numéro 2, juillet 2006. “Entretien avec Ahmed Djoghlaflaf, nouveau Secrétaire exécutif de la CBD” (www.iepf.org/docs/objectif_terre/OTvol8no2.pdf).

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Comments and suggestions for future columns are welcome and should be addressed to the editor.

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