



PRESS RELEASE

UEBT and CBD sign MOU to help stop biodiversity loss

Montreal, 18 August 2011 – In the context of the launching of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, the Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that seeks to contribute to the implementation of the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020.

The CBD Strategic Plan contains twenty targets designed to halt the loss of biodiversity and ensure that by 2020 ecosystems are resilient and continue to provide essential services.

With this MOU, UEBT and the CBD Secretariat will work together on key issues of this strategic plan, particularly on increasing public awareness of biodiversity, promoting the engagement of the business community in biodiversity protection and putting in practice the equitable sharing of benefits that result from biodiversity use.

The MOU was signed by the CBD Executive Secretary Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif and UEBT's Executive Director Rik Kutsch Lojenga at a signing ceremony held in Geneva, Switzerland on 18 August, 2011.

Activities under the MOU will include UEBT providing regular inputs on biodiversity awareness using its annual biodiversity awareness study, the Biodiversity Barometer. In addition, the two organisations will work together to communicate on the value of biodiversity to target groups such as the business community. The United Nations Decade on Biodiversity should prove, as did the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity, an opportunity for increased business awareness and engagement in biodiversity issues. The UEBT 2011 Biodiversity Barometer revealed that one out of three consumers surveyed had heard about the International Year of Biodiversity.

Engaging the private sector in biodiversity protection is another important element in the collaboration between the CBD Secretariat and UEBT. The role of the private sector is, according to Mr. Rik Kutsch Lojenga, pivotal: "The business community can help advance the CBD objectives, which are biodiversity conservation, its sustainable use and the equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. Implementing ethical sourcing practices is one way that companies can contribute to these objectives."

In addition, the CBD Secretariat and UEBT will collaborate on raising awareness of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) within the business community. Under the MOU, UEBT will carry out various activities geared towards awareness raising and technical assistance within the cosmetics and food sectors. This will help clarify how the Nagoya Protocol is relevant for such companies and accelerate the putting into practise of access and benefit sharing practices. UEBT will share the experiences obtained in this process with the CBD community.

For Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, involving the private sector in the CBD is of utmost importance. Particular emphasis is required on access and benefit sharing, an issue that is new to most of the business community. “Part of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity is to enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and with that to enhance appreciation of the importance of biodiversity and its conservation. The aim is that by 2015, the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing is in force and operational, and consistent with national legislation. This cannot happen without the input of the private sector, one of the main users of biodiversity.”

Notes for editors

The Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing

This Protocol is a new international agreement under the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted in 2010. Its aim is to facilitate the implementation of CBD ABS principles. These principles include the fact that research and development of biodiversity-based products can only take place with the approval of relevant countries and communities, which must also share in the benefits. For more information please read the CBD factsheet on Access and Benefit-Sharing and the UEBT technical brief on the Nagoya Protocol.

Factsheet: www.cbd.int/iyb/doc/prints/factsheets/iyb-cbd-factsheet-abs-en.pdf

Technical brief: www.ethicalbiotrade.org/news/wp-content/uploads/UEBT_ABS_Nagoya_Protocol_TB.pdf

Union for Ethical BioTrade

The Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) is a non-profit association that promotes the ‘Sourcing with Respect’ of ingredients that come from biodiversity. Members commit to gradually ensuring that their sourcing practices promote the conservation of biodiversity, respect traditional knowledge and assure the equitable sharing of benefits all along the supply chain.

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The Convention on Biological Diversity

Opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and entering into force in December 1993, the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 193 Parties, the Convention has near universal participation among countries. The Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystem services, including threats from climate change, through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders including indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women and the business community. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety is a subsidiary agreement to the Convention. It seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 160 countries plus the European Union have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Secretariat of the Convention and its Cartagena Protocol is located in Montreal, Canada.

For more information visit: www.cbd.int.

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