



# Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

## COMMUNIQUÉ

Not an official document



### **Investing in the future – business for biodiversity and sustainability**

*Montreal, 16 June 2008* – The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) held consultations with the business community on 11 and 12 June 2008 in Montreal and San Francisco to discuss the involvement of businesses in implementing the Convention.

On 11 June 2008, representatives of Canadian businesses met in Montreal in a one day seminar to review their business links with biodiversity and to consider the establishment of a Canadian business forum for biodiversity conservation.

Prepared with close consultation between the CBD Secretariat, IUCN and the management consultancy firm, Deloitte, the seminar was held at the University of Quebec at Montreal (UQAM) and attracted more than sixty-five senior figures from industries ranging from oil and gas, mining, water, power, fisheries, finance and agri-business as well as representatives from government, environmental NGOs and international organizations. The meeting took place with the participation of Ms. Hélène Latouche, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy Analysis, Ministry for International Relations, Government of Quebec.

This was the first meeting of its kind aimed at mobilizing businesses in Canada in activities of the CBD and towards practical steps in implementing the Convention. The meeting took place in the wake of the decisions adopted at the CBD Conference of the Parties (COP 9) held in Bonn in May, which reiterated the need to engage business in the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention.

In a key note address, Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the CBD, emphasized the urgency for mitigating the rate of biodiversity loss and the great potential of Canadian businesses in the implementation of effective conservation strategies in line with decisions of the CBD COP. Keynote addresses were made also by Jeff McNeely, Chief Scientist of IUCN, on how biology can build business, and by Gerard Dufour, the Vice-President, Environment Health and Safety, of Rio Tinto Alcan.

At a time that businesses are being viewed as essential supportive players in advancing conservation efforts globally, many Canadian businesses have also recognized that biodiversity conservation is indeed a fundamental element of successful and sustainable business practices.



ONE NATURE • ONE WORLD • OUR FUTURE  
COP 9 MOP 4 Bonn Germany 2008



United Nations  
Environment Programme

413 Saint-Jacques Street, Suite 800  
Montreal, QC H2Y 1N9, Canada

Tel : +1 514 288 2220  
Fax : +1 514 288 6588

<http://www.cbd.int>  
[secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int)

Conserving Canada's biodiversity will take the concerted efforts of government, environmental non-government organizations, industry and individual Canadians. The development of a private sector initiative that will provide a catalyst, knowledge and recognition for Canadian businesses that support biodiversity conservation programs holds enormous potential for those businesses and for Canada.

Participants therefore agreed to work together towards the establishment of a business forum for biodiversity conservation and that such a forum would help to position Canadian businesses as leaders in biodiversity conservation through well-informed, innovative and decisive actions that promote improvements in human health and economic well being by maintaining the diversity and health of natural ecosystems and their ecosystem benefits.

The establishment of a Canadian forum for biodiversity conservation could also assist many businesses in the face of both regulatory uncertainty and uncertainty about future supply and distribution scenarios in the development of strategic conservation plans. And it will help Canadian businesses demonstrate to the public and to their markets that they are engaged in understanding, promoting and implementing sound conservation practices, including in their supply and distribution chains.

Concurrently, at the invitation of International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA) – set up in 1974 to be industry's channel of communication with the United Nations – the CBD Secretariat participated in a stakeholder dialogue designed to help shape the direction and content of the IPIECA Strategic Plan.

The workshop was held in San Francisco on 11 and 12 June 2008. In addition to senior representatives from the industry, including major multi-national companies, participants included Mr Ravi Sharma, Director of the CBD Secretariat's Division of Implementation and Technical Support, and representatives from the United Nations Environment Programme, other agencies of the United Nations, and leading conservation groups.

The discussions highlighted the need for the oil and gas industry to consider implications of its exploration activities on biodiversity, especially as companies start to enter newer and more ecologically sensitive areas in the seas and on land. The issues of fresh water management and promotion by the industry of biofuels, were also recognized as important activities that can have serious implication on biodiversity. The IPIECA expressed its commitment to continue working with the oil and gas industry, not only to help minimize its environmental impact but also getting it involved in promoting biological diversity by influencing its substantial supply chain used to deliver a wide range of equipment and materials to support their operations.

As a follow-up, the CBD secretariat invited IPIECA and its members to discuss in detail how its activities can help fulfill the CBD objectives.

-----