



Convention on
Biological Diversity



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PRESS RELEASE

Biodiversity awareness keeps rising among consumers and business

Paris/Montreal 5 May 2011. Biodiversity awareness has risen again among consumers and business, according to the latest edition of the Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) Biodiversity Barometer launched in Paris today. When asked if they had heard about biodiversity, an average of 65% of the people interviewed in the USA, France, Germany and the UK said they had heard about biodiversity in February 2011, up from 56% in February 2009. In the same period, 27% of the world's top 100 beauty companies mentioned biodiversity in their reporting, up from 13% in 2009.

When measured in seven countries (Brazil, South Korea, Japan, USA, France, UK and Germany) the average biodiversity awareness is 70%. Yet, the UEBT Biodiversity Barometer shows that large differences exist between countries, with particularly high awareness rates in France (98%), Brazil (93%), and South Korea (78%).

According to one of the targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), by 2020 at the latest, people need to be aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve it and use it sustainably. The UEBT Biodiversity Barometer provides important data to track progress towards this target.

Rising awareness can partly be attributed to the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity, of which 1 in 3 people surveyed had heard. To help achieve the targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, the United Nations recently declared 2011-2020 the Decade on Biodiversity.

When asked to define biodiversity, the numbers drop significantly, with on average of only 1 in 3 people being able to define biodiversity correctly. However, it is encouraging to see that the number of correct definitions has gone up faster than the general increase in awareness. Young people more often define biodiversity correctly, which indicates a strong upward potential over the next decade and confirms the plans of the CBD to promote biodiversity education.

“These results are an important tool for the achievement of the Global Biodiversity targets,” said Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity. “During the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, our number one priority will be to work to increase biodiversity awareness around the world. The Biodiversity Barometer will help us track our progress, as well as fine-tune the messages to the realities of each region.”

The Biodiversity Barometer also shows that TV programmes, documentaries, and articles in newspapers and magazines are the most important source of knowledge of biodiversity, which points at possible channels to target in order to increase awareness.



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“In addition to television and articles, some respondents said they had heard about biodiversity through brands, highlighting a good opportunity for the private sector to play a role in awareness-raising,” said UEBT’s Executive Director Rik Kutsch Lojenga. “In addition, we asked people what messages would make them want to protect biodiversity. Many said that linking biodiversity to everyday life, underlining its use in products such as cosmetics and foods, would be an effective conservation message.”

The UEBT Biodiversity Barometer also shows the importance of companies sourcing biodiversity ethically. As in previous years, 88% of the people interviewed would like to know more about how cosmetics companies source biodiversity. Only 40% of the consumers are confident that cosmetics companies source biodiversity in an ethical manner (i.e., in an environmentally and socially responsible way). Eighty per cent of those interviewed would have more faith in a company that is being verified externally.

Ahmed Djoghlaif pointed out that, “the 2011 Biodiversity Barometer shows that over 50% of the consumers said that improving livelihoods of African producers and protecting African biodiversity would motivate them to buy products made with African natural ingredients. This demonstrates that the sustainable use of biodiversity is a potential source for sustainable economic development for many developing countries”.

Full information and many more interesting facts and figures can be found in the UEBT Biodiversity Barometer, which can be downloaded from the UEBT website.
http://www.ethicalbiotrade.org/dl/BAROMETREpourWeb_2011_EN.pdf

The CBD and the UEBT collaborate to raise business awareness on biodiversity and engage the private sector in ethical sourcing of biodiversity.

Notes for Editors:

The Union for Ethical Biotrade

The Union for Ethical BioTrade 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.

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, 159 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.