



Convention on
Biological Diversity

PRESS RELEASE



Consumers ready to contribute to protection of biodiversity, but need information and reputable brands to guide their choice

Montreal/Paris, 26 May 2016 – More and more people are aware of biodiversity. If credible information and reputable brands are available, consumers are ready to purchase biodiversity-friendly products and contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. These are among the latest insights of the Biodiversity Barometer, an annual survey of the Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) on biodiversity awareness among consumers and leading beauty, food and beverage companies around the world.

Launched in 2009, the Biodiversity Barometer now distills the results of eight years of research on biodiversity awareness among 54,000 people in 16 countries. It offers valuable information – both for governments developing strategies to meet the United Nations Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and for companies shaping their approaches towards ethical sourcing of biodiversity. The Aichi Biodiversity Targets include one on awareness by 2020, at the latest, ensuring that “people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably”. The Biodiversity Barometer is one of the global indicators recognized under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

“It is particularly encouraging to see the growing biodiversity awareness around the world, with more education, and a focus on cultivating the interest of consumers in contributing to biodiversity conservation, I am confident that we can meet the 2020 target on biodiversity awareness and action”, says Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, the Executive Secretary of the CBD.

UEBT research shows that consumers would like to contribute to biodiversity conservation, but most don't yet know how to go about it. They expect companies to respect people and biodiversity, but are currently far from confident that appropriate measures are being taken. Consumers want to receive more information, and could be convinced by the reputation of a brand as well as authentic, externally verified stories.



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Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
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
secretariat@cbd.int www.cbd.int



“We see both a clear responsibility and opportunity for companies. Natural ingredient supply chains can be turned into positive agents of change, promoting actions that restore biodiversity and promote local development. This implies a significant challenge, of course, as it requires a paradigm shift and a true commitment to ethical sourcing, but it can be done. A few companies, including UEBT members, have already taken up the challenge and are leading the way”, says Rik Kutsch Lojenga, UEBT Executive Director.

The beauty sector offers some inspiring examples of how companies can put their supply chains to work for people and biodiversity, and UEBT research shows consumers begin to recognize this. For instance, Natura Cosmetics, a Brazilian multinational that is widely recognized for their commitment to sustainability, has pioneered sourcing with respect of biodiversity for many years. Natura makes sustainable use of the Amazon’s biodiversity and actively contributes to local development, something that is verified independently by UEBT. The natural cosmetics company Weleda is another good example. Just recently, Weleda was awarded the Swiss Ethics Award for their engagement with UEBT and their commitment to promoting ethical sourcing practices along all their natural ingredient supply chains.

Also beyond UEBT, companies are acting. For instance, The Body Shop, which is also mentioned by consumers in the UEBT survey, recently launched a new global CSR Commitment, Enrich Not Exploit, with a pledge to enrich the planet, its biodiversity and resources.

The top ten insights from the 2016 UEBT Biodiversity Barometer are:

1. The understanding of biodiversity is rising significantly around the world. Understanding has doubled in the USA, and increased by 70% in France and Germany since UEBT started measuring in 2009.
2. Biodiversity is a global concept, with high awareness in emerging markets in Latin America and Asia. More than 90% of consumers, mostly internet connected, have heard about biodiversity in Brazil, China, France, Mexico, Peru, and Vietnam.
3. People want to personally contribute to biodiversity conservation, but they generally don’t know how to go about it.
4. Consumers around the world expect companies to respect biodiversity, but have little confidence that they currently do. On average, only around one-third of the respondents are confident that companies pay serious attention to ethical sourcing of biodiversity.
5. Transparency is important. Consumers want to know whether sourcing practices respect people and biodiversity. They would like more information, preferably externally validated.
6. Consumers are convinced of companies’ respect for people and biodiversity mainly through brand reputation, as well as through authentic stories and images in brands’ communication.
7. Younger people have the highest awareness of biodiversity and can identify brands that respect biodiversity. They learn about biodiversity at school, and value companies taking concrete actions for people and biodiversity.
8. Few international brands have positioned themselves around sourcing practices with respect for people and biodiversity.

9. Corporate communication on biodiversity by beauty, food, and beverage companies is on the rise, but still falls short of expectations. Among the top 100 beauty companies, 38 communicate about biodiversity, whereas 63 among the top 100 food and beverage companies do. These numbers still need to go up, and so should the quality of reporting.
10. References to access and benefit sharing (ABS) are rising in corporate communications. This follows the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol and EU rules on ABS in 2014.

More information can be found in the 2016 UEBT Biodiversity Barometer. <http://ethicalbiotrade.org/biodiversity-barometer/>

Note to editors

Union for Ethical BioTrade

The Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) is a member-based non-profit association that promotes the ‘Sourcing with Respect’ of ingredients that come from biodiversity. UEBT promotes sourcing practices that advance sustainable business growth, local development and biodiversity conservation. UEBT was created in 2007 as a spin off from the United Nations to promote business engagement in BioTrade. In 2011 the CBD and UEBT signed a MoU to contribute to the implementation of the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020.

More information at: www.uebt.org, or contact pr@uebt.org.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

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 196 Parties up to now, 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 and the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing are supplementary agreements to the Convention. The Cartagena Protocol, which entered into force on 11 September 2003, seeks to protect biological diversity from the potential risks posed by living modified organisms resulting from modern biotechnology. To date, 170 Parties have ratified the Cartagena Protocol. The Nagoya Protocol aims at sharing the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources in a fair and equitable way, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by appropriate transfer of relevant technologies. It entered into force on 12 October 2014 and to date has been ratified so far by 76 Parties. For more information visit: www.cbd.int. For additional information, please contact: David Ainsworth on +1 514 287 7025 or at david.ainsworth@cbd.int; or Johan Hedlund on +1 514 287 6670 or at johan.hedlund@cbd.int.