



PRESS RELEASE



Convention on
Biological Diversity



Asian consumers have growing awareness of biodiversity and want brands to protect it

- *New report shows majority of Asian consumers feel companies morally obligated to positively impact biodiversity*
- *Asian youth better informed about biodiversity than other age groups.*
- *Asian consumers have higher awareness of biodiversity than consumers in UK, US or Germany.*

20 May 2019 – A report launched today shows that Asian consumers have an increasing awareness of the planet's biodiversity and want to see companies protecting it. In fact, awareness is higher than that of consumers in the UK, US or Germany, with most Asian consumers having 'heard of biodiversity.'

A majority of Asian consumers surveyed also feel that 'companies have a moral obligation to assure [us] they have a positive impact on people and biodiversity' and most Asian consumers surveyed said they have more faith in brands 'whose commitment to ethical sourcing biodiversity is verified by independent organisations.'

The data was published in the 2019 *UEBT Biodiversity Barometer*, an ongoing set of research that has spanned more than a decade and is updated annually. The Barometer has interviewed more than 68,000 consumers over 11 years, asking what they know and understand about biodiversity, and what they expect from brands. This year's edition focused on consumer insights from four countries in Asia: China, Japan, South Korea and Vietnam. One major takeaway from the research has been that Asian consumer awareness of biodiversity has increased over the last decade.

The report is commissioned by the Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) an international non-profit organisation. The research was shared today with company leaders at UEBT's annual *Beauty of Sourcing with Respect Conference* held in Paris for 300 executives from the personal care, natural pharmaceutical, specialty food sectors and ABS policymakers.

Dr. Cristiana Paşca Palmer, Executive Secretary of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity said "In line with our 2020 biodiversity targets, we see consumer awareness rising every year, including in Asia. Businesses must embrace conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in response to consumer



expectations on biodiversity, and assure a livable future for all. This is also underpinned by the IPBES' *2019 Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* released earlier this month. It provides a fundamental baseline of where we are and where we need to go as a global community to reach the 2050 Vision of the UN Biodiversity Convention of 'Living in harmony with nature'.

An additional highlight of the Biodiversity Barometer is that young people aged 16 to 24 are the best informed about biodiversity. In this year's Asia surveys, most young consumers said buying products that respect people and biodiversity makes them feel good (compared to 55+ years old). This is particularly true in China, where the vast majority of young people experience this feel-good factor. Asian youth are also seeking concrete actions from companies, with most saying that they 'would like companies to inform me about the concrete actions they take to ensure they respect biodiversity and people when they source the natural ingredients use.'

"We felt the time was right to dive deeper into consumers' insights from Asia. In 2020, China will host the UN Summit on Biodiversity, which will define the global plan on biodiversity for the next decade. Chinese leadership in this major global event underscores the role that Asia has in protecting the world's biodiversity. This also means there is an opportunity for business to take concrete action to position their brands in Asian markets as leaders in sourcing with respect for people and biodiversity," said Rik Kutsch Lojenga, UEBT's Executive Director and a leading global expert on ethical sourcing.

As emerged previously in Western countries surveyed, UEBT's research found a gap in consumer confidence related to a company's actions: in other words, consumers have higher awareness of biodiversity and think it's important, but they have lower confidence that companies are protecting biodiversity. In the 2019 report, South Korea and Japan showed 45 per cent confidence rates, somewhat in line with the findings in Western countries. Almost a quarter of Japanese respondents (24 per cent) said they don't know if companies pay serious attention to biodiversity.

However, consumer confidence that companies are having a positive impact on biodiversity is much higher in Vietnam and China, with the majority of those surveyed feeling confident. Surveyed consumers in all countries have more faith in companies whose sourcing practices are verified.

"This latest Biodiversity Barometer report continues to encourage businesses to seize the opportunities offered by growing consumer awareness of biodiversity, including increasingly in Asian markets," concluded Dr. Paşca Palmer.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Biodiversity Barometer

To access the full report and more key takeaways, quotes and statistics by country, consumer group as well as top brands cited: www.biodiversitybarometer.org , or download summary PDF of 2019 report.

About the Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT)

UEBT is a non-profit association that promotes sourcing with respect. They support and verify companies' commitments to innovation and sourcing that contribute to a world in which people and biodiversity thrive. More information at: www.uebt.org.

About the UEBT Beauty of Sourcing with Respect Conference

Since 2008 UEBT has been organizing the Beauty of Sourcing with Respect Conference annually. The conference is organized on a non-profit basis. This year's edition is supported by L'Oréal, Natura, LVMH Recherche, Symrise and Weleda, ABS Capacity Development Initiative. For more information please visit

the UEBT website: www.ethicalbiotrade.org/bsr2019

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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, 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, 171 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 by 117 Parties.

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