



Convention on
Biological Diversity



UNION FOR
ETHICAL
BIOTRADE
SOURCING
WITH RESPECT

PRESS RELEASE

New report shows vast majority of consumers surveyed feel companies morally obligated to protect biodiversity

- *Survey of 6,000 consumers show people have growing awareness of biodiversity and want companies to protect it.*
- *Generation Z and Millennials better informed about biodiversity than other age groups and increasingly investigate if companies ‘walk the walk.’*
- *Consumers in France, Brazil and Switzerland have higher awareness of biodiversity than consumers in Germany, the UK and US.*
- *Top brands cited as taking positive action for people and biodiversity included Natura (Brazil), Weleda (Switzerland), and Yves Rocher (France).*
- *42% of consumers could not name a single brand taking positive actions for biodiversity.*

11 November 2020 – Consumers have an increasing awareness of the planet’s biodiversity and want companies to protect it, says new report launched today.

A majority of consumers surveyed in the report, commissioned by the Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) and asking consumers what they know about biodiversity, and what they expect from brands, feel that ‘companies have a moral obligation to ensure that they have a positive impact on people and biodiversity.’ More than 70 per cent of consumers surveyed suggested their trust is higher when a brand’s commitment to ethical sourcing of biodiversity is independently verified.

The data was published in the *2020 UEBT Biodiversity Barometer*, an ongoing set of research updated each year, that has spanned more than a decade. Because 2020 marks the end of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, 2020 is also the last year of the Barometer. These ten years have seen increased discussions and efforts on biodiversity, with biodiversity gaining unparalleled momentum as a global issue of concern.

“I am extremely encouraged by UEBT’s contributions to the Convention’s objectives over the last decade, particularly with regards to identifying the steady increase of consumer awareness on biodiversity, and ethical and sustainable sourcing as documented in the Biodiversity Barometer,” said Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.



The Biodiversity Barometer found that Generation Z and Millennials are best informed about biodiversity and increasingly likely to investigate a company's actions. This year's Barometer also shared some insights from Spate, a US agency founded by two ex-Google staffers, that found that consumer searches around 'biodiversity' is on the increase in the US market. Searches around 'sustainability,' 'green beauty' and 'ethical' have risen as well. The search data was run only for the US and took place during the post-lockdown period in October 2020.

Unfortunately, the Barometer also showed that the last decade was one of low consumer trust. As has emerged every year, and once again in 2020, 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 2020 report, 82 per cent of respondents believe that companies have a moral obligation to ensure a positive impact on people and biodiversity, but only 41 per cent of those surveyed felt confident that companies are paying serious attention to ethical sourcing of biodiversity. However, trust levels increased if consumers could know that sourcing actions were independently verified (72 per cent were then confident).

Trust has indeed become the new normal, with transparency ranking higher on the list of consumer expectations each year. When asked about what information respondents wanted to see on product packaging, the highest ranks were given, in order: the list of product ingredients; origins of ingredients; and the impact on biodiversity. Respondents in France and Brazil were particularly interested in these issues.

"Once again we see that biodiversity awareness keeps rising," said Rik Kutsch Lojenga, UEBT's Executive Director and a leading global expert on ethical sourcing. "Companies have a tremendous opportunity to develop people's trust through transparency and especially through on-the-ground actions that conserve, sustainably use, and restore biodiversity. All of us depend on biodiversity to survive and to thrive. As the UN Decade on Biodiversity ends, so do we close this decade-plus of research. We look forward to deepening our core work to promote ethical sourcing of ingredients from biodiversity."

Ms. Mrema added, "It is clear that we need to scale up ambition in support of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. We need smarter, more efficient policies to safeguard biodiversity as much as we need to find ways to integrate the values of biodiversity into boardrooms."

UEBT is an international non-profit organisation that works to regenerate nature and secure a better future for people through ethical sourcing of ingredients from biodiversity. A preview of the research was shared with more than 100 company leaders on a video call last week during UEBT's *Digital Dialogues*. The audience included representatives from personal care, natural pharmaceutical and specialty food companies.

Since 2009, the Barometer has interviewed over 74,000 consumers in 16 countries. Six thousand of these were surveyed in 2020, asking what they know and understand about biodiversity, and what they expect from brands. This year's edition focused on consumer insights from six countries: Brazil, France, Germany, Switzerland, UK and US. Surveys were conducted in March 2020, just as the COVID-19 crisis was emerging.

One major takeaway from the research has been that consumer awareness of biodiversity has increased each year over the last decade.

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 2020 report.

About the Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT)

UEBT is a non-profit association that promotes sourcing with respect. Their mission is to regenerate nature and secure a better future for people through ethical sourcing of ingredients from biodiversity. UEBT's vision is a world in which all people and biodiversity thrive. The organisation sets good practices for how companies and their suppliers source specialty ingredients for the food, cosmetics and natural pharmaceutical sectors. UEBT is internationally recognised for its work advancing business contributions to the sustainable development goals. More information at: www.uebt.org.

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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 so far, 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, 173 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 129 Parties.

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