

Training workshop on "Addressing the intersection between the Nagoya Protocol, access and benefit sharing rules and BioTrade"

Hanoi, Vietnam, 27-28 June 2016

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to also warmly welcome you all to this workshop on "addressing the intersection between the Nagoya Protocol, access and benefit sharing rules and BioTrade". It is my pleasure to introduce the objectives of the workshop which is jointly organized by UNCTAD, Viet Nam Biodiversity Conservation Agency, Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs in Viet Nam and BioTrade Implementation Group Viet Nam (BIG).

UNCTAD, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, developed the BioTrade Initiative to support trade and investment in biological resources to promote sustainable development and livelihoods in line of the 3 objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, namely:

One, the Conservation of biological diversity;

Two, Sustainable use of its components; and

Three, Fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources.

UNCTAD's BioTrade Initiative seeks to enhance the capability of developing countries to produce value-added products and services derived from native biodiversity, for both the domestic consumption and international markets. The Initiative also assists developing countries in creating an enabling policy and regulatory environment to facilitate the development and strengthening of biodiversity-related businesses. It does so by building partnerships with key actors, including with National BioTrade Programmes, and working together to

promote sustainable business ventures and providing inputs to policy and rule making.

In addition, as the BioTrade implementing partner in Viet Nam, Helvetas Vietnam has been supporting the implementation of BioTrade-related activities, in particular in the development of value chains based on native and medicinal species. Helvetas Vietnam has also played an instrumental role in the creation of the first business association in Viet Nam, the BioTrade Implementation Group (BIG) which is a co-partner for this workshop.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The effective preservation of biodiversity and ecosystems cannot be met through environmental regulations alone. Balancing the protection of ecosystems with sustainable use objectives demands a systematic response at all levels by a myriad of actors. In this regard, the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources with those providing such resources is a key goal.

In Viet Nam as well as in other 20 countries, BioTrade has become a key vehicle, and perhaps the most successful, for advancing the implementation of benefit sharing objectives. The majority of BioTrade products in Vietnam are related to medicinal and aromatic plant formulations, functional foods and derived products, all essential for health and nutrition. Several Vietnamese companies are applying today BioTrade principles and criteria. These companies include Traphaco, Nam Douc, Vietroselle, and DHG nature and many more will be joining. I am informed that in Viet Nam, sales of BioTrade products range from USD 100 to 200 million, some ABS is taking place.

In looking at recent regulatory developments, an important consideration is that the Nagoya Protocol of the CBD on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization, entered into force on October 2014. The Protocol applies to research and development activities over genetic resources and natural biochemical, which are key inputs to industries in the food, pharmaceutical, personal care and botanical industries. It will thus have significant implications over how BioTrade businesses operate, and on international trade of biodiversity-based products.

BioTrade already includes, within its Principles and Criteria, provisions on access and benefit sharing. BioTrade principles 3 and 7, for example, focus on "fair and equitable benefit sharing" within the BioTrade value chain, and on the respect of actor rights, including on resource access and use. This places BioTrade companies at an advantage for complying with the Nagoya Protocol and its implementing regulations. Some adjustments will be needed as the scope and coverage of BioTrade principles and Nagoya Protocol provision, although similar, are not the same.

UNCTAD has developed, together with some partners, a scoping study on "Facilitating BioTrade in a Challenging Access and Benefit Sharing Environment". It examines the interlinkages between BioTrade and Nagoya Protocol rules and scope. Some of the experts that produced and review this scoping study are present today at this workshop and their views would be very relevant. The Vietnamese Government has also been involved providing inputs to this scoping study. It has, through its Biodiversity Conservation Agency (BCA), been closely working with UNCTAD, the BioTrade Implementation Group and Helvetas Vietnam with the support of Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs to promote better understanding of the Nagoya Protocol implications, especially regarding BioTrade projects and activities in Viet Nam. I wish to thank sincerely all our partners for their support.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are currently working to develop a national study for Viet Nam to assess the status of BioTrade and ABS regulations and procedures. This would help to determine the best way forward for an efficient and effective national implementation of the Nagoya Protocol. UNCTAD and Viet Nam Biodiversity Conservation Agency are also working together on the elaboration of administrative and procedural regulations that will facilitate the national implementation of the Nagoya Protocol, in particular in case of BioTrade products. The findings will be presented in this workshop for your consideration with a view to helping define a way forward. We need advice on drafting and implement the rules, procedures and best practices for ABS under the Nagoya Protocol for BioTrade products.

This is the focus of discussing today and tomorrow in the workshop.

In conclusion I wish to express UNCTAD's appreciation to SECO Vietnam and BIG making possible this workshop, the experts who have accepted our invitation to take part in the discussions and all the participants.

THANK YOU.