

Viet Nam training workshop on the identification of barriers to the trade of biodiversity based and BioTrade products from Viet Nam

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to warmly welcome you all to this workshop "on the identification of barriers to the trade of biodiversity-based and BioTrade products from Viet Nam".

The workshop is organized by UNCTAD with the support of the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) in Viet Nam under the third phase of the UNCTAD BioTrade Facilitation Programme, supported by SECO.

UNCTAD is also grateful to the support given by the BioTrade Implementation Group Viet Nam in organizing this workshop. We are also grateful to the support received from the Government of Viet Nam including through the Permanent Mission in Geneva, Switzerland.

UNCTAD, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, launched the BioTrade Initiative in 1996 to support trade and investment in biodiversity to promote sustainable development and enhance livelihoods from biodiversity-rich developing countries like Viet Nam. This is in line with the 3 objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, namely: conservation of biodiversity; sustainable use; and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources.

Some important biodiversity dependent sectors include:

- pharmaceutical,
- biotechnology,
- seed,
- crop protection,
- horticulture,
- cosmetics and personal care,
- fragrance and flavors sourced from botanicals,
- food and beverage,
- fashion; and
- tourism industries.

The Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity has valued some of these industries and it estimates that the natural cosmetics is worth US\$ 26 billion; natural beverages about US\$ 23 billion; and botanical industries about US\$ 85 billion.

The significance of biodiversity to humans and businesses can be seen from the fact that 57 percent of the most prescribed drugs in the United States originate from biological resources (CBD, 2010).

Through partnerships with key private and governmental actors, UNCTAD's BioTrade Initiative seeks to develop tradable sectors through value chain development and facilitate trade of products and services that are derived sustainably from native species and ecosystems (UNCTAD, 2016). The Initiative works towards enhancing the capability of developing countries to produce value-added products and services, for both the domestic consumption and international markets.

For instance, under the BioTrade project in Viet Nam, managed by Helvetas Vietnam in collaboration with the National Institute of Medicinal Materials (NIMM), BioTrade-related activities have been implemented, particularly in the development of value chains based on native medicinal species. The support provided 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.

Engaging in international trade using nature-based products has confronted many challenges, many of which are legitimate such as the protection of endangered species or protection of human, animal and plant life. Non-tariff measures or NTMs in this category include Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures or SPS and Technical Barriers to Trade or TBT measures. In the course of our work on NTMS, we found out that having information on such NTMs is critical to addressing them in a manner that these do not constitute deigned protectionism measures against legitimate trade.

In general, the identification, awareness building and understanding the impacts of non-tariff measures is challenging, and even more so when dealing with biodiversity and BioTrade products. There is currently no comprehensive and updated mapping of non-tariff measures applicable, nor is there a mapping of the type of non-tariff measures affecting BioTrade exports from the developing countries like Viet Nam. Therefore, identifying and mapping relevant non-tariff measures that possibly hinder BioTrade is the focus of this workshop. We have conducted a scoping study on possible harmful non-tariff measures, which will be discussed in this workshop.

We are aiming at increasing understanding and raising awareness of Vietnamese policy makers and private stakeholders on the main non-tariff measures identified when exporting products from the personal care, food and phyto-pharma sectors when accessing markets of **China, European Union, Japan, Switzerland and USA**. We will be presenting the result of the companies' survey that has been carried out on this topic.

I wish to underline that ensuring conservation of biodiversity and its sustainable use is a goal found in the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development goals, in particular goal 15 on life on land. Discussions in the implementation of these goals will feature prominently at UNCTAD 14 in Nairobi, Kenya from 17 to 22 July 2016.

In conclusion, I wish to express UNCTAD's appreciation to SECO Vietnam and BIG for making this workshop possible, the experts who are here today, and all the participants.

I wish you a successful workshop.

THANK YOU.