



United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Distr.: Limited
24 April 2008

Original: English

Twelfth session

Accra, Ghana
20–25 April 2008

Summary of the UNCTAD side event

Making trade work for biodiversity sustainable use

Summary prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat

1. The side event was attended by H.E. Mr. Arsene Balihuta, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of Uganda in Geneva, Hon. Eng. Nelson Gaggawala, Minister of State for Trade, Uganda, H.E. Mr. Gonzalo Gutierrez, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Peru, Mr. Hans-Peter Egler, Head of Trade Promotion, SECO, Switzerland, Dr. Supachai Panitchpadki, Secretary-General of UNCTAD and Ms. Lakshmi Puri, Acting Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD and Director, Division on International Trade in Goods and Services and Commodities and delegates from 45 member States. Mr. Lucas Assunção, Chief of Section, Biodiversity and Climate Change, moderated the event.

2. The event highlighted the increasing importance of biotrade in development strategies and development cooperation processes. Twelve years after UNCTAD launched the BioTrade Initiative, aimed at promoting trade and investment in biological resources as a means of furthering sustainable development, a number of countries and regions had made remarkable progress in embracing biotrade concepts and principles as integral parts of their national and regional development strategies. In addition, biodiversity was beginning to occupy an important place in the agenda of international trade negotiations and trade policy formulation processes.

3. Biotrade had created platforms where Government, business and civil society had successfully and effectively engaged in development collaboration. As a result, it was increasingly seen as an important component in development cooperation agreements that could deliver effective solutions to meet sustainable development challenges in the economic, social and environmental spheres, and further advance efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

4. As biotrade activities took place in a complex and evolving legal and policy environment, a range of legislative and policy discussions were being held that would, directly or indirectly, impact biodiversity protection in general and biotrade activities in particular. There was a risk that unless biotrade was adequately recognized and supported in those discussions, the implications of new rules and policies might negatively affect the efforts made to preserve the environment

through the sustainable use and management of biodiversity. Specific challenges also persisted in the areas of productive sector development, resource management, market information, export promotion, access to finance, among others.

5. Countries expressed their views on the opportunities stemming from biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in terms of trade and investment, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises, and recognized the importance of trade facilitation strategies for biodiversity goods and services as a means to promote trade and sustainable development. Furthermore, countries had demonstrated their interest in better understanding issues at the interface between trade, development and environment conservation, including issues related to eco-labelling, certification, standards among others.

6. The second phase of the BioTrade Facilitation Programme (BTFPII) would provide a more effective platform for collaboration that allowed UNCTAD to focus on its areas of expertise and actively participate in that initiative by contributing to the creation of a policy environment that promoted trade and investment as an incentive for the sustainable use of biodiversity.

7. In addressing the opportunities and challenges of globalization for development, successful and concrete examples in linking trade, productive sector and sustainable development such as biotrade should continue to be supported as a means to help peoples and natural resources – including the most vulnerable among them – find real opportunities and benefits from globalization.

8. The event ended with the signing of a partnership agreement between the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and UNCTAD to implement BTFP II, aimed at promoting an enabling policy environment for biotrade activities.
