

# **BioTrade and Access and Benefit Sharing**

**Parallel event during the Global  
Business and Biodiversity Forum at  
CBD COP 14**

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Welcome remarks

Ambassador Paul Garnier

***Persons to be addressed by name to be confirmed onsite with UNCTAD contact person, Lorena Jaramillo***

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

## **1 Introduction**

On behalf of the Swiss Government, I am delighted to welcome all of you to this event, where we are going to explore how BioTrade and Access and Benefit-Sharing under the Nagoya Protocol are supporting the implementation of the Agenda 2030.

We are looking back to a long and intense journey where BioTrade has been shaped to become a tool for conserving biodiversity and, in parallel, contributing to poverty alleviation. Safeguarding natural resources and reducing poverty at the same time by promoting the trade of sustainably sourced biodiversity-based goods and services – this dual use is exactly why Switzerland is supporting different BioTrade projects through its development cooperation activities. I am pleased that we have today the opportunity to share together with our partners concrete experiences on how BioTrade and especially access and benefit sharing mechanism are supporting the achievement of the SDGs. Hopefully others will get convinced of the concept and join the BioTrade family eventually.

## **2 BioTrade and SDGs**

The concept of BioTrade with its set of Principles and Criteria for the sustainable use of biodiversity contributes directly or indirectly to all but one SDG (exception is SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy). This is amazing and you probably agree that it is worth exploring more!

We are certainly aware that trade is not a panacea to solve all challenges. Nevertheless, BioTrade has proven to be a real change maker in favor of ecosystems conservation and sustained livelihoods. The promising “recipe” is to attribute economic value to natural resources, thus provide incentives for their responsible use and consequently for their conservation. Trade, as promoted under the BioTrade Principles and Criteria, is generating income and supporting sustainable livelihoods of rural communities living within and closely to biodiversity rich areas or hotspots.

Furthermore, the BioTrade Principles and Criteria are also making direct reference to fair and equitable access and benefit sharing and the Nagoya Protocol. The latter is important because it aims is to create an enabling environment for providers and users of biodiversity resources and thus contributes to foster successful partnerships, sustainable development as well as human well-being.

Global sales in BioTrade products and services reached 4.4 billion Euro in 2016. This figure shows that BioTrade has not only made the transition from theory to implementation. BioTrade has already transitioned from a

previously niche green market towards a robust and growing sub-sector of the economy of many developing countries. Today's lifestyle and consumers' interest for specialty products and a strong consumer trend to favor sustainably sourced products certainly add to this change but also underline the economic potential of BioTrade.

### **3 Future engagement of Switzerland**

These aspects and dynamics provide us with good reasons to continue and deepen the engagement. Switzerland is committed to further contribute to reach established goals and agreements within the BioTrade arena.

Also in the coming years the Government of Switzerland will be directly involved in BioTrade at different levels:

- We will continue to support the UNCTAD BioTrade Initiative, which is also responsible for co-hosting this side event.
- We will also continue to intervene at country level and support our partner countries to make best use of the potential of BioTrade. We are for example working with the here present ABS Initiative on the establishment of BioTrade value chains in South Africa.
- And last but not least, we seek to improve the access of Natural Ingredients, including BioTrade and sustainably derived products to the Swiss and European Markets. This through strengthening Business

Support Organisations that deliver services to BioTrade SMEs like buying missions and the facilitation of participation in international trade fairs.

#### **4 Concluding remarks**

Despite all these efforts and the market opportunities we see, let me conclude by saying that engaging in trade with biodiversity products including fair access and benefit sharing mechanisms is yet not an easy task. Setting up sustainable BioTrade value chains requires the coordinated and sustained work by a large variety of actors. The UNCTAD BioTrade Initiative supports partners – which are governments, companies and civil society alike - to cope with these challenges. However, only if we join forces at all levels we can seize the vast opportunities in favor of ecosystems and livelihoods of the poor and finally reach the goal we have set ourselves through the Agenda 2030.

Thank you.