



Members of the BioTrade Stakeholders Steering Committee (SSC)
BioTrade and other actors from the trade and environment communities
October 2020

**Call to Action: Making BioTrade a lever for recovery and resilience under the
COVID-19 pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic reminds us now, more than ever, how our shared human health and the health of our planet are interconnected. When we envision a future for the world after the pandemic, resilience, adaptability and sustainable recovery are key themes that have emerged. In the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda, as well as in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, charting a path to recovery should take into account social, economic and environmental factors.

Over the last decades, we have been witnessing global deforestation, pollution, and illegal trade of wildlife which threaten the life, livelihoods and well-being of people and nature. Under such circumstances urgent action is needed. For recovery and resilience building to take place in a post-COVID-19 world, trade can play a positive role. When trade is traceable, done legally and sustainably, it generates and sustains livelihoods in rural communities. The production and sale of biodiversity-based products in turn, can generate incentives to conserve natural resources and protect biodiversity. It fosters the adoption of sustainable practices in business models.





One such initiative is the [UNCTAD BioTrade Initiative](#), established in 1996 to promote legal, traceable and sustainable trade in biodiversity-based goods and services in line with the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), among others. BioTrade refers to the collection, production, transformation, and commercialization of goods and services derived from biodiversity under environmental, social, and economic sustainability principles and criteria, known as the [BioTrade Principles and Criteria \(P&C\)](#). BioTrade provides an opportunity to reduce harmful activities in untouched forests and for scaling up restoration and sustainable use activities around these areas. Similarly, it also contributes to legal flows and consumption of healthy and natural products, i.e. for food and medicinal purposes, that help in boosting the human immune system. Therefore, BioTrade partners recognize that linking trade, biodiversity and sustainable development is a compulsory pathway toward more resilience at community, private sector, and ultimately national levels under a post-COVID-19 recovery.



Emanating from discussions at the [BioTrade's third Stakeholders Steering Committee meeting](#) on 5 May 2020 and to address the situation described above, BioTrade partners and other actors are issuing this joint statement to call for the following actions:

1. **Foster a balanced relationship between the post-COVID-19 economic recovery and policies and the different dimensions of sustainable development.** We urge this to be done through the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity and building socio-economic benefits and livelihoods, particularly in rural communities. This will contribute to building a better, healthier and sustainable future for all: countries, businesses, communities, and people.
2. **Emphasize that the sustainable use of biodiversity and the trade in its derived products and services are closely linked to building sustainable livelihoods.** Local biodiversity is a main source of food security and household income that ensures the livelihoods of indigenous people and rural communities. It is also the center of biodiversity-based companies.
3. **Ensure that trade in biodiversity-based products and services, including wildlife trade, is legal, sustainable and traceable.** Trade in biodiversity-friendly sourced products and services is an essential factor to reduce the risk of emergence and spread of zoonoses and hence the risk of future pandemics, as well as maintaining human health and food security in a post-COVID-19 world.
4. **Continue and strengthen post-COVID-19 multilateral actions on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** as well as the CBD and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, CITES and its Strategic Vision post-2020, and the Paris Agreement. It must ensure that no one is left behind and that our economic activities are developed within the nature limits.
5. **Design and implement an enabling policy framework that encourages the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and the sustainable trade of biodiversity-based products and services under fair and equitable benefit sharing schemes.** Incentives for biodiversity conservation, restoration and sustainable use such as BioTrade, which can directly contribute to curbing and hopefully halting biodiversity loss, deforestation and habitat conversion, polluting activities and illegal wildlife trade, should be designed and implemented. These can play a crucial role, particularly in a post-COVID-19 recovery phase.
6. **Recognize that legal access under national frameworks which seeks to implement the CBD and the Nagoya Protocol to marine and terrestrial genetic resources can be an infinite source of inputs for the bioprospecting for nature-based medicines** that can contribute to fight current and future diseases. The value of “biodiversity pharmacy” and related Traditional Knowledge (TK) for innovation under benefit-sharing schemes should not be underestimated.
7. **Reaffirm that the UNCTAD BioTrade Principles and Criteria and related tools and standards represent a unique and state-of-the-art approach and example to develop sustainable biodiversity-based sectors and businesses, and shift towards local economic development through sustainable trade.** We encourage more countries and stakeholders to implement and benefit from BioTrade in building resilient sectors, businesses and communities/Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), as well as supporting the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

Supporters:

The following fully support the above Call to Action:

Name, surname and position	Name of organization
Kongchay Phimmakong, Deputy Director, Science Department, Ministry of Science and Technology	Ministry of Science and Technology, Lao People's Democratic Republic 
Daniel Lauchenauer, Programme Manager	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO, Switzerland  Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft Confédération suisse Confederazione Svizzera Confederaziun svizra Swiss Confederation Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research EAER State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO
Bianca Brasil, Programme Management Office	Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)  Convention on Biological Diversity
Mathieu Lamolle, Senior Advisor of Sustainability Standards and Value Chains Ana Patricia Batalhone, Associate Programme Officer	International Trade Centre (ITC)  International Trade Centre
Rik Kutsch Lojenga, Executive Director	Union for Ethical BioTrade  UNION FOR ETHICAL BIOTRADE SOURCING [®] WITH RESPECT
Balakrishna Pisupati, Conservation and Development Specialist	FLEDGE 
Rupa Mukerji Director, Advisory Services	Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation  HELVETAS
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<p>Suhel al-Janabi, Co-manager</p>	
<p>Veronique Rossow</p>	<p>Expert</p>
<p>Teresa Moreira, Officer in Charge of the Trade, Environment, Climate Change and Sustainable Development (TED) Branch of UNCTAD</p> <p>Lorena Jaramillo, Economic Affairs Officer of UNCTAD</p>	<p>UNCTAD BioTrade Initiative</p> 

(This statement remains open for additional supporters)