5th UN Biotrade Congress.

Geneva, Switzerland, 12-13 September, 2019.

Item: Considering the main findings of the IPBES report, how can trade and businesses prevent biodiversity loss and trigger a transformative change towards biodiversity as well as contribute to the 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework?

Distinguished delegates dear colleagues and friends

First of all I want to warmly thank the Government of Switzerland and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development for inviting IPBES to this 5th UN Biotrade Congress. It is an honor to speak to you as IPBES Chair.

IPBES, as you know, was established by Governments in 2012, and currently includes 132 Governments as its Members. IPBES produces assessments of available knowledge regarding biodiversity and ecosystem services in response to requests from its Members and other stakeholders, including multilateral environmental agreements (like the Convention on Biological Diversity and CITES). IPBES also has an ambitious capacity building program, and performs other functions including the identification of knowledge gaps, and the identification of policy support tools to inform decision making.

IPBES produces its assessments by involving scientists and other knowledge holders from all regions of the world. The journey, so far, has involved more than 2,000 experts from over 100 countries, from different academic disciplines, including natural and social sciences, and from different knowledge systems, including indigenous and local knowledge systems. Together, from very different perspectives, they have assessed the nature contributions to people analyzing the state of biodiversity and ecosystem services, but also the consequences of the changes observed for people, and importantly, future scenarios and options for action.

This past May 2019, in Paris, Governments approved the IPBES Global Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. This landmark report

was produced by 146 experts and 350 contributing authors from all regions of the world. Together they analyzed, over the course of 3 years, 15,000 scientific publications and other forms of knowledge and received 20,000 individual comments through the peer review process of IPBES, which increases scientific quality and credibility.

What does the IPBES Global assessment report tell us? I want to present five main messages:

First: nature is being degraded at a scale and rate never experienced before in the history of humanity. Some key findings can show the picture: ¾ of the land surface is now significantly altered by human actions; more than 85% of wetlands have been lost; and only 3% of the oceans can still be described as "free from human pressure".

As you well know, one million animal and plant species are now threatened with extinction out of an estimated total of 8 million, many within decades.

Local varieties and breeds of domesticated plants and animals are also in decline. Fewer varieties and breeds of plants and animals are being cultivated, raised, traded and maintained around the world, despite many local efforts, which include those by indigenous peoples and local communities. By 2016, 559 of the 6,190 domesticated breeds of mammals used for food and agriculture (over 9 per cent) had become extinct and at least 1,000 more are threatened.

Second: This degradation of nature is affecting the contributions that people derive from nature:

Just to mention, this loss of diversity, including genetic diversity, poses a serious risk to global food security by undermining the resilience of many agricultural systems to threats such as pests, pathogens and climate change. Not only biodiversity is in danger, also human well-being through lack of food, health, water quality, amongst others.

Third: The direct and indirect causes of the problem, or drivers, are already known:

The assessment's authors have ranked, for the first time at this scale and based on a thorough analysis of the available evidence, the five direct drivers of change in nature with the largest relative global impacts so far. These culprits are, starting with the most important: (1) changes in land and sea use; (2) direct exploitation of organisms; (3) climate change; (4) pollution and (5) invasive alien species.

Those five direct drivers result from an array of underlying causes – the indirect drivers of change – which are in turn underpinned by societal values and behaviors that include production and consumption patterns, human population dynamics and trends, trade, technological innovations and local through global governance. Unsustainable use of the Earth's resources is underpinned by a set of demographic and economic indirect drivers that have increased, and that furthermore interact in complex ways, including through trade.

In the past 50 years, the human population has doubled, the global economy has grown nearly fourfold and global trade has grown tenfold, together driving up the demand for energy and materials. A variety of economic, political and social factors have shifted the economic and environmental gains and losses of production and consumption, contributing to new economic opportunities, but also to impacts on nature and its contributions to people. But is not only legal activities that affect nature contributions to people. As The E.S. of CITES is here, she can explains very well the impacts of illegal trade of flora and fauna around the world.

Fourth: Major international goals will not be reached if these trends continue, and this is crucial to take into account for a post 2020 framework:

The Global Assessment finds that international goals for conserving and sustainably using nature and achieving sustainability will not be met with current trajectories.

It is very likely that most Aichi Targets will be missed by the 2020 deadline (which is next year!) since the Global Assessment found good progress for only four of the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets.
Regarding the SDGs, current negative trends in biodiversity and ecosystems will undermine progress towards 35 out of 44 of the assessed targets related to poverty, hunger, health, water, cities, climate, oceans and land.

The Global Assessment provided strong evidence that the loss of biodiversity is not only an environmental issue, but also, and fundamentally, a developmental, economic, security, social and moral issue as well.

Taking all this into consideration, the authors of the Global Assessment also examined six policy scenarios - including 'Regional Competition', 'Business as Usual' and 'Global Sustainability' - projecting the likely impacts on biodiversity and nature's contributions to people of these pathways by 2050. They concluded that, except in scenarios that include transformative change, the negative trends in nature, ecosystem functions and in many of nature's contributions to people will continue to 2050 and beyond, due to the projected impacts of increasing land and sea use change, exploitation of organisms and climate change. And dear colleagues at this point I have to highlight that the "business as usual" scenario is not an option if we want to have a sustainable future with good quality of life for people.

Fifth: Solutions exist and, importantly, there is still time to act
Despite the efforts that stand out in a large number of countries in different degrees of involvement and development, the IPBES Global Assessment makes it clear that the current response of the international community to biodiversity loss is insufficient. The Global Assessment concludes that to reverse these processes, comprehensive transformative changes are needed for human beings to generate conscious processes to reduce the accelerated trend of drivers of biodiversity loss.

And yes, it is possible to initiate right now transformative changes; in fact there are wonderful examples here in this Congress, including the one of our colleague of Natura Cosmetics present here.

But everybody asks the easy recipe on how start these transformations? There are no easy shortcuts. Nevertheless our assessment propose five main interventions or levers that can generate transformative change:
(1) incentives and capacity-building;
(2) cross-sectoral cooperation;
(3) pre-emptive and precautionary actions in regulatory and management institutions and businesses;
(4) decision-making in the context of resilience and uncertainty; and
(5) environmental law and implementation.

Employing these levers may have to involve actions, which requires courage and vision and also new resources, particularly in low-capacity contexts such as in many developing countries.

There are numerous points on which to act to enable these levers. Reforming trade systems and financial markets, although challenging, is essential to controlling the impact of global economic drivers on nature. For example is important to consider adopting regulations that seek to limit excessive financial speculation on those markets that can affect biodiversity outcomes.

The circular economy reduces unsustainable production while decoupling economic growth and the deterioration of the environment. Four 'R' models (reduce, reuse, recycle and recover) enable the circular economy not to use additional natural resources to produce materials and to avoid discarding products as waste. Therefore, circular economy can be considered as a business-oriented option that helps protect nature and its benefits to people and good quality of life in various ways

Also, to reduce trade-offs between business needs and targets and improve understanding between long-term approaches to meet global goals and short-term approaches chosen by companies, there is opportunity to develop and strengthen voluntary standards that comply with international best practices. Recently, for example, the global corporate reporting

standards for water have been revised to measure water consumption and withdrawal in water stressed areas more efficiently (GRI 303: Water, 2018). Such reporting standards aim to enable the corporate decision makers to assess the impacts of their activities and how to sustainably manage the resources.

Other measures, for example, to expand multi-sectoral cooperation can be on coastal management to include corporate social responsibility measures, standards for building and construction, and eco-labelling. From controlling overfishing and pollution to promoting new technologies for energy and carbon sequestration to incentives for sustainable tourism, policies and incentives towards the sustainable use of the oceans have economic and social impact across sectors of society and regions.

We must dare to review what has been done so far, reaffirm the positive and recognize the failures. We must rethink ourselves as species in order to remain sustainable in the future, we must consume and produce responsibly; incentivize economic systems based on a harmonious relationship with our own biodiversity and the services it provides us. But above all, we have to be sincere with ourselves. Here all of us are connected with sustainability…but what about other governments, sectors, companies that are totally outside of this and do not take care? Let's invite them, show that the future of the economy is the sustainable one. Is one of our tasks. Capacity building start with those who are indifferent.

The situation is urgent, but the solutions are possible and viable through seeking the benefits of synergy/mutually reinforcing approaches (the total is easier than the sum of the parts) You have the mechanisms and the unique opportunity to change paradigms and generate a better future for our society with the development of sustainable trade frameworks. I am sure that you, from business and trade sectors, are committed to redirect the current trend of biodiversity loss and therefore the negative impacts on human development by addressing the direct and indirect drivers that transform our biodiversity and turning the negative impacts to transit

towards sustainable solutions based on the basic relation between humans and nature.

Thank you very much for being part of this journey towards sustainability.