

Distinguished guests,
Esteemed partners, Colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

On behalf of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), I **wish to also warmly welcome you** to this morning session and **thank the CBD secretariat** for the opportunity to **co-organize it within the Business and Biodiversity Forum**, as well as **to all our partners and speakers**. I also take this opportunity to **thank the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO** for its **continued** support in implementing **BioTrade** all these years.

The **cooperation** between CBD and UNCTAD secretariats **dates** back to **COP3 in November 1996**, when UNCTAD launched its BioTrade Initiative *to promote trade and investment* in biological resources as its contribution to the implementation of the **three objectives of the Convention: conservation, sustainable use, and fair and equitable sharing of benefits**. This long-standing partnership was **formalized in October 1997** and since then, BioTrade **activities were always anchored to the Convention's objectives**.

BioTrade **promotes trade that contributes to livelihoods and safeguards biodiversity by implementing** social, environmental and economic **sustainability criteria, also known as the BioTrade Principles and Criteria**.

These Principles and Criteria are **used at the sector, value chain and company levels** from the collection, production, transformation, and commercialization of goods and services derived from biodiversity. It is exactly these principles that **differentiate BioTrade from other trade and biodiversity initiatives and bio-businesses**.

Under BioTrade, **we seize (sees) the linkages between sustainable trade and investment in biodiversity as an engine for economic growth and development, while creating incentives for conserving and sustainably using biodiversity**.

Mainstreaming biodiversity into the global economy is also an essential part of our work **as the UN Trade agency by building the business case for biodiversity, and working closely with private**

stakeholders in implementing BioTrade. This is not an easy task and includes a collaborative approach with governments, businesses, academia and civil society in creating an enabling environment to foster entrepreneurship in biodiversity-based sectors.

I would also like to take this opportunity to **announce that with the financial support of SECO, in May 2018 we launched our new Global BioTrade programme - Linking trade, biodiversity and sustainable development. It focuses on building partnerships, sharing knowledge and upscaling BioTrade, thereby advancing the implementation of the SDGs.**

The experiences and lessons learned from this journey are being shared today in the first panel on **fostering sustainable sourcing and trade of biodiversity-based products to achieve the SDGs.**

This panel, jointly organized by UNCTAD and CAF, **encourages an active dialogue and exchange of experiences on the benefits and challenges related to implementing BioTrade and sustainable sourcing practices in support of the SDGs.**

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Thank you, Valerie for sharing with all of us the description of Panels 2 and 3.

In closing, allow me to express and reiterate UNCTAD and CBD's appreciation to **CAF, the ABS Capacity Development Initiative and the UEBT for co-organizing** this morning's sessions. **I would like to give our special thanks to all the panelists for accepting our invitation and to all of you [the audience] for attending. Again, our thanks to the government of Switzerland and SECO for their continued trust in UNCTAD and BioTrade partners.**

I will now pass the floor to the Ambassador of Switzerland to the Arab Republic of Egypt, His Excellency Mr. Paul Garnier for his welcome remarks.
