



UNCTAD BioTrade Initiative
Launch of the 2020 BioTrade Principles and Criteria:
Making sustainable trade part of the solution
16 November 2020; 14.30 – 17.00 CET
Webinar

**Welcome remarks of
Ms. Monica Rubiolo,
Head Trade Promotion,
Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO**

Good afternoon everybody and thank you, Deputy Secretary-General, for the kind words.

We have a very impressive line-up of speakers today. I would like to acknowledge particularly the presence of:

- Ms. Isabelle Durant, Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD;
- Mr. Diego Llosa, Viceminister of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism (MINCETUR) of Peru ;
- Ms. Ivonne Higuero, Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES);

Distinguished partners, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen

1. On behalf of the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO, I would like to congratulate UNCTAD, the BioTrade team and its partners. Today we are celebrating two milestones in the world of BioTrade by launching both the 2020 BioTrade Principles & Criteria and

the BioTrade self-assessment tool, which UNCTAD and the International Trade Centre (ITC) developed jointly. I am honored to be part of this important event.

2. Seventeen years ago, when the BioTrade Facilitation Programme was launched, biodiversity was by far not as prominent on the international agenda as climate change. Today, biodiversity and its loss are all over the news. One proof was the UN Biodiversity Summit, which took place only a few weeks ago in September. At this summit, many heads of state and government and ministers convened under the theme of “Urgent action on biodiversity of sustainable development”.
3. The President of the Swiss Confederation, H.E. Ms. Simonetta Sommaruga highlighted that Heads of State and Government should “recognize their responsibility to ensure that the production and consumption does not take place at the expense of nature and therefore, of people”. In the margins of this Summit, we saw pledges from financial institutions amounting to €3 trillion in assets, from business with US\$4 trillion in combined revenue, and from leaders from 78 countries calling for action to reverse the loss of biodiversity.
4. Ladies and gentlemen, this shows that there is a real need but also readiness for a concerted action by the international community to halt biodiversity loss. It is understood that this is which is not only an environmental issue but also a social and economic.
5. Over the past two decades we have seen the potential of BioTrade to transform businesses and government policies in a manner that leads to the conservation of biodiversity, sustains the livelihoods of communities and supports countries in diversifying their exports in a sustainable manner. We understand that trade is not the silver bullet to solve our biodiversity crisis, but sustainable trade initiatives such as BioTrade are part of the solution.
6. The revised BioTrade Principles and Criteria launched today are a building block of the concept of BioTrade. They provide the necessary guidance to ensure the sustainable use of resources and equitable sharing of benefits along the value chain. Trade of products and services in line with these Principles and Criteria can create jobs and

businesses in new biodiversity-based sectors, particularly in rural communities. This enables developing countries to diversify their economy and seize opportunities arising from new market trends.

7. The BioTrade Self-Assessment Tool, which we are also launching today, provides a hand on tool to self-assess business practices regarding the BioTrade Principles and Criteria and to get a first diagnostic report of areas for improvement. It also allows to benchmark the BioTrade Principles and Criteria against other relevant sustainability standards on ITCs sustainability map. We believe this will become an important tool for existing BioTrade practitioners, but also for new actors interested in BioTrade.
8. We in particular welcome that with ITC and UNCTAD two longstanding partners of SECO have joined forces in the development of this Self-Assessment Tool.
9. From a mere concept, BioTrade has become a reality for million producers/farmers, collectors/hunters and workers working worldwide in sectors such as food, personal care, phytopharma and nature-based tourism. Global sales reached over five billion Euro in 2019, an increase of 18.6 percent from 2018. The SECO-funded Regional BioTrade Project for example enhanced the livelihoods of over 13,500 people (52 percent of whom are women) in Lao PDR, Viet Nam and Myanmar through employment or increased income. The “trade secret” is to add economic value to biodiversity by using it wisely in order to provide incentives for conservation and private sector engagement.
10. Trade that is done in a sustainable manner will contribute to curbing biodiversity loss and promote sustainable use practices. This is the very essence of the BioTrade Principles and Criteria. They guide businesses to sustainably source, transform and commercialize goods and services derived from plants, animals and ecosystem services. They provide a pathway for businesses to achieve sustainability.
11. It is inspiring to see organizations, institutions, and associations team up to try to make things better. I commend UNCTAD and its partners for revising the BioTrade Principles and Criteria to keep them relevant, enhance them, and incorporate best practices. It is also timely to align

them with international treaties and legal and policy frameworks. The inclusion of marine biodiversity resources will benefit more actors, value chains and sectors, leaving no one behind.

12. We look forward to the continued partnership with UNCTAD on trade and biodiversity. Initiatives like BioTrade are an exemplary initiative for creating economic opportunities for rural communities through trade while safeguarding nature. It is an imperative for our generation to take care of our planet so we can live in harmony with nature. Together we can. And together we must!

13. Again, congratulations to ITC, UNCTAD, the BioTrade team, and its partners.

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I wish you a fruitful and inspiring webinar.

THANK YOU.