

Report on “Biological and Genetic Resources – innovations and supply chains in support of the SDGs and Agenda 2030” at the Global Business and Biodiversity Forum at COP 14

Background and objectives

This session was convened under the Global Business and Biodiversity Forum (BBF) co-hosted by the Government of Egypt and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity on 14 to 15 November 2018 in Sharm-el-Sheik, Egypt. The forum, which preceded the 14th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP14), aimed at business engagement on biodiversity issues. As part of the forum, a session was jointly organized by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Resources (SCBD), UNCTAD BioTrade Initiative, ABS Capacity Development Initiative, Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), and Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT).

The event focused on how BioTrade and Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) implementation can contribute to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The event was organized into three panels. The first panel was led by UNCTAD/CAF which focused on BioTrade and how sustainable sourcing and trade can have a positive impact in advancing the 2030 Agenda. The second panel was led by SCBD and UEBT which presented practical cases and links between sustainable development and access and benefit-sharing. The final panel led by ABS Initiative gave concluding commentaries on BioTrade and ABS from government, company, and association prospective.



Opening and Attendance

The panels were well attended by representatives of companies, policy makers, academics, and international organizations with engaging and insightful discussions following each of the presentations. The event was opened by SCBD and UNCTAD. Welcome remarks were given by H.E. Paul Garnier, Ambassador of Switzerland to Egypt in which he emphasized that biodiversity can be conserved and can be sustainable **used** while generating benefits locally and globally. He also assured the continued commitment of Switzerland towards the goal of both biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation.





Panel 1: Fostering sustainable sourcing and trade of biodiversity-based products to achieve the SDGs

- **Michael Mane** (President of Mane Americas and of Mane Foundation) opened the panel by sharing Mane’s experience as a manufacturer for fragrances and flavors for the food and cosmetic industry, on setting up sustainable value chains. He emphasized that setting up sustainable value chains that ensure more equitable sharing of benefits would require identifying stakeholders who are willing to commit and work together. For example, by identifying key stakeholders of the Benzoin value chain with Helvetas, they were able to not only secure a stable production but was also able to commit them to the BioTrade Principles and Criteria which ensures sustainable production.
- **Fábio Miguel** (Purchasing Director of Boticário Group) demonstrated how Boticário has been incorporating sustainability into their business practices through effective management and innovative procurement systems. For example, they are training buyers on how to select more sustainable suppliers as well as investing minimum of 1 percent net income per year in biodiversity. He emphasized that reconfiguring logistics and strategizing for innovative solutions are key, especially when operating over 4,000 stores in Brazil.
- **René Gómez-García Palao** (Head Green Business Unit and GEF-CAF Coordinator of CAF) spoke about the achievements of BioTrade from his 10-year experience on working with BioTrade Latin American region. He emphasized the importance of how the BioTrade Principles and Criteria have a helpful tool to bring people on the ground to sustainably work on developing businesses and conserving biodiversity. This has led to the positive outcomes of over 400 companies supporting the programme today. He highlighted the importance of building strategical alliances among stakeholders to develop and implement business plans and create enabling policies for businesses.

- **Lorena Jaramillo** (Economic Affairs Officer of UNCTAD) showcased how BioTrade seizes 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. Biotrade works to implement sustainable sourcing practices through providing tools, enhancing the capacity and resilience of stakeholders, and providing benefits for the local communities. She also stressed the partnership aspect of the BioTrade programme and working together with partners on the company, country, and regional level in 46 countries.



Panel 2: Links between Sustainable Development and ABS

- **Zoubida Charrouf** (President of Association Ibn Al Baytar) illustrated how ABS can be a driver for sustainable development. In Morocco, benefit sharing arrangements based on ABS principles have ensured that research and development of new value-added argan products bring economic, social, and environmental benefits to local communities and researchers. For example, an ABS agreement between the association and a French research laboratory contributes to funding social programmes for the women's argan cooperatives and the planting over 20,000 new argan trees.
- **Gilles Benech**, (President of Provital France) outlined the experience of a global company processing and selling active ingredients for the cosmetics industry in implementing ABS. Provital recently secured an ABS permit in Mexico that builds on its existing initiatives for collaboration and empowerment of women and local communities in Mexico. Benefit sharing has increased local incomes and enhanced local capacities so that local partners now not only produce aromatic and medicinal plants but also operate and conduct their businesses independently. He emphasized that because of valuing local communities, a more fair, secure, trustable, and long-term supply chain has been put in place.

- **Mr. Joao Teixeira** (Senior Sustainability Coordinator of Natura) explained how Natura pioneered and is making a difference in local development and conservation of biodiversity through ABS. Natura aims to develop innovative products through use of Brazilian biodiversity which support local development projects in line with the SDGs. With over 80 ABS contracts in Brazil, Natura provided several examples of its contributions to the SDGs in 34 communities and over 200,000 hectares in the Amazon region.

Panel 3: Looking forward: BioTrade and ABS as building blocks for sustainable development

- **Erica Pereira** (Sustainability Coordinator of Beraca Ingredients) advocated that companies not only need to have clear goals profit-wise but also consider where to impact and create better benefits for those along the supply chains. Moreover, she emphasized the role of ABS in respecting local communities and use biodiversity in a way that benefits everyone, including nature.
- **Daphne Yong d'Hervé** (Chief Intellectual Property Officer of the International Chamber of Commerce) commented that the three panels presented in the event confirmed that BioTrade and ABS can lead to creating societal, economic value in the commercialization of biological resources and utilization of genetic resources. However, she highlighted that research and development may be a long and costly process, without any guarantee of commercial returns at the end. For this, ABS should remain a flexible and practical tool.
- **Matibe Khorommbi** (Chief Director of Biodiversity Economy at the Department of Environmental Affairs of South Africa) pointed out that while the government takes on the approach that biodiversity must be an asset for economic and sustainable development, engaging the private sector is also crucial. Therefore, they have a clear national bioprospecting¹ strategy to create jobs which will contribute to at least \$47 billion to GDP by 2030. Moreover, major efforts have been instilled for better coordination and exchange of ideas among different actors.

Key highlights

1. BioTrade and ABS implementation are already contributing to advancing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Furthermore, they provide lessons and successful approaches that can be replicated and upscaled in different context.
2. Working together to consolidate and strategically align the stakeholders in partnership is vital for biodiversity conservation especially the commitment and trust from local communities, collaboration of like-minded development organizations on the ground, and cooperation of the government for enabling policies.
3. Investment is crucial for sustainable sourcing, not only financially but also time and committing to the people you work with along the value chain. Investing to work with the local communities is especially important to have a strong relationship to ensure long-term sustainable and consistent supply of resources

¹ process of discovery and commercialization of new products based on biological resources



4. Sustainability is on the agenda for everyone and society is giving more importance on social responsibility and sustainable development. This makes it even more the case that sustainable sourcing is now more important than ever because it is highly demanded from consumers.
5. More companies are embracing ABS into their business plans not just for legal compliance but because it creates impact for the local communities they work with through ensuring that the supply chains are fair and secure. In this way, ABS is used as a tool for companies to engage and respect the communities they work with.
6. Mainstreaming biodiversity into the global economy can only be done through creating business cases for biodiversity and working closely with private stakeholders to create an enabling environment. For this, attributing economic value to natural resources provide incentives for sustainable use and livelihoods is key to biodiversity conservation. BioTrade plays a key role in making this linkage between sustainable trade and investment in biodiversity as an engine for growth and development.
7. The use of genetic resources can create societal and commercial value while conserving biodiversity. At the same time, creating economic value requires a long process with many actors, which can be a risky and expensive journey without any guarantee of commercial returns at the end and hence a supportive framework is needed.



Further information:

- Session Biological and Genetic Resources – innovations and supply chains in support of the SDGs and Agenda 2030 - <https://unctad.org/en/pages/MeetingDetails.aspx?meetingid=1995>
- UNCTAD Global BioTrade Programme: <https://unctad.org/en/Pages/DITC/Trade-and-Environment/BioTrade/BT-Initiative-Linking-programme.aspx>

- Global Business and Biodiversity Forum: <https://www.cbd.int/business/meetings-events/2018/default.shtml>

