

Final Intergovernmental consultation on nature-based solutions (Nbs)
9-13 October 2023, Nairobi, Kenya

UNCTAD's intervention followed by a written submission

- Excellencies, distinguished participants, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,
- The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is pleased to take part in the Global Consultation on 'nature-based solutions' and commends the Co-Chairs and UNEP for convening these consultations.
- UNCTAD is the main agency within the United Nations system that deals with trade and development and supports developing countries to access the benefits of a globalized economy more fairly and effectively. It has been actively working for over two decades on trade and environment issues considering its mandate by 195 member States.
- With regards to the three tasks for the consultations and considering the nature based-solutions definition under UNEA Resolution 5/5 (*Nature based-solutions for supporting sustainable development*), I would like to mention some of our flagship programmes and projects that contribute to addressing the triple environmental crises that we are facing, namely, biodiversity loss, climate change and plastic pollution by promoting trade in line with environmental, social and economic sustainability criteria:
 1. BioTrade Initiative;
 2. Oceans Economy and Fisheries programme;
 3. Blue BioTrade project; and
 4. Sustainable Manufacturing and Environmental Pollution Programme (SMEP).
- In supporting the first and third tasks of the consultations related to examples of best practice and options for supporting sustainable investment in nature-based solutions, these programmes and project provide a wealth of information, including on case studies, best practices and lessons learned applied in different ecosystems and contexts from around the world. Moreover, we support R&D on the ground working together with governments, entrepreneurs and IPLCs, as well as creating an enabling policy environment all the way to inter-governmental processes to advance their roll out.
- The four programmes mentioned, as well as others covering sustainable consumption and voluntary sustainability standards are listed under the [50+ illustrative list of practical interventions](#) the United Nations system can pursue jointly in support of the [Common approach to Integrating Biodiversity and Nature-based Solutions for Sustainable Development into United Nations Policy and Programme Planning and Delivery](#) agreed in 2021. The latter two documents are also relevant to our discussions at the consultations and for the guidance material being prepared by UNEP.
- In relation to the second task, I would like to underscore UNCTAD's BioTrade Principles and Criteria which are a set of guidelines for governments, businesses and civil society implemented in almost 100 countries since 2007 and updated in 2020. These Principles and Criteria foster the sustainable production and trade of biodiversity-based products which generate sustainable livelihoods, in particular for indigenous peoples and local communities, and conserve, restore and sustainably

use biodiversity. These sustainability guidelines are complemented with four approaches: sustainable livelihoods, ecosystems approach, adaptive management and value chain. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework makes a direct reference to these Principles and Criteria under the complementary indicator related to trends of trade and commercialization in biodiversity-based products that is sustainable and legal under Target 5.

- Complementing this intervention, we will be sending a written submission with further detail on the programmes mentioned above and how they contribute to the three tasks of the consultations.
- I would like to conclude by stating that UNCTAD will continue supporting member States and collaborating with other UN agencies and organizations in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the implementation of the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Paris Agreement and address the triple planetary crises we are currently facing through solutions based on nature and trade.

Complementing the intervention made in plenary, UNCTAD submits this written statement which provides further information on the following programmes and projects:

FIRST TASK: Compile examples of best practice in nature-based solutions, based on the best available science

- I. **UNCTAD's [BioTrade Initiative](#)** launched in 2016 supports countries to effectively address biodiversity loss while generating livelihoods by promoting trade and investment in biological resources to further sustainable development in line with the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), namely the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits generated. At the core of the BioTrade framework are the [BioTrade Principles and Criteria](#). These guide all the activities implemented from for the production, transformation and commercialization of products and services derived biodiversity that mutually comply with social, economic and environmental sustainability criteria. The Principles and Criteria are already applied by UNCTAD and partners to terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems in almost 100 countries in Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe. Several examples of best practices and case studies have been or are being developed by BioTrade partners in a variety of sectors such as personal care, food, plant-based pharmaceuticals, fashion, and sustainable tourism, among others. Relevant information, particularly on case studies, best practices and lessons learned can be found in the following publications and projects:
 - UNCTAD: [20 years of BioTrade: connecting people, the planet and markets](#) (20+ case studies and lessons learned); reports of the BioTrade Congresses in [2012](#), [2013](#), [2014](#), [2016](#), [2019](#) and [2021](#), [Implications of the African Continental Free Trade Area for Trade and Biodiversity: Policy and Regulatory Recommendations](#), [Women in rural Namibia](#), the [Global BioTrade Programme](#) funded by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO, the forthcoming 16 case studies on BioTrade from Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe (2023), among others

- [National BioTrade Programme in Peru](#) which includes a vast set of documents, including [guidelines](#) and [BioTrade manual](#), [National BioTrade Strategy and Action Plan by 2025](#), case studies including from the [Andean BioTrade Project \(GEF/CAF/UNEP\)](#), among others, among others
- Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation: under the SECO-funded [Regional Biotrade Project in Southeast Asia](#) with case studies and other relevant information from Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam
- Multi donor ABS Capacity Development Initiative (ABS-CDI) through its [Access and benefit-sharing \(ABS\)-compliant Biotrade in Southern Africa \(ABioSA\)](#) and through the global programme [BioInnovation Africa](#)
- Union for Ethical BioTrade with several [documents](#) targeted at the private sector, including on the [Biodiversity Action Plans](#) (case studies, guidance documents and tools), and publications like [The Big Shift: Business for Biodiversity- lessons learned from over 10 years of UEBT](#), among others.

These and other documents are also available at UNCTAD/ITC BioTrade Knowledge Sharing and Self-assessment tool at: <http://www.sustainabilitygateway.org/biotrade/>

- II. [UNCTAD's Ocean Economy and Fisheries Programme](#) has been supporting developing countries to identify the opportunities and challenges that the growing global ocean economy can bring. It also supports national trade and other competent authorities to design and create an enabling policy and regulatory environment that promotes the development and emergence of sustainable ocean economic sectors through the definition and implementation of national and regional oceans economy and trade strategies. It works on the 5 pillars of Ocean Economy being Economy and trade; Science and technology; Environmental; Social and Governance. Relevant compilation documents for the discussions under the first task are:
 1. [Towards a climate resilient multispecies finfish management plan for Belize](#)
 2. [Trade and Environment Review 2023 – Building a sustainable and resilient ocean economy beyond 2030](#)
 3. [Plastic Pollution: The pressing case for natural and environmentally friendly substitutes to plastics](#)

- III. The [Blue BioTrade project](#) was launched in 2020 by UNCTAD and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), in cooperation with CITES, and with Grenada, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as beneficiary countries. It uses a bottom-up approach to support sustainable trade in CITES-listed species by implementing [UNCTAD's BioTrade Principles and Criteria](#). This set of practical guidelines for governments and companies enable the development of biodiversity-friendly trade and are strongly interlinked to CITES's approach to conserve species and reduce poverty through sustainable trade. The project is helping small-scale fishers in the three Eastern Caribbean countries to benefit from exports of species such as queen conch, an iconic sea mollusk or shellfish, by supporting countries in the region to overcome trade restrictions. Relevant material with experiences on this project are:
 1. [Promoting sustainable trade as a safety net for marine wildlife](#)
 2. [Blue BioTrade in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines: Developing value for the sustainable trade and production of queen conch in the Eastern Caribbean](#)

3. [The Blue BioTrade regional plan of action for the Eastern Caribbean queen conch value chain](#)
 4. [Blue BioTrade in Grenada: Developing value for the sustainable trade and production of queen conch in the Eastern Caribbean](#)
 5. [Blue BioTrade in Saint Lucia: Developing Value for the Sustainable Trade and Production of Queen Conch in the Eastern Caribbean](#)
- IV. [Sustainable Manufacturing and Environmental Pollution \(SMEP\)](#) programme aims to generate cutting edge scientific evidence that can improve existing knowledge of the environmental health and socio-economic impacts of selected trade-exposed manufacturing sectors across target countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and the Indo-Pacific region. The programme also seeks to identify suitable technology-based solutions to address the most pressing environmental health issues associated with manufacturing in target countries, and invest in developing business processes and systems that will result in the uptake of pollution control solutions. In addition, the programme addresses the issue of plastic pollution, focusing on identifying and supporting the development of solutions towards material substitution and enhanced biodegradation options. SMEP has been established by the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and is implemented in partnership with UNCTAD. Relevant SMEP materials are:
1. [Information/database](#) on SMEP funded projects being implemented and other information, some of which may be relevant to NbS
 2. [SMEP trade and pollution dashboard to using Life Cycle Assessment \(LCA\)](#) to compare impacts of substitute materials to single use plastics, to which consideration of biodiversity impacts may soon be added.
 3. [Sustainable Manufacturing and Environmental Pollution \(SMEP\) | UNCTAD video case studies](#) on material substitution for 4 selected SMEP focus countries
 4. [unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ditcted2023d2_en.pdf](#) study on the pressing case for natural and environmentally friendly substitutes to plastics

SECOND TASK: Assess existing and discuss potential new proposals, criteria, standards and guidelines to address divergences, with a view to achieving a common understanding among Member States for the implementation of nature-based solutions, including to support Member States in designing, implementing and evaluating nature-based solutions, building on existing work, initiatives and platforms, as appropriate, and without prejudice to existing efforts and initiatives of and new proposals from individual Member States

UNCTAD would like to highlight the [seven BioTrade Principles and 25 Criteria](#). These are a set of sustainability guidelines used by governments, businesses and civil society for developing sectors, value chains and businesses that ensure the production and trade of biodiversity-based products and services is done respecting environmental, social, and economic sustainability criteria. The BioTrade Principles and Criteria are complemented with minimum eligibility criteria as well as four approaches: sustainable livelihoods, ecosystems approach, adaptive management and value chain. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework directly mentions these guidelines under the complementary indicator in Target 5: [“Trends of trade and commercialization in biodiversity-based products that is sustainable and legal \(in line with BioTrade Principles and/or CITES requirements\)”](#)

The Principles and Criteria were first launched by UNCTAD and partners in 2007 and updated in 2020 to reflect evolving legal and policy frameworks and growing experiences and lessons learnt among BioTrade partners for over a decade. For example, issues they address include:

- conservation, restoration and sustainable use and management of biodiversity,
- strengthen the resilience and adaptation of species and ecosystems to climate-related hazards;
- equitable sharing of the benefits generated between all actors involved, as well as promote local development;
- socio-economic sustainability; and
- respect for the rights of indigenous people and local communities and other actors involved.

The BioTrade Principles and Criteria may provide a basis for advancing on this second task as these:

- a. Are anchored in the social, environmental and economic pillars of sustainable development;
- b. Are closely aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals;
- c. Are in line with and contribute to the objectives of Multilateral Environmental Agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and
- d. Contribute to the achievement of the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity.

THIRD TASK: Identify options for supporting sustainable investment in nature-based solutions and share information on bilateral and multilateral sources of finance to enable developing countries to develop and deploy nature-based solutions

Finally, in relation to the third task, UNCTAD would like to underscore the importance of sustainable trade and trade policy which can generate incentives and channel public and private financial resources to address the triple environmental crises through solutions based in nature. This is exemplified by the programmes presented above under the first task.

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