From Trade to Sustainable and Creative Livelihood:  
Biodiversity and Design

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Statement

from

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Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO, it is my pleasure to welcome you to this Side Event at UNCTAD 14: From Trade to Sustainable and Creative Livelihood: Biodiversity and Design.

Switzerland has been partnering with UNCTAD on the sustainable use of biodiversity for many years. It has done this from a trading perspective through the various phases of UNCTAD’s BioTrade Facilitation Programme, which has been conceived as concrete support of the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The importance of biodiversity, (that is, the variety of life on earth and related ecosystems), cannot be highlighted enough. Natural resources that form biological diversity are located mainly in rural areas, where over 70% of the world's poor live and directly depend on those resources to meet 90% of their needs. However, biodiversity is being lost at accelerating rates, reducing the capacity of ecosystems to provide these essential services for human survival, starting by those that depend most and directly on those resources. For instance, some 1.6 billion people depend on forest and non-timber forest products for their livelihoods and over three billion depend on marine and coastal biodiversity.
We are aware that trade is not the “silver bullet” able to solve all challenges attached to the threatened loss of biodiversity. But the concept of BioTrade with its set of **principles and criteria for the sustainable use of biodiversity** can be a real change maker in favor of ecosystems and livelihood of the poor. Global sales in BioTrade products and services reached Euro 4.3 billion in 2015, which includes value added products derived from baobab, marula, native cocoa, shea butter, sacha inchi, maca, cocoa, among others. (*Remark fur: also services such as ecotourism and community-based tourism are part of BioTrade*). This figures show a clear transition from a previously niche green market to a **robust sub-sector of the economy** of many developing countries.

In fact, we observe a strong **consumer trend** that favors sustainably sourced products. Today’s lifestyle and consumer interest for specialty products bring new opportunities for biodiversity products and services.

Many developing countries are **biodiversity hot spots**. However, biodiversity conservation is often not sufficiently taken care of and conservation alone cannot solve the issue. It is therefore important to **attribute economic value** to biodiversity in order to provide incentives for protection.

BioTrade with its unique approach offers therefore **interesting opportunities** for developing countries. It can help indigenous people to invest in a sustainable use of nature and to maintain traditional knowledge, thereby contributing to its conservation.

All these aspects and dynamics provide us with good reasons to continue and deepen our engagement. During the Convention on Biological Diversity Conference of the Parties in Hyderabad in 2012, **Switzerland committed to double its financial engagements** in favor of biodiversity by the year 2020. With this commitment, Switzerland will further **contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals** (SDG 15 Life on Land).
We are well underway to reach the established goals. In the coming years, the government of Switzerland through the Swiss Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment will be directly involved in the question of biodiversity and promotion of BioTrade at different levels:

- In cooperation with UNCTAD and the partners of the BioTrade Facilitation Programme, we will foster the international policy dialogue and framework conditions addressing the core challenges, such as the removal of technical barriers to trade, the improvement of market information and the concrete implementation of Access and Benefit Sharing schemes. Experiences from projects can be fed into relevant multilateral negotiations.

- Interventions at country level in partner countries to make best use of the potential of BioTrade by strengthening local capacities to identify goods and services with a market potential.
  - This includes defining and managing sustainable collection plans;
  - providing technical assistance to SMEs and access to finance;
  - assist and better organize small holder farmer groups, including minor investment in their infrastructure;
  - support the strengthening of institutions related to BioTrade.

- Last but not least, we support to improve the access to the Swiss and European Market through facilitation of participation in international trade fairs.

To conclude, all these efforts and the enormous market opportunities for engaging in trade with biodiversity products is not an easy task. Setting up sustainable BioTrade value chains requires the coordinated and sustained work by a large variety of actors from the public, private and academic sectors and the civil society. The BioTrade Initiative supports partners - governments, companies and civil society alike - to address these challenges and capitalize opportunities offered by BioTrade. Only if we join forces at all levels, we can seize the vast opportunities in favor of ecosystems and the livelihood of the poor.
Thank you.