

STATEMENT OF PRIVATE SECTOR  
WORKING GROUP II

Agenda item 24. Cooperation with other conventions and international organizations and initiatives, and engagement of stakeholders  
March 2006

**Opening Statement:**

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I am speaking on behalf of private sector organizations and associations representing interests including Certification, Biotechnology, Pharmaceutical, Oil and Gas, Mining and Metals, Seed and Germplasm, Chemicals, Crop Protection, Bio-Remediation, and Enzymes. We would like to express our appreciation of the work by Parties in developing the draft decision before us, which takes into account outcomes of the London and Sao Paulo meetings, and follows COP7 where the private sector called on the CBD to encourage private sector participation.

We value the work of the CBD, for example in the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, to ensure a sustainable environment for all, now and in the future. We recognize that the CBD goals are essential for sustainable business.

This is the first time the COP considers adopting a decision that would formally recognize the vital role that the private sector has in supporting and implementing the many initiatives under this Convention, and that seeks to increase its engagement. We thank the Parties and the secretariat for this opportunity.

The “private sector” or business community comprises an extremely diverse array of interests from various sectors, from small and medium enterprises to large companies, and from all regions, in developing as well as developed countries. Our interests and concerns are sometimes aligned and sometimes quite divergent. The tendency to think of and to treat the private sector as a single actor should be avoided.

That being said, while we often need to express views on a sector by sector basis, we share a common interest in greater participation by the private sector in the Convention’s substantive work and we ourselves are working to increase broader and more diverse business engagement. For this reason, the private sector should be encouraged to participate in the work of the CBD in a more flexible and robust way, among other things through inclusion of relevant business sectors in Contact and Technical Expert Groups.

We believe that this participation will enrich the work of the CBD and allow the private sector to share its expertise and knowledge, and thus contribute more effectively on substance. In addition, the private sector will undertake to increase our participation in the CBD through actions such as:

- 1) Efforts to raise awareness among private sector representatives, companies and trade associations about the work of the CBD and to actively seek greater involvement,
- 2) Work with the Secretariat to facilitate interactions with the private sector, for example general distribution of notifications and materials to private sector representatives,
- 3) Responding to the greatest extent possible to requests for technical information, case studies, submissions, and so forth.

We fully support the initiatives and actions undertaken by the Executive Secretary to more fully incorporate the opinions, expertise and experience of the private sector. Realization of the Convention's three objectives in part depends upon the private sector's participation, as for example is recognized by GEF's work on engaging the private sector in their 2005 report, and as is recognized in IUCN's current draft Operational Guidelines for Private Sector Engagement. The private sector already works in partnership with other stakeholders to support biodiversity. Three examples are the WBCSD, EarthWatch and the IUCN's Guide to Business and Biodiversity, the ICMM's work with IUCN to develop Good Practices for Biodiversity and Mining, and the Energy and Biodiversity Initiative.

Once again, we welcome the opportunity offered by this decision and we thank Parties for their work in developing it. We would like to conclude by calling on Parties to ensure that reference to the private sector is included in decisions made by this COP where stakeholder participation is identified, for example in the Appendix to draft decision VIII/15 in document UNEP/CBD/COP/8/1/Add.2 which lists Proposed Core Group Members of the Global Partnership For Biodiversity.

We have prepared a few suggestions for the draft text, and will provide these to the secretariat.

Mr. Chairman, these comments have been made in the hope that this decision will be approved, and that the private sector can work with all stakeholders towards achieving the three objectives of the CBD. Thank you.