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## Decision VIII/17

### Private-sector engagement

*The Conference of the Parties,*

*Recalling* decisions III/6, V/11 and VI/26 of the Conference of the Parties, in particular objective 4.4 of the Strategic Plan (“Key actors and stakeholders, including the private sector, are engaged in partnership to implement the Convention and are integrating biodiversity concerns into their relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral plans, programmes, and policies”),

*Emphasizing* the need to involve all stakeholders in the implementation of the Convention and the achievement of the 2010 target, while mindful also that responsibilities for implementation rest primarily with Parties,

*Noting* the need to enhance voluntary commitments of the private sector to, and strengthen regulation in support of, the objectives of the Convention,

*Recognizing* that the private sector encompasses a broad range of actors,

*Noting* that there are multiple reasons for promoting the engagement of business and industry in the implementation of the Convention, including the following:

(a) The private sector is arguably the least engaged of all stakeholders in the implementation of the Convention, yet the daily activities of business and industry have major impacts on biodiversity. Encouraging business and industry to adopt and promote good practice could make a significant contribution towards the 2010 target and the objectives of the Convention;

(b) Individual companies and industry associations can be highly influential on Governments and public opinion; thus, they have the potential to raise the profile of biodiversity and of the Convention itself;

(c) The private sector possesses biodiversity-relevant knowledge and technological resources, as well as more general management, research and communication skills, which, if mobilized, could facilitate the implementation of the Convention,

*Welcoming* ongoing and new initiatives to engage businesses in furthering the objectives of the Convention, including dialogue between business leaders and Ministers involved in implementing the Convention,

*Welcoming* the initiative of the Ministry of the Environment of Brazil and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs of the United Kingdom, together with the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the Brazilian Business Council for Sustainable Development (CEBDS), Insight Investment and the Executive Secretary, to develop ideas, that could best be pursued through the Convention or in support of its objectives, for engaging business in biodiversity issues, as a means of working towards the 2010 target,

*Noting* the report of the first Business and the 2010 Biodiversity Challenge meeting (UNEP/CBD/WG-RI/1/INF/5) held in London on 20-21 January 2005, as well as the report of the second meeting (UNEP/CBD/COP/8/INF/11) held in São Paulo, Brazil, from 3-5 November 2005,

*Noting* that the following types of tools and mechanisms may be of use in facilitating contributions from business and industry towards the implementation of the Convention and its 2010 target:

- (a) Awareness-raising materials and training workshops on business and biodiversity issues;
- (b) Guidance on the integration of biodiversity considerations into existing voluntary or mandatory reporting and performance standards, guidelines, and indices in order to mainstream biodiversity considerations into business practice;
- (c) Certification schemes reflecting the full range of biodiversity-related issues to facilitate consumer choice based on companies' biodiversity performance;
- (d) Internationally agreed standards on activities that impact biodiversity;
- (e) Guidance and tools to assist companies in implementing good practice with regard to biodiversity;
- (f) Biodiversity policies and action plans to define and operationalize companies' biodiversity commitments;
- (g) Biodiversity benchmarks to guide and assess companies' biodiversity management practices;
- (h) Guidelines for incorporating biodiversity-related issues into existing environmental impact assessment procedures and strategic impact assessment;
- (j) Partnerships to facilitate knowledge-sharing with regard to good practice;
- (k) Public-private partnerships,

*Further noting* that some of the tools and mechanisms enumerated above may also be of use in facilitating cooperation among government agencies that deal with biodiversity conservation and sustainable use and those that deal with economic development, in regard to implementation of the Convention and achievement of its 2010 target,

*Noting* that contributions from business and industry towards the implementation of the Convention and its 2010 target could be facilitated by further work under the Convention to develop:

- (a) Tools, guidance and standards on biodiversity-related issues relevant to the private sector;
- (b) Tools for assessing the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services, for their integration into decision-making;

- (c) Guidance for potential biodiversity offsets in line with the objectives of the Convention;
- (d) Guidance on integrating biodiversity into industry standards, certification schemes and guidelines;
- (e) A guide to the Convention for the private sector;
- (f) Guidance for Parties on how to engage the private sector, in accordance with national needs and circumstances,

*Noting that* further work on ways and means of supporting small and medium-sized enterprises with environmentally sound products, such as that developed by the UNCTAD BioTrade Initiative, would help to promote good biodiversity practice among business and industry,

1. *Urges* national focal points, working with relevant government departments, to communicate the importance of biodiversity to companies operating within the jurisdiction of Parties, including state-owned companies and small and medium enterprises, to engage such companies in the development of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and to encourage such companies to adopt practices that support the implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans and the objectives of the Convention;
2. *Encourages* national focal points, where appropriate, to include private sector representatives on national delegations to meetings of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, the Conference of the Parties, and other intergovernmental meetings, and nominate them to participate in technical expert groups;
3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to compile information on the business case for biodiversity and good biodiversity practice, and to make this information available through the clearing-house mechanism;
4. *Further requests* the Executive Secretary to include the private sector as a target audience for its outreach materials and in the Global Initiative on Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA);
5. *Invites* businesses and relevant organizations and partnerships, such as the Finance Initiative of the United Nations Environment Programme, to develop and promote the business case for biodiversity, to develop and promote the wider use of good practice guidelines, benchmarks, certification schemes and reporting guidelines and standards, in particular performance standards in line with the 2010 indicators, to share information on biodiversity status and trends, and to prepare and communicate to the Conference of the Parties any voluntary commitments that will contribute to the 2010 target;
6. *Invites* businesses to align their policies and practices more explicitly with the three objectives of the Convention and its goals and targets;
7. *Encourages* business representatives to participate in the meetings of the Conference of the Parties, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, and other intergovernmental meetings;
8. *Decides* to consider, at its ninth meeting, further ways and means to promote business engagement in the implementation of the Convention, with a particular emphasis on the Convention's role in facilitating such engagement;
9. *Invites* the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group on Technology Transfer and Scientific and Technical Cooperation to address the role of the private sector in achieving the three objectives of the Convention and to consider the

relevance of the present decision for the work of the Expert Group, and to report thereon to the Conference of the Parties;

10. *Encourages* Parties to prioritize the implementation of Article 6(b) of the Convention.

