

Cooperation with other Conventions and International Organizations and Initiatives, and Engagement of Stakeholders in the Implementation of the Conventions (Agenda Item 24)

Eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP8), Curitiba, Brazil, 20-31 March 2006

Engaging Private Sector in Support of CBD Implementation

Document UNEP/CBD/COP/8/25 for the 8th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) recalls that goal 4 of the Strategic Plan, adopted by decision VI/26, envisages broader engagement across society and objective 4.4 seeks partnerships among key stakeholders, including the private sector. The Addendum 'Engagement of the Private Sector' (UNEP/CBD/COP/8/25/Add.1) specifically addresses the imperative of private sector engagement for effectively implementing the CBD. The ideas developed in the multi-stakeholder Business and the 2010 Biodiversity Challenge meetings held in London and São Paulo, in January and November 2005, and recommendation 1/7 of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on the Review of Implementation of the Convention, which met in September 2005 (UNEP/CBD/COP/8/4), all contribute to the draft decision before COP8 (outlined in paragraph 20 of the Addendum).

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) welcomes the inclusion of the discussions on the role of the private sector in the COP agenda and commends the CBD Secretariat for following a consultative process to develop ideas for private sector engagement. IUCN encourages the COP to demonstrate leadership by taking these ideas forward as outlined in the draft decision.

IUCN concurs with the assertion in the Addendum that business operations significantly affect biodiversity, and that business should be encouraged to avoid, minimize and mitigate their negative impacts on biodiversity, to share relevant expertise, information and technology, and to promote good conservation practice broadly. IUCN also believes that the role of business is not limited to reducing its environmental 'footprint'. It has also a responsibility and the potential to positively contribute to the objectives of the CBD.

In considering further guidance for the private sector on biodiversity and engagement with the Convention processes, IUCN encourages the Parties to consider building on the existing experiences. IUCN calls Parties attention to the Business and Biodiversity Handbook (IUCN and WBCSD 2002) and the Business and Biodiversity Guide (IUCN and WBCSD 1997) which could be useful for their work.

The discussions around biodiversity offsets as a tool for conservation have generated much interest and have highlighted that some questions still remain. IUCN thus welcomes

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the recommendations from the CBD Secretariat consultation process to further explore the potential of biodiversity offsets, seeking to address these questions as well as the issues of definitions, means and mechanisms needed for an effective implementation of offsets and the need to ensure, at a minimum, no net loss of biodiversity and securing net social benefits. The call before COP8 for enhancing interaction with the private sector is consistent with the resolutions WCC 3.060 and 3.061 of the IUCN 3rd World Conservation Congress. The latter resolution encourages engagement with the private sector in ways which effectively manage potential risks, and calls on IUCN to develop operational guidelines for this purpose. These will be one of the first such guidelines available in the public domain. IUCN offers to share its knowledge and experience of these guidelines with the Secretariat and Parties of the Convention to support their respective efforts for private sector involvement in the conservation of biodiversity.

IUCN believes that the draft decision, as outlined in paragraph 20 of the Addendum, demonstrates significant progress towards harnessing the business potential for conservation.

Therefore, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) calls on the COP8 to:

- *adopt* the decision outlined in paragraph 20 of the document UNEP/CBD/COP/8/25/ADD1.

The call on business to develop and promote the business case for biodiversity, as in the draft decision (paragraph 20 (5)) is well made as is the call for performance standards. Leadership from states and global fora such as the CBD is needed to establish rigorous international standards that could be evenly and transparently applied for businesses to compete on a "level playing field". Developing such standards requires collaboration between business and the conservation community, and IUCN offers its help in bringing the various actors together in the pursuit of this shared interest.

IUCN recognises that it may not always be feasible for individual companies to participate in CBD meetings in their entirety. However, in line with paragraph 20(7), to raise awareness and encourage corporate biodiversity action,

IUCN underlines the importance of active participation of the business community in relevant formal discussions, for instance, through industry associations.

IUCN recommends that the COP8:

- *request* the Executive Secretary to explore and pursue innovative mechanisms that would facilitate the involvement of the private sector in the CBD process.

IUCN values the efforts undertaken at COP8 to provide additional platforms for dialogue on business and biodiversity, notably through informal side events and the High Level Segment.

References:

IUCN, 2006 (draft). [Operational Guidelines for Private Sector Engagement](http://www.iucn.org/themes/business/Secretariat/Guidelines.htm)
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Earthwatch Institute (Europe), IUCN, WBCSD, 2002. *Business and Biodiversity: The Handbook for Corporate Action*
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