

**The 10th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development**  
**Item 5 of the Provisional Agenda**  
**Implementation of the mandate and programme of work –**  
**Focused thematic discussion and interactive dialogue**  
Palais des Nations, Room XXI, Geneva

**Trade, biodiversity and the right to development:**  
**an equation to be constructed**  
Tuesday 29 October 2024, 16h30 to 18h00

**Concept Note**  
**Presented by Isabelle Durant**

## **Introduction**

The 2024 United Nations Biodiversity Conference of the Parties (COP16) to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) will take in Colombia from 21 October to 1 November 2024. The Conference has challenged the international community to consider “nature-positive” long-term development trajectories, integrating biodiversity as a pillar in the functioning of our societies. The issue is intrinsically linked to climate change.

The UNEP 2024 Global Resources Outlook highlights the fact that "the extraction and processing of biomass (e.g., agricultural crops and forestry) accounts for 90% of land-related biodiversity loss and water stress, as well as one third of greenhouse gas emissions."<sup>1</sup> This is an issue for all latitudes, but as with climate change, it reveals the fundamental inequalities at the heart of global resource use between developed and developing countries. In addition to questions of financing a virtuous biodiversity strategy, rethinking/reflections and experiments around the bioeconomy and the relationship between trade and biodiversity can also be part of the solution.

According to some estimates, global trade is responsible for almost a third of all species extinctions.<sup>2</sup> Coffee, chocolate and beef are just a few examples of products consumed daily around the world that are linked to biodiversity loss. A country's footprint on biodiversity is sometimes greater abroad than on its own territory, raising serious concerns about the externalizing of environmental costs and its impact on the right to development extra-territorially. For trade to play a leading role in the fight against biodiversity loss and for sustainable development, specific principles must be upheld, and certain conditions must be met throughout the value chain.

## **Purpose**

This EMRTD panel discussion will explore the impact of protecting, valorizing and trading biodiversity-based goods and services on the right to development, in particular equitable access to development opportunities and equitable distribution of development benefits.

## **Guiding questions**

The panel will therefore consider the following questions:

- 1. What principles and conditions must international trade meet if it is to play a genuine role in combating biodiversity loss?**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/rich-countries-use-six-times-more-resources-generate-10-times>

<sup>2</sup> <https://unctad.org/news/why-trade-must-be-part-solution-biodiversity-loss>

2. Are current international trade rules up to the challenge, in terms of both content and application?
3. What role can indigenous peoples, guarantors of the preservation of their resources and their territory, as well as local producers and actors, play in the certification and monitoring of the application of these rules?
4. How can we guarantee traceability throughout the value chain of a product derived from biodiversity, and what responsibility and power do consumers ultimately have?

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