



Opening Statement COP-8

Thank you Madam Chair and congratulations on your appointment. I am speaking on behalf of the International Chamber of Commerce.

The International Chamber of Commerce is the voice of world business, serving as a partner of the United Nations and its agencies to work toward economic growth, job creation and prosperity. With thousands of member companies of all sizes and sectors and business associations in every part of the world, ICC has been an engaged participant in environmental and sustainable development discussions, from Rio to Johannesburg, working with UNEP, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development and UNDP. In all that we do, we seek to act, and encourage our members to act, in an environmentally sound manner.

We are pleased to inform delegates that in January of this year, the International Chamber of Commerce established a Task Force on the Convention on Biological Diversity. One of the main objectives of this Task Force is to increase business engagement in the Convention, a goal that has also been identified as a priority by the Parties. The Task Force will pursue this objective through outreach to and education of companies and associations that can contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and by serving as a business focal point for the Secretariat, Parties, Governments and organizations.

In addition to working closely with delegates in considering Agenda Item 24 on the engagement of stakeholders, we look forward to making substantive contributions on a number of topics at this meeting including technology transfer, scientific and technical cooperation, access and benefit sharing, impact assessment, protected areas and incentive measures.

Finally, Madam Chair, we wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Executive Secretary on his new post and thank him for his strong leadership, and his efforts to date to more fully integrate all stakeholders in the CBD process. While the CBD is a governmental forum in which both leadership and decision-making must remain the exclusive province of governments, we believe that increased opportunities for meaningful and transparent input by relevant stakeholders and dialogue among all participants will improve our chances of achieving our collective goals concerning the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.