



**International Chamber of Commerce**

*The world business organization*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **ICC steps up business engagement in COP-9 biodiversity negotiations**

Bonn, 19 May 2008

As the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) opens here today, world business is committed to help create an international framework, supple enough to safeguard biodiversity and promote its sustainable use, the International Chamber of Commerce said.

“Business has the skills, the expertise, and the technological resources to help promote the goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity,” said ICC Secretary General Guy Sebban. “The Convention covers a range of issues which potentially have an impact on different business sectors and these are becoming increasingly engaged in the various areas under discussion.”

The world business organization will have a highly visible and active presence at the meeting with a large delegation of companies and associations from a broad cross-section of commercial activities. More than 200 business representatives will be involved in the discussions during COP-9. ICC will also host two side events for delegates to exchange experiences and best practices.

At COP-9, negotiations will enter a critical stage for the creation of an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefits sharing. The agreement must be concluded before the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties in mid-2010.

The ICC delegation will advocate the need for a flexible international framework to accommodate the many different ways in which various industries work with genetic resources, sectors ranging from cosmetics to enzymes and fermentation, specialty chemicals and biotechnology, flavours and fragrances, pharmaceuticals, and plant breeding.

The first ICC side event, held jointly with the Access and Benefit Sharing Alliance (ABSA) and the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO) on 21 May, will focus on capacity building and technology transfer aspects of access and benefit sharing arrangements through a case study in Malaysia.

As discussions at COP-9 will take place amidst global concern about the pressing need to address the increasing demand for food by a growing world population, issues revolving around sustainable agriculture will also come to the fore in Bonn.

ICC will host a second side event on integrating conservation of biodiversity into agriculture production, coinciding with the celebration of International Biodiversity Day on 22 May. Panelists and speakers at the event will provide a multi-dimensional view of the ways business contributes to biodiversity, from plant breeders to small-scale farmers and multinational food producers.

The ICC delegation will have an exhibit showcasing new technologies used by industry organizations and companies to promote sustainable agriculture.

The delegates at COP-9 will also discuss how the private sector contributes to improving agricultural output while integrating biodiversity conservation into its activities. Representatives will talk about the urgent need for a greater dispersion worldwide of agricultural technologies from pest management to irrigation, and of integrated crop management, from maintaining natural habitats to establishing field margins.

ICC is the main representative body for world business at COP-9. Through its CBD and Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Task Forces, ICC has been contributing to the CBD negotiations since they started.

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**About ICC**

The International Chamber of Commerce is the largest, most representative business organization in the world. Its hundreds of thousands of member companies in over 130 countries have interests spanning every sector of private enterprise.

A world network of national committees keeps the ICC International Secretariat in Paris informed about national and regional business priorities. More than 2,000 experts drawn from ICC's member companies feed their knowledge and experience into crafting the ICC stance on specific business issues.

The United Nations, the World Trade Organization, and many other intergovernmental bodies, both international and regional, are kept in touch with the views of international business through ICC.

For more information, please visit: [www.iccwbo.org](http://www.iccwbo.org)