

PRESS RELEASE

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WINNERS OF BIODIVERSITY AWARDS REVEALED

MADRID – Companies in the food sector, leading and pioneering efforts to promote conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, were honoured with Biodiversity Awards on Tuesday 16 November. The Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) and United Business Media (UBM) revealed the winners at a ceremony held at the Health Ingredients trade fair in Madrid, hosted by health expert and nutritionist Amanda Hamilton.

Coop, the largest retail group in Switzerland was recognized in the Leadership category for its commitment to regional produce, rare species and its support to organic farmers. The jury also commended Coop's creative public awareness campaigns to bring biodiversity closer to the consumer. **Unilever**, a company known for its numerous global food brands, was recognized in the innovation category for its Allanblackia project, working with rural producers and local biodiversity in Africa in the development of this new vegetable oil. The jury commended Unilever's commitment to small scale farming systems and its partnership with environmental NGOs.

Speaking at the awards ceremony, Christian Waffenschmidt, Head of Sustainability Brands of Coop said *«We are very grateful to UEBT and UBM for recognizing our commitment and honouring us with the Biodiversity Award. For us, this award is a confirmation that we are on the right path. And it is also a stimulus to even further increase our commitment with regard to sustainability.»*

Maha Misbah, Senior Project Leader, Supply Chain Innovation for Unilever also said: *“We are delighted to receive this award. Monday, Unilever unveiled its Sustainable Living Plan” in which we set our goals for sustainable sourcing, reducing environmental impact and enhancing livelihoods. The Allanblackia project is a great example of how we will reach these goals.”*

The Biodiversity Awards, a joint venture between UEBT and UBM, recognize the focus on sustainability issues in the International Year of Biodiversity 2010 and the important role of business in realizing international objectives on biodiversity. Rik Kutsch Lojenga, Executive Director of UEBT, called the Biodiversity Awards *“a real success.”* He noted that the Biodiversity Awards *“not only convoked many interesting initiatives in the sector, but also provided the opportunity to reward ones that we feel are truly groundbreaking and showing the potential of business engagement in biodiversity.”*

At the awards ceremony, honourable mentions were also awarded. In the leadership category a mention was awarded to **Marks & Spencer**, one of the leading retailers in the UK, for its company-wide programmes addressing biodiversity, and partnerships such as its collaboration with WWF. The other honorable mention in the leadership category was awarded to **Lotus Foods**, a U.S. company working to bring ancient rice varieties to the market, giving farmers a reason to use and protect such varieties. In the innovation category, an honorable mention was awarded to **EcoFlora**, a Colombian company that has developed a natural blue colorant based on local biodiversity and Ethical BioTrade principles.

The panel of judges for the 2010 Biodiversity Awards included Amarjit Sahota of Organic Monitor, Cyril Lombard of PhytoTrade Africa, Francis Vorhies of Earthmind, and Katie Bird of Decision News Media. Mr. Sahota, speaking on behalf of the jury, noted the growing commitment to biodiversity in the food sector: *“With the International Year of Biodiversity, we seem to have reached the turning point on business and biodiversity, which is now becoming an actual consideration for both companies and consumers.”*

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The Union for Ethical BioTrade is a non-profit association that promotes the ‘Sourcing with Respect’ of ingredients that come from native biodiversity. Members commit to gradually ensuring that their sourcing practices promote the conservation of biodiversity, respect traditional knowledge, and assure the equitable sharing of benefits all along the supply chain.

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