

## **Global Roche Statement on Biodiversity:**

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Roche recognizes that the issue of biodiversity and traditional knowledge is of growing importance, particularly for developing countries. The nations have sovereignty over the biological resources and indigenous knowledge within their boundaries. Moreover, unauthorized or unrestrained removal of natural materials from their indigenous habitats can harm the ecology and economy of the country concerned. Therefore, Roche supports the principles of resource stewardship as broadly enunciated in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Roche at present avoids the use of natural resource materials as a source for existing products or as a source for the discovery and development of pharmaceuticals. Roche's drug discovery efforts focus on innovative technologies such as molecular biology and genetic engineering, genomics, proteomics and bioinformatics, but also high-throughput screening of synthetic chemical compounds and chemical compounds obtained by combinatorial chemistry.

In the event of Roche discovering or developing a commercial product derived from natural resource material or from plant, microbial or animal genetic resources, the company is committed to ethical and legal access to the resources as well as to fair and appropriate recognition of rights-holders to biodiversity resources and traditional knowledge.

### **Background**

The protection and utilization of natural resources are increasingly discussed in particular as they relate to intellectual property rights and ethics. These debates concern the right to obtain patents, access to genetic resources, compensation and benefit sharing agreements, local and regional social and economic development schemes, preservation of cultural heritage, and the rights of indigenous peoples to their resources and traditions. For many countries, sustainable development of natural resources, the protection of traditional knowledge, and related potential economic development are significant issues due to concerns about alleged unfair exploitation of their resources, on one hand, and a keen interest in the sustainable economic development of their environment, on the other hand.

**Biological diversity** - or biodiversity - is often understood in terms of the wide variety of plants, animals and microorganisms from all sources. To date, around 1.75 million species have been identified but scientists believe that there is actually many times this number. Biodiversity also includes genetic differences within each species, for example, between varieties of crops and breeds of livestock. The concept of 'biodiversity conservation' is similar to that of 'nature conservation' as it places specific emphasis on threatened habitats and species. It also implies that social, cultural and economic values are important in conservation planning.

The **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**, part of the United Nations Environment programme (UNEP) and agreed to by most world leaders at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 sets out commitments for maintaining the world's

ecological systems. The CBD establishes three main goals: (1) the conservation of biological diversity, (2) the sustainable use of its components and (3) the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources. Its definition of 'biological resources' includes genetic resources, organisms or parts thereof or any other biotic component of ecosystems with actual or potential use or value for humanity. The CBD recognizes **patent rights** on products derived from natural materials and the role they can play in support of the broad principles of the CBD. The Convention does not cover human genetic resources.

**Conclusion:** Roche takes seriously its responsibilities toward protecting biodiversity, respecting nature, and working with the rights holders of natural resource materials. If natural resources are utilized, by our adhering to the broad principles espoused in the CBD, we will support sustainable biological resource development.