

PRESS RELEASE

Dialogue and paradigm shifts – SusCon is on the way to becoming main event for sustainable business

Successful rite of passage for dialogue platform between business, science and civil society - Djoghla (CBD) verifies top marks – Business & biodiversity community appreciate personal nature of encounters

Munich, 18th June 2010. SusCon 2010 underwent a successful rite of passage. Approximately 270 participants from 26 nations were guests at the CCN CongressCentre Nürnberg from 15th to 16th June. For two days, experts and decision-makers from business, science, politics and civil society dealt with the topic of 'business & biodiversity' in constructive dialogues. In an exceptionally personal working atmosphere, characterised by a high-level of commitment demonstrated by the organisers, it was clear that actions should follow words. After the first SusCon was launched as a pre-event at the BioFach last year, initiators Bernward Geier, Udo Censkowsky and Fritz Lietsch established the conference on its own this year. It received best marks personally from Dr. Ahmed Djoghla, Executive Secretary Convention on Biological diversity (CBD). The top biodiversity expert at CBD alluded to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland and declared that SusCon, with its innovative concept, has the potential to be a 'new Davos'. "We need a wake up call and dialogue at all levels".

The initiators could not have received a bigger compliment, according to them. The current feedback from the business community shows that they are heading in the right direction. "Of course, there is room for improvement", sums up organiser Udo Censkowsky from Organic Services. "We are happy that mid-sized companies such as Delinat, Weleda, Bionorica, Primavera, Lavera, Neumarkter Lammsbräu, Symbioprint and also enterprises such as Volkswagen, Danone, Hypovereinsbank- Unicredit Group, Rewe, Unilever, Puma, Kraft Foods, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Telekom took advantage of our offer and are open for more suggestions anytime".

SusCon is planning round three on the 28th/29th June 2011. "The objective until then should be to increase the amount of participating companies (2010: 34% without consultants/service providers), to motivate a broader range of companies from different sectors as well as to integrate regional companies more intensively," explains Fritz Lietsch, as second organiser of the group. Before the summer break, the central theme of SusCon 2011 will be defined.

Biodiversity is what climate change was five years ago

A great number of interested companies as well as potential sponsors want to first wait and see how the topic develops and if it actually becomes part of daily life in business, adds the organising trio. "Both will happen", projects Rik Kutsch Lojenga, Executive Director Union for Ethical Biotrade.

According to a survey conducted with the marketing research institute IPSOS, which was presented at SusCon 2010, the worldwide awareness of biodiversity has increased on both the consumer and business sides, in particular in Germany in the last twelve months. With the exception of Brazil as the 'biodiversity champion', companies worldwide have assessed the topic in the same way we were assessing climate change five years ago. "Managers who want to be sufficiently prepared, would do well to deal urgently with this subject" recommends Lojenga.

Edgar Endrukaitis, Coordinator of the Business and Biodiversity Initiative, 'Biodiversity in Good Company' completely agrees with him. "With the new *Corporate Biodiversity Management Manual*, developed in conjunction with Prof. Dr Schaltegger from the Centre for Sustainability Management (CSM) at Leuphana University in Lüneburg, we want to give companies suggestions on how to integrate biodiversity into corporate procedures", explain the experts from the Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), who coordinate the initiative for the Federal Environment Ministry. The EU Business and Biodiversity Campaign depend on concrete support from companies. This campaign will approach companies in fall of 2010 with biodiversity checks and industry-specific workshops.

Standing Ovation for UN Messenger of Peace and Activist Jane Goodall

Jane Goodall unleashed enthusiasm with her opening speech on the second day of the conference. She described the procedures of international companies that got rich off of the resources of the planet and destroyed valuable environments for man, animal and plant. At the same time, the 76-year-old denounced the worldwide decadent behaviour and consumption patterns that companies continue to fuel with their actions. She herself cannot to this day understand how the most intellectual species on the planet manages to destroy its own foundation for existence. Mass consumption and poverty are two sides of one coin for her, and she referred to the increasing number of environmental refugees. "Africa is a tragic continent, suffering from a form of neo-colonialism", says the environmentalist. She sees hope especially in our children. Therefore, with her worldwide project Roots & Shoots, she wants to contribute to teaching the next generation about critical thinking and the true value of life.

Lack of sustainability strategies, greenwashing and debate on values

A recurring theme throughout the conference was the critical discussion about the lack of sustainability strategies and greenwashing in the face of the oil catastrophe in the Gulf of Mexico. In order to make the subject "values" and the aspect "man in harmony with nature" clear, the organisers deliberately chose a counterpoint to the heavily intellectual discussion. "Integrating the artistic presentations of painter and installation artist Dao Droste in conjunction with Aromatao, the glass musician Sascha Reckert and the

photography of the Wild Wonders of Europe, we want to illustrate that the road to change goes through the return to nature and therefore to ourselves” explains SusCon organiser Bernward Geier. “In particular Droste’s large format pictures in ‘Open Mindedness’ stand for the attitude that we need to have in the debate on sustainable economics” Udo Censkowsky comes to the point. There can only be solutions for a planet with seven billion people if we learn to respect the treasures of nature, to accept them with humility and gratitude and enter into deferential dialogue with one another. Here, the three organisers are in agreement.

SusCon 2010

This year the second International Conference on Sustainable Business and Consumption took place in Nuremberg at the Nuremberg Trade Fair. From 15-16 June, businesses, NGOs and policy makers exchanged information about biodiversity in particular. The focus was on new business models such as social business, certifications, as well as concrete activities to preserve biodiversity. Supporters include IUCN, FAO, IFOAM, Rainforest Alliance, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), cscp, Deutsche Umwelthilfe, Soil & More, as well as the Business & Biodiversity Initiative. Sponsors included Unilever, REWE Group, Neumarkter Lammsbräu as well as DEG/ KfW Banking Group. At the first event in 2009, prior to the international BioFach, The World Organic Trade Fair, around 200 people participated from the business and NGO sectors. For more information, go to www.suscon.net.

Press Contact:

Carla Kleinjohann, Communication & Sustainable Development Agency
T: +49 (0) 89 – 21 11 25 30, Mobil +49 (0) 171- 731 25 93, ck@carla-kleinjohann.com

More Information

Udo Censkowsky, Organic Services: +49 (0)89-82075902, u.censkowsky@organic-services.com
Bernward Geier, COLABORA: +49 (0)2245-618652, b.geier@colabora-together.de
Fritz Lietsch, ECO-World, +49 (0)89-7466111, f.lietsch@eco-world.de

