

## **Welcome Note**

Prof. Werner Wahmhoff (DBU)

BIOREFINICA 2009 – International Symposium on Biobased Products and Biorefineries, 27 January 2009

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased about this opportunity to welcome you on behalf of the German Federal Environmental Foundation, named DBU. After 2004 and 2006 it is the third time, that we proceed the International Symposium Biobased Products and Biorefineries here in Osnabrück. This year, roughly 30 % of the participants come from abroad. Due to this fact I would like to introduce first the foundation itself:

**The German Federal Environmental Foundation** (Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt, DBU) is a private foundation with a total capital of € 1.8 billion, and in these terms the world's largest environmental foundation.

Our promotional work follows the concept of **sustainable development**, committed at the Rio Conference in 1992. Our support concentrates on highly innovative model projects which promise environmental benefit, especially in the field of preventive environmental protection and cleaner production

We particularly encourage cooperation projects between small and medium-sized enterprises and research institutions. We support in four areas: environmental technology, environmental communication, environmental research and nature protection. Information about the current focus is available in our guidelines, and of course, my colleagues are ready to answer all your questions.

Since 1991 we promoted roughly 7,100 projects with a total amount of financial backing of € 1.4 billion, on average around €50 million per year in the recent past. .

Chemistry is of special interest, due to its dominating role for our economy and ecology. The idea of **Green or Sustainable Chemistry** can contribute to achieving sustainability in two key areas. First, polluting technologies and products must be replaced by benign, safe and inherent alternatives. Second: the resources used by the chemical industry must increasingly be obtained from renewable sources.

Today, roughly 10 % of our resources in chemical industry are biobased. Within the next decade, experts assume that 20 % of all chemical processes are biobased or biotechnological influenced. One possibility towards a more sustainable economy are biorefineries and biobased products.

The Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt DBU supports projects within this field. According to our current guidelines, we can support

- in the field of white biotechnology,
- the field of sustainable chemistry, and/or
- the field of renewable materials.

Besides, we support a large number of symposia, congresses and workshops. In order to enhance a broader communication of project results the DBU decided to establish the **Centre for Environmental Communication** (Zentrum für Umweltkommunikation, ZUK), starting its work 5 years ago. And so we are happy to have the opportunity to welcome you here today, on the premises of this **centre** and to arrange this symposium with you.

Guiding theme of the event is the conversion of biomass for the chemical industry. I would like to highlight three points:

1. We should especially consider the use of nonfood material. It is assumed, that residual material, e.g. straw, could be a continuous source, quite independent from changes on the global market.
2. Renewable materials are different from fossil raw materials. The high functionalising degree

of renewables necessitates new processing strategies.

3. One additional topic in the focus of attention is the evaluation and balancing of sustainability. On basis of such a balancing, different source and conversion procedures are compared and assessed.

Let me thank the organizing committee and scientific board and our partners DECHEMA, Gesellschaft Deutscher Chemiker, Verband der Chemischen Industrie and BIOPOS and last but not least my colleagues from DBU and ZUK for preparing the conference. I wish you interesting lectures on high scientific level and fruitful discussions during the next two days

Thank you for your attention.