

WCC-2020-Res-135-EN

Promoting human, animal and environmental health, and preventing pandemics through the One Health approach and by addressing the drivers of biodiversity loss

CONSIDERING that pandemics prevention – a cross-border emergency once again highlighted by the COVID-19 crisis – calls for an urgent, multilateral and ambitious mobilisation, involving all actors concerned;

NOTING Resolution 3.011 *Addressing the linkages between conservation, human and animal health, and security* (Bangkok, 2004);

NOTING the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) workshop report on biodiversity and pandemics and RECOGNISING the growing body of literature addressing the linkages between biodiversity loss and its drivers and pandemics and notably its finding that pandemic risk can be significantly reduced by addressing the main causes and drivers of biodiversity loss;

NOTING that, despite growing awareness of the importance of the One Health approach, the international community's action has not been able to stem the rapid loss of biodiversity or prevent the COVID-19 pandemic – which has far-reaching impact for human health, ecosystems and economies – or other sanitary crises related to infectious diseases or antimicrobial resistance;

BELIEVING that the One Health approach, involving human health, animal well-being (both domestic and wildlife), and plant and ecosystem health, will at the same time guarantee better human and animal health, contribute to preventing pandemics, and tackle the biodiversity crisis in the context of climate change;

NOTING that human health is defined as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (World Health Organization – WHO) and that ecosystem conservation is a prerequisite of this;

FURTHER NOTING the guidance produced by WHO, the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on *Reducing public health risks associated with the sale of live wild animals of mammalian species in traditional food markets*;

WELCOMING the Rome Declaration and the launch of the One Health High-Level Expert Panel (OHHLEP) by the Tripartite Plus aiming at enhancing scientific information on the links between human, animal and environmental health, for better public decision making to prevent and respond to future sanitary crises, and to inform the public;

NOTING WITH APPRECIATION the growing number of initiatives and discussions on the One Health approach aiming at preventing risks of zoonotic emergences and pandemics by combining research, operational action and participatory approaches involving communities, e.g. the PREventing ZOonotic Disease Emergence (PREZODE) international initiative, the G20 Declaration (September 2021), ZODIAC, the International Alliance against Health Risks in Wildlife Trade;

NOTING the recognition by the Species Survival Commission (SSC) Wildlife Health Specialist Group that ‘the integral connections between human, animal and environmental health require a coordinated One Health approach to help protect the health and survival of wild populations’;

NOTING that the wildlife trade – including all parts of the trade chain, from source to destination – as well as land-use change, agricultural expansion and intensification, and wildlife consumption play an important role in the spillover and transmission of zoonotic diseases which undermine human, animal (both domestic and wildlife) and ecosystem health; and

EMPHASISING that the economic cost of preventing and reducing pandemic risks is estimated to be one hundred times lower than the cost of facing such crises;

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020, at its session in Marseille, France:

1. CALLS on Members and INVITES relevant United Nations (UN) and other international bodies to promote that national, regional and global policies, plans, approaches and potential future instruments and mechanisms not only improve preparedness and response but prioritise the need to prevent future pandemics arising from zoonoses by addressing the drivers of biodiversity decline;
2. URGES Members to promote urgent action on an ambitious One Health approach in key international events and processes, notably in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework at the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), at the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the upcoming discussions on a potential international treaty on pandemics;
3. INVITES Members to consider future OHHLEP recommendations as appropriate, e.g. through strategies and action plans for biodiversity and health;
4. CALLS ON Members to take a One Health approach so that wildlife trade does not pose a significant risk to ecosystems, human or animal health;
5. URGES Members to introduce and/or strengthen measures to reduce the potential of pathogen spillover in human-animal interactions (both domestic and wildlife) especially with species and human activities in ecosystems considered as higher-risk according to the latest scientific findings;
6. CALLS on Members and INVITES other governments and relevant stakeholders to urgently address the drivers (according to the latest science) causing significant risk of pathogen spillover, where relevant, including in: i) land-use change causing habitat fragmentation and degradation, ii) agricultural expansion and intensification, (iii) unsanitary and other food production systems and practices that increase the risk of pathogen spillover, and iv) unsafe wildlife trade and consumption; and
7. URGES Members and stakeholders involved in human, animal and ecosystem health to:
 - a. develop pathogen spillover prevention strategies that include reversing ecosystem loss and degradation and the recovery of ecosystem functions;
 - b. where appropriate, develop and further strengthen One Health networks dedicated to the health of humans, domestic and farm animals, wild fauna and flora and ecosystems, i.e. initiatives that holistically address direct and indirect drivers of pathogen spillovers and further enhance participation of communities, the private sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in such networks;
 - c. enhance participation of communities, the private sector and NGOs in such networks, notably in vulnerable countries located in the inter-tropical area;
 - d. promote sustainable and safe food production systems and practices to reduce risk of pathogen spillover;
 - e. further develop and strengthen existing bio-safety and bio-security measures related to domestic and wild animal management;
 - f. develop and strengthen relevant impact assessment procedures, as appropriate, to include the study of both potential pathogen spillovers and measures available to prevent spillovers;
 - g. further enhance efforts to stem the illegal trade in wildlife;
 - h. strengthen synergies among all components of One Health at all levels through training, interoperable monitoring systems, data sharing and scientific cooperation, between and during crises;

i. foster scientific research on the links between biodiversity loss and pathogen spillover and ecosystem health, animal well-being (both domestic and wildlife) and human health;

j. improve technological capacities to monitor and prevent pathogen spillover, outbreaks of zoonotic diseases and antimicrobial resistance; and

k. strengthen awareness raising and education on the interconnectivity of life forms, habitats and human activities underlying pathogen spillover events, and foster understanding of the impact and contribution of individual and collective human behaviour in order to avoid such events.