



Statement by

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On World Health Day this year, we call for “health for all”.

A healthy environment is fundamental to making this a reality.

Our environment, and its biodiversity, provide goods and services that are essential to peoples physical and mental health. These include sources of food, medicines, fuel, livelihoods, and cultural enrichment. Biodiversity contributes to clean water and air, regulates pests and diseases, and mitigates the devastating impacts of climate change and natural disasters.

However, with biodiversity currently in crisis, our health is undeniably following suit.

Many of the main drivers of biodiversity loss are also causing ill-health: these include climate change, pollution, and invasive alien species as well as deforestation and ecosystem degradation which increase the risk of disease emergence. In fact, more than 70% per cent of emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic. The connection is clear.

The recently adopted Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework acknowledges this connection. It encourages a “One Health” approach to optimize the health of people, animals, plants, and ecosystems. The Framework also recognizes the need for equitable access to tools and technologies including medicines, vaccines and other health products related to biodiversity. And it highlights the urgent need to decrease environmental degradation to reduce health risks.

Several of the 2030 action targets of the Framework address biodiversity and health linkages. Achievement of Target 1 -management of land use change and of Target 5 the sustainable and safe use of wild species would reduce the risk of pathogen spillover. Target 7 aims to reduce negative impacts from pesticides and highly hazardous chemicals. Target 11 calls for the



enhancement of nature's contributions to people, including the regulation of air, water, and diseases, while target 12 focuses on increasing the benefits from urban green and blue spaces.

To reach these targets, transformative change is needed. We must urgently mainstream nature's contributions to people into national policies and strategies, including biodiversity and health strategies and action plans. "Health for all" can move from concept to reality, but only when our planet is healthy, will our people truly be healthy as well.
