

Biodiversity and Health priorities for CBD COP16

For more information, contact Christine Franklin, Intergovernmental Policy Officer (cfranklin@wcs.org) and Sue Lieberman, Vice President of International Policy (slieberman@wcs.org)

Policy recommendations for Agenda Item 22: “Biodiversity and health”

The global biodiversity loss and climate change crises, and the threats to human and animal health from epidemics and pandemics of zoonotic origin, pollution, and more are all intricately interconnected and result from, or are exacerbated by, global and local losses in ecological integrity. WCS, therefore, welcomes discussion under this agenda item and urges Parties to adopt a strong and concrete Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health (hereafter “Action Plan”) at CoP16.

Regarding the Action Plan, WCS provided scientific and technical comments during the peer review process and is pleased to see its development thus far. We strongly recommend that any remaining brackets be removed and the Action Plan be adopted without further delay. However, if the Action Plan is reopened for further negotiation, we recommend the following edits to help strengthen some of the actions listed under “Land and sea use (Targets 1, 2 and 3)” and “Species management (Targets 4, 5 and 9).”

In column 3 of the **Land and sea use** section of the table:

- **Amend** paragraph 1, to include priority for ecological integrity, as follows: “*Encourage efforts to consider biodiversity and health interlinkages in land- and sea-use planning and policies, plans and actions for conservation and restoration, with particular priority for ecological integrity,*”

In column 2 of the **Species management** section of the table:

- **Retain (remove brackets around)** the text “Infectious disease emergence can be reduced by preserving wild species that work as reservoirs for viruses, and by reducing unsafe contact between humans, their livestock and wildlife.”

In column 3 of the **Species management** section of the table:

- **Amend** paragraph 3, sub-paragraph (e), as follows: “*Including policies and actions aimed at limiting pathogen spillover and spillback in wildlife use and management programmes and activities, such as including the closure or tight regulation of commercial wildlife farming and commercialization large commercial markets for live wildlife (particularly birds and mammals).*”
- **Amend** paragraph 4, as follows: “*Strengthen, when possible and in accordance with national capabilities, the capacity to understand and manage human-mediated factors with high potential to drive the transmission of zoonotic diseases, such as unregulated and unsustainable consumption of wild meat use and trade of wild species.*”

Regarding the draft decision on biodiversity and health, we recommend the following:

- **Retain (remove brackets around)** operative paragraphs 1, 3 sub-paragraph (a), 4, 7 and 9.
- **Retain (remove brackets around)** the text at the end of preambular paragraph 11: “*...[as well as the current negotiations held at the World Health Organization on a new pandemic agreement, especially in terms of the potential risks of zoonotic diseases*

spilling over from wildlife,]”. There are dedicated articles on prevention and One Health in the Proposal for the WHO Pandemic Agreement. While the legal text may vary slightly, there is a clear recognition of the importance of the prevention of infectious disease transmission between animals and humans; the range of environmental, climatic, social, anthropogenic and economic factors that increase the risk of pandemics; and the need to take measures to identify and address the drivers of pandemics at the human-animal-environment interface. It is imperative that this ongoing process not impact the adoption of the Action Plan at COP16. The Action Plan and pandemic agreement negotiations are not mutually exclusive or dependent.

- **Retain** (remove brackets around) or **amend** the text in operative paragraph 3 subparagraph (b) that encourages Parties to “*designate a national focal point on biodiversity and health.*” We recognize that in many cases Parties may not wish to designate a new focal point but rather find other modalities to increase cooperation and coordination on biodiversity and health among relevant ministries, departments and other government agencies; thus, we are open to textual proposals that encourage Parties to establish the structures and/or arrangements best suited to them for effective coordination on biodiversity and health issues across sectors.

WCS-organized side events- all events located in the Blue Zone (badge required)

Date/Time	
23-October (5:45-7:15pm)	Adopting the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health: Stakeholders’ perspectives on its benefits for nature and people Location: IUCN Pavilion, Plaza 1
31-October (10:10-11:30am)	High-level dialogue: Mainstreaming biodiversity within and across sectors to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 Location: Nuqui - Academia & Research, Plaza 1
31-October (3:00-4:20pm)	Prioritizing biodiversity and health actions at all levels Location: Mavecure - Business and Industry Organizations, Plaza 1

Other biodiversity and health side events- all events located in the Blue Zone (badge required)

Date/Time	
23-October (1:30-2:30pm)	Evolving solutions to evolving challenges – the Global Wildlife Program experience Location: GEF Partnership Pavilion, Plaza 2 WCS speaker: Chris Walzer (TBC)
24-October (1:30-2:45pm)	Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health, mainstreaming and connecting across sectors - organized by SCBD, UNEP, WHO Location: KMGBF Pavilion, Plaza 1 WCS speaker: Sue Lieberman
30-October (1:15-2:45pm)	Nature-based solutions for health: Implementing the One Health approach between conservation and health organizations Location: IUCN Pavilion, Plaza 1 WCS speaker: Chris Walzer