

Uganda Statement for the special virtual sessions of SBSTTA-24 and SBI-03 on Biodiversity, One Health and Responses to COVID-19, 15-16 December 2020

Thank you Co-Chairs,

Uganda joins South Africa speaking for Africa, and appreciates the studies done under the Convention regarding health and biodiversity, including recent activities undertaken by the Secretariat in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic which has ravaged the world and caused many fatalities.

Indeed, pandemics and new emerging diseases negatively influence global and national socioeconomic, political and health policies and interventions.

We need a healthy Earth in order to have a healthy human being. Hence, we recognize the linkages between biodiversity and human health, and the need for multi-sectoral and holistic approaches to address the common drivers of biodiversity loss, disease risk and ill-health.

Uganda acknowledges the One Health concept that addresses health, livelihood and food security concerns, and the interface with ecosystems, including wildlife. We are convinced that this concept provides the necessary impetus to balance the three objectives of the CBD, especially for developing economies like Uganda that are highly dependent on Nature and to address the interface between biodiversity and human beings.

Hence, Uganda expects to see a Post2020 Biodiversity Framework that prioritises human health than ever before.

*Questions in CBD/SBSTTA-SBI-SS/2/2;*

- 1. How can the Convention on Biological Diversity further contribute to an inclusive, transdisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach to One Health that reflects the full range of biodiversity-health linkages?*
- 2. How can the Convention on Biological Diversity contribute to ensuring that responses to COVID-19, including both short-term stimulus measures and longer-term approaches to 'build back better', contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, bearing in mind that such stimulus and recovery measures are already being designed and implemented?*

The first two questions can be handled as one; and responses relate to the following;

- The dependence on biodiversity and its services has resulted in unprecedented interactions between human beings and biodiversity and consequently the risk of transmission of diseases from animals to human beings. It has been demonstrated through research that wildlife health is a fundamental indicator of the health of the planet, its ecosystems, and its

ability to provide services. Hence, it is important for a globalized effort to detect, respond and manage pandemics and other diseases in a timely manner and to mainstream biodiversity into the public health sector, matched with the requisite resources and effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

- The Programme of Work on Biodiversity and Human Health should be enhanced, in order to tackle the main drivers of diseases, and to respond to trends in a timely manner.
- Restoration of biodiverse ecosystems contributes to limiting the emergence and spread of infectious diseases by boosting the ability of ecosystems to provide products and services such as, medicines, food and nutrition security to support healthy communities.
- Legal trade in wildlife species should be safe to ensure sustainability of biodiversity and to stop spread of infectious diseases.
- Effective valuation of biodiversity and value-addition should be undertaken by parties, to enable biodiversity to play its meaningful role in socio-economic development, for instance, from use of traditional medicines and pharmaceutical products.
- We should take meaningful measures to enhance conservation and sustainable use of target species that contribute to human health and wellbeing.
- Covid-19 Pandemic has shown that tourist revenue is not sustainable. Accordingly, conservation requires deliberate financing, aside from reliance on tourist revenue. Hence, adequate financial resources for biodiversity need to be part of the Post2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
- Recovery plans for the biodiversity sector need to be prioritized in the economic stimulus packages of countries and need to be incorporated into monitoring plans, including aspects related to;
  - livelihood enhancement and human wellbeing,
  - strengthened enabling laws, policies and other administrative measures at country level,
  - mobilizing more resources nationally and internationally, and
  - managing land-use effectively.

3. *How should the interlinkages between biodiversity, health and pandemic risk be reflected in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework?*

Taking into account the results of the IPBES study on the pathogen reserves, we request that more information be provided on the regional distribution of those reserves and solutions to potential risks. Nevertheless, our brief responses are below;

- Current draft targets 4, 8, 10, 13, 14 and 15 of the Post-2020 Framework provide the necessary linkages and can only be refined in this regard.
- Parties should be strengthened to implement targets that support the One Health Concept to control and/or eradicate infectious diseases.
- The continued loss of biodiversity increases the interaction between human beings to wildlife. Hence, there is a need to focus on restoration of habitats, including by enrichment

planting with indigenous species and re-stocking, in line with the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration.

- We need to step up policy dialogues and public engagements on human health and biodiversity linkages, and enhance social justice.