

**CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
SPECIAL VIRTUAL SESSION FOR SBSTTA 24 AND SBI 3 ON
BIODIVERSITY, ONE HEALTH AND COVID-19**

STATEMENT BY

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Madam Chair

Ladies and gentlemen

Malaysia would like to thank the CBD Secretariat for organizing the special virtual session for SBSTTA-24 and SBI-3 on Biodiversity, One Health and COVID-19. Given how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected our lives, this session is timely to underline the importance of biodiversity and highlight its inextricable link to human health.

Malaysia through the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) launched the Wildlife Disease Surveillance Programme (WDSP) in 2011 to monitor and conduct the surveillance for wildlife diseases at high-risk interfaces between wildlife, domestic animals and humans in Peninsular Malaysia. Throughout 2011 to 2020, approximately 22,000 samples were collected from about 1,900 individuals consist of more than 100 wildlife species. 12 novel viruses were discovered (including 4 new coronaviruses found in bats and rats) and 10 known viruses. At present, these novel viruses do not pose any risk to human health, but a complete epidemiology study will be needed to confirm this.

In addition, under the One Health framework, the links between the human, domestic animal, and wildlife health sectors are coordinated through the Inter-Ministerial Committee on the Control of Zoonotic Diseases, co-chaired by the Ministry of Health (MoH) and Department of Veterinary Services (DVS) (under the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries) in which DWNP and other relevant ministries are invited as members including the Malaysian One Health University Network (MyOHUN). Internationally, collaborative research work is being carried out with EcoHealth Alliance (EHA) on the PREDICT project since 2010. The project looks into the study of zoonotic infections among persons and livestock exposed to wildlife and zoonotic disease surveillance in wildlife.

Madam Chair,

None of the aforementioned diseases are of the same magnitude and severity of COVID-19. This unprecedented virus has caused many uncertainties in our daily lives. Malaysia firmly believes that such a big challenge must be met by an even bigger drive for transformative change especially in mainstreaming biodiversity into health. We welcome specialized programs, funding and technology transfer to improve upon our current ability.

The Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework must find the balance in ambition and ability to meet the set targets. In addition, it is equally crucial that the interlinkages between biodiversity, health and zoonotic diseases are incorporated. Malaysia will continue to work with stakeholders in the health sector to make this a reality.

Thank you, Madam Chair.