

Thank you, Chair.

We (too) extend our condolences to the millions of people around the globe who have become ill or lost a loved one to COVID-19. We are grateful to the CBD Secretariat for organizing this meeting and for the opportunity to briefly comment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had many devastating consequences and has forced the world to take stock and ask hard questions about how we got here and what we can do to prevent another global disease outbreak.

While the exact source of the virus remains uncertain, scientists agree that just like HIV, Ebola, SARS, Bird Flu, and MERS, COVID-19 is zoonotic: it jumped from animals to people, likely as a result of our increasing interface and interaction with wildlife.

Re-orienting our relationship with nature and investing in biodiversity should be at the heart of government recovery plans in order to significantly reduce the risk of future pandemics and avoid similar or greater human, economic, and environmental harm.

We must adopt a precautionary use of nature approach to policy-making, which should include:

1. Ending deforestation by stopping illegal logging and other forms of destructive encroachment and focusing on the restoration of forests and natural ecosystems to enhance the livelihoods of people living in or depending on natural landscapes, and
2. Recognizing and securing indigenous peoples rights to land, territories and resources, as key to any effort to stem biodiversity loss and address the climate crisis.
3. Eliminating all illegal wildlife trade and put an expeditious end to legal commercial wildlife trade and commercial wildlife farming where it cannot be guaranteed it won't be a risk to human health or biodiversity, excluding for safe and sustainable subsistence purposes.
4. Taking aggressive action to address the climate crisis.

Our approach must take into account the need for a just transition and respect the rights and livelihoods of indigenous and other people living in, or depending on, natural landscapes.

To this end, we (join in supporting the recommendation) recommend that CBD work with interested Parties, stakeholders, and observers to craft a suite of precautionary measures based on the Discussion Note for use in stimulus and recovery efforts, and to guide the post-2020 framework discussions, that will ensure a green recovery from COVID-19.