

1 **Special Virtual Session for SBSTTA-24 and SBI-3 on Biodiversity, One Health and**
2 **COVID-19, 15-16 December 2020**
3 **(7-9 Montreal time / 13-15 CET)**

4 **Draft Statement on behalf of the EU and its Member**
5 **States**

6 **Version: 10.12.2020**

7 Distinguished Executive Secretary Mrema,

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9 Distinguished Chairs of SBSTTA and of SBI,

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11 Distinguished Colleagues,

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13 Ladies and gentlemen,

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15 I am honoured to address this virtual session on behalf of the European Union and its Member
16 States.

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18 The EU and its Member States would like to express their deepest compassion with the victims of
19 the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic and social consequences. It is a challenging time for
20 everyone, but we are aware of the particularly harsh impacts on the vulnerable.

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22 We appreciate all efforts to advance the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity
23 framework and recall the urgency to continue this process. We therefore thank the SBSTTA- and SBI-
24 Chairs and the Secretariat for organising this meeting.

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26 Distinguished Co-Chairs and Colleagues,

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28 The risk of pandemics is increasing rapidly around the world. Science tells us that among the
29 underlying causes of pandemics are the same global environmental changes that drive the loss of
30 biodiversity and climate change: human disruptions in ecosystems.

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32 In addition, poaching as well as illegal, poorly regulated and insufficiently controlled trade in wild
33 animals and products increase the risk of pandemics due to a higher chance of zoonotic spill overs.
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35 The COVID-19 pandemic reminds us that human health, biodiversity loss and climate change are
36 interdependent. Biodiversity and climate are crucial for human wellbeing and achieving the
37 Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to tackle this planetary
38 emergency in an integrated way and make the transformative change needed leaving no one behind.
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40 We can reduce the risk of zoonotic infectious diseases and pandemics by several means. We must
41 learn the lessons from the Corona crisis and act accordingly.
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- 43 - Firstly, these lessons must be translated into the overall ambition of the post-2020 global
44 biodiversity framework. We must take the necessary actions to protect, restore and
45 sustainably use our biodiversity. For instance, we need to increase and effectively manage
46 protected areas. We need to effectively tackle the drivers of biodiversity loss and the goals
47 and targets need to reflect the necessary ambition.
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- 49 - Secondly, we should apply the “One Health” approach, encompassing the interconnections
50 between human, animal and environmental health. This should be clearly and explicitly
51 reflected in the post-2020 framework, and incorporated into crosscutting and sectoral
52 strategies and action plans.
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- 54 - Thirdly, we need to ensure that our response to the current health and economic crisis is
55 green and just. We need to recover better and achieve sustainability and resilient societies.
56 Biodiversity, climate and the environment as a whole need to be put at the heart of our
57 COVID-19 recovery strategies. How we decide to stimulate the economy and allocate
58 resources in response to the crisis will either increase the pressure on biodiversity and
59 climate, or reduce it.

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61 The report of the IPBES workshop on biodiversity and pandemics has told us clearly that the cost of
62 pandemic prevention is only a small fraction of the cost of pandemics and their economic and social
63 impacts. Therefore, let us take preventive action.
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65 Distinguished Co-Chairs and Colleagues,
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67 Let me assure you that the European Union and its Members States stand ready to committedly
68 work hard with you to develop and implement an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity

69 framework. A framework which also contributes to reducing the risk of pandemics and supports a
70 nature-positive, resilient economic and social recovery.
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72 Thank you.