

Sri Lanka statement on Biodiversity, One Health and COVID-19 Special Virtual session

15 – 16 December 2020

Mr. chair,

Thanks to the CDB secretariate organizing this timely valuable discussion.

Sri Lanka appreciated the SBSTTA-SBI-SS/2/2 on discussion note for the special virtual session on biodiversity, one health and the response to covid-19. GBO 5, IPBES report and other document provided for the discussion.

Sri Lanka is an island in the Indian Ocean with significant terrestrial, aquatic and marine biodiversity.

Like other countries, Sri Lanka too is faced with climate induced disasters, biodiversity depletion, pollution, etc. The continuation of COVID-19 pandemic has further escalated the impact of these calamities in multifold.

Further, COVID-19 pandemic has led to unprecedented economic challenges including the disruption caused to production industries, agriculture, fisheries, tourism etc.

Biodiversity and human health are closely interlinked and ecosystems consists of a great diversity of organisms to provide the necessary services for life, including food, clean air, the quantity and quality of fresh water, medicines, spiritual and cultural values, climate regulation, pest and disease regulation, and disaster risk reduction, each of which are fundamental for human health, both mental and physical and ecosystem health too.

In Sri Lanka as a result of urbanization, globalization deforestation etc, more people live in close contact with wild and domestic animals. Disruptions in environmental conditions and habitats such as deforestation and intensive farming practices provide new opportunities for diseases to be transmitted from animals and lead to the emergence of newer zoonotic diseases. Environmental Pollution is another factor which promotes zoonotic diseases. Pollution of land and water sources has created new threats to the health of both animals and humans. Therefore, Sri Lanka has taken several actions to implement **one health approach** with all relevant stakeholders in controlling zoonotic diseases.

As a country we have been utilizing the indigenous medicinal knowledge to overcome health issues. It is recognized to uplift the indigenous medicinal knowledge with more scientific and modern approach to benefit for the human and the animal health.

Current Government policy of sri Lanka highlighted the importance of introducing scientific methods to improve sustainable agriculture, animal husbandry and plantation agriculture to achieve maximum financial gains while reducing the impact on the environment. In other way the linear economy in which manufactures produce goods using raw materials and dispose wastes in to environment will be replaced with circular economy in which wastes in one industry can be used as raw material in another this will create eco- industries and pave the way for a green economy.

Further, it is recognized the need to develop the habit of consuming foods with no contamination with harmful chemicals to Building up a community of citizens who are healthy and productive . In order to guarantee the people's right to such food the Sri Lankan agriculture will be promoted to use organic fertilizers. It will be benefitted not only for human health for soil dwelling organisms, pollinators and other species as well.

"The Colombo Declaration on Sustainable Nitrogen Management with an ambition to" **halve Nitrogen waste by 2030**" was launch on Sustainable Nitrogen Management, 'Nitrogen for Life', held in Colombo, Sri Lanka recognizing the relevance of Nitrogen and the need for coordination between different relevant stakeholders. It can bring out multiple benefits, including effective measures in conserving biological diversity.

I am indeed happy to notice that the Colombo Declaration on Sustainable Nitrogen Management is being imbibed by the UN Convention on Biological Diversity acknowledging the communication ease it offers. However, we need more of such collective actions projecting into the future to bring out multiple benefits, including effective measures in conserving Biological Diversity. The government is also looking for possible partnerships to expedite the process of raising public awareness as agreed by the Colombo Declaration."

Finally, I would like to stated that the Sri Lanka is ready to work with hard to develop and implement the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to achieve the said target on living in harmony with nature.

Thank you