

Born Free's statement at the Special Virtual Session for SBSTTA 24 and SBI 3 on Biodiversity, One Health and COVID-19

15 December 2020

Thank you Chair, I am speaking on behalf of the Born Free Foundation.

We believe that the CBD, particularly through the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, has a key role to play in bringing about the transformative changes that are urgently needed to address the persistent ecological and human health crises that we face today. In particular, we commend the CBD's collaborative efforts to address those challenges, and support the development of a global plan of action on biodiversity and health, due to be considered at SBSTTA-24.

However, we note that the post-2020 GBF in its current form does not provide a clear pathway towards the fundamental changes required if we are to genuinely transform our relationship with nature, in order to prevent future pandemics and reverse biodiversity loss.

Monitoring measures to ensure "safe" wildlife harvesting and trade operations will inevitably fall short of keeping people safe, and will, in themselves, do nothing to halt the exploitation of wild animals that has been identified as a major driver of biodiversity loss.

If we are to ensure the future safety of people from zoonotic diseases, as well as reverse species declines, a highly precautionary approach to wildlife trade will be required. Targets must be set which aim to significantly reduce, and ultimately eliminate, non-essential uses of wildlife in all its forms, and ways of measuring sustainability must be established which take into account all uses and pressures on species, and incorporate the potential societal and economic impacts of wildlife use on human and animal health.

The incorporation of the One Health/[One Welfare](#) approaches into the Framework would provide essential pathways for biodiversity mainstreaming. Crucially, animal welfare needs to be a major consideration in any effort to mitigate human health risks arising from human-wildlife interactions. We would like to direct your attention towards the [Animals' Manifesto](#), a joint initiative developed and supported by nearly 170 NGOs, which includes a set of policy proposals to prevent pandemics through the integration of animal welfare and biodiversity protection into COVID-19 recovery and financing policies.

Born Free stands ready to provide more detailed suggestions on how the interlinkages between biodiversity, health and pandemic risk should be reflected in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

Thank you