

**Special Virtual Session for SBSTTA-24 and SBI-3 on Biodiversity, One Health and COVID-19,
15-16 December 2020**

Intervention by FINLAND (14.12)

Distinguished SBSTTA and SBI chairs, the Secretariat and colleagues on-line,

Biodiversity is a key environmental determinant of human health. The conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity can benefit human health by maintaining ecosystem services and our options for the future. Biodiversity loss jeopardizes the achievement of many Sustainable Development Goals, including those related to food security, climate change and poverty eradication.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of the relationship between people and nature. Nature has provided people nature-based activities especially for people living in densely populated urban areas. Research shows that nature enhances human health and well-being. While the relationship between biodiversity and infectious zoonotic diseases is complex, it is clear that the loss and degradation of biodiversity and natural habitats increases the risk of disease spillover from wildlife to people as well in the future. To avoid that, we need to take urgent measures.

Accordingly, an inclusive, cross-sectoral *One Health approach* is required. Among other things, this requires strengthening of the environmental dimensions of the approach for example by integrating the work of UNEP with the existing work of FAO, OIE and WHO.

Wildlife trade and land use need strengthened regulations, and we need to ensure that those regulations are effectively enforced on national level. It is critically important to, also strengthen national capacity to address health-biodiversity linkages to support preventative approaches to health.

Finally, we need to continue the dialogue between health and environment sectors at all levels, strengthen monitoring capacities to anticipate, prepare for and respond to public health threats from ecosystem change, and to consider health-biodiversity linkages in various health and environmental assessments.

Chairperson, we align ourselves with the intervention made by Germany on behalf of the EU and its Member states.

Thank you!