

## UK Intervention

Special virtual session on biodiversity, One Health and COVID-19

I would like to thank the co-chairs and secretariat for organising this special session and for maintaining valuable momentum towards COP-15 next year.

Although this year has taken a very different path to the one we expected, the UK is committed to driving forward a green industrial revolution as we build back greener from the pandemic and address the twin challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change. A healthy natural environment is not only important for biodiversity but also for the health of society and our economy.

In November, the UK Prime Minister set out a ten-point plan for recovery which recognises the importance of protecting and restoring our natural environment. And just a few days ago at the Climate Ambition Summit, the UK's COP26 President noted the intertwined fates of the pandemic, climate change and nature.

Covid-19 has shone a new light on the linkages between biodiversity and human health and made the role of an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework even more critical.

COP15 presents an opportunity to address zoonotic disease risks, to build on the existing CBD decisions, tools and initiatives, and to strengthen synergies and implementation.

It is our ambition to amplify not just better visibility of the interlinkages between biodiversity, health and pandemic risk within the CBD framework, but also within other conventions. The UK supports a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency and multi-sectoral approach in addressing future pandemics. Risks can be avoided or significantly reduced by:

- Integrating of biodiversity into strategies, policies and practices to effectively address biodiversity loss alongside other cross-cutting issues such as climate change.
- Incorporating zoonosis risk in policies towards land-use change and use of wild species;
- Taking further steps to reduce risks arising from illegal wildlife trade by improving practices to ensure the safe harvest, trade and processing of wild animal products; and
- Adopting One Health approaches, which means working together at a local, national, regional, and global level to detect, prevent and respond to threats including zoonotic diseases.

It is essential that we place nature recovery at the heart of Covid-19 recovery and the UK has committed to an ambitious plan to do just that. We are investing in large-scale landscape recovery projects, creating more protected areas, environmental education, and the restoration of damaged habitats such as peatlands and wetlands, and

employing hundreds more people to restore the natural environment so we can look ahead to a more prosperous, greener future.

Before closing, I would like to highlight the work of the Edinburgh Process on the role of sub-national governments, cities and local authorities in the implementation of COP-15 outcomes, to ensure positive outcomes for biodiversity and human health. The UK has submitted the outcomes of this process to the secretariat and looks forward to discussing them at SBI-3.