

Statement

World Resources Institute

SBSTTA-SBI Special Session

December 16, 2020

Thank you Chair for giving the World Resources Institute the floor. The topic of this session could not be timelier or more urgent, as many have already said. I would like to draw your attention to two resources that WRI believes should be of use in addressing the issue of the linkages between human health and biodiversity, which have been so starkly highlighted by this pandemic.

First, posted on the website for this meeting, you will find a document titled [*COVID-19 Response and Recovery – Nature-Based Solutions for People, Planet and Prosperity. Recommendation for Policymakers*](#). The document, available in English, French and Spanish, contains comprehensive recommendations on addressing five key priority areas for taking a One Health approach to COVID-19 response and recovery:

- Halting degradation and loss of natural ecosystems as a public health priority;
- Reforming livestock production to reduce zoonotic pandemic risk;
- Reduce zoonotic disease risk posed by commercial wildlife trade and markets;
- Protecting recent conservation investments in the face of COVID-19 pressures;
- Enacting policies and strategies for a nature-positive COVID-19 economic recovery.

This set of jointly-agreed policy recommendations is offered by the CEOs of 22 environment, conservation and development organizations, including WRI, WWF, WCS, The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, Birdlife International, the GEF, the World Business Council on Sustainable Development, and many others.

In addition, co-chairs, I would like to bring to your attention the recent launch of an important coalition focused on Preventing Pandemics at the Source.

As others have observed, pandemics are a systemic problem with roots spread out across many sectors. Effectively getting to those roots will require dialogue and coordinated action between sectors – particularly health and environment,

but also agriculture, trade, food and nutrition, and others – that are currently not accustomed to working together. To address these root causes, WRI has joined with a number of other organizations to build a **Coalition to Prevent Pandemics at the Source** which aims to do three things:

- 1) Convene a **policy taskforce** that would rapidly develop and recommend policies to help prevent the spillover of novel pathogens, and, critically, advocate for adoption of these policies globally and in high-risk countries.
- 2) Launch a **Global Fund to Prevent Pandemics** to steward the cause of prevention and drive on-the-ground prevention efforts long after COVID-19 has passed and attention has shifted.
- 3) Initiate a **global awareness campaign** to create public recognition of the importance, feasibility, and cost-effectiveness of pandemic prevention at the source. This story needs telling, reframing, and making popular to ensure that governments make it a top political priority alongside health systems preparedness.

The Coalition currently includes 10 organizations from across the health and conservation sectors, with more members to come. Members include Harvard's Center for Health, Climate, and the Global Environment, the Harvard Global Health Institute, Conservation International, Dalberg Catalyst, EcoHealth Alliance, Rainforest Alliance, Right 2 Health Action, WCS, WRI, and WWF.

This pandemic provides an important and fast-closing opportunity for reflection and reshaping. We must use it to take the hard steps we need to live and thrive within our planetary boundaries.

Thank you.