

**Statement by  
David Cooper  
Acting Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity  
World Health Day  
My health, my right  
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As declared by the United Nations General Assembly in July of 2022, all people have the [right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment](#). The fulfilment of this right is necessary for the full enjoyment of a wide range of human rights, including the rights to health, food, and water. And it requires that we protect nature.

Our health depends on nature, or biodiversity, in so many ways. The variety of plants, animals and micro-organisms provides us with essential medicines and nutritious food. Wetlands, forests and other ecosystems regulate the climate and protect the supply and quality of water. Urban green and blue spaces support our physical and mental health.

But we are losing biodiversity faster than ever before. This loss threatens the multiple contributions of nature to our health. It increases the risk of disease, including pandemics, our exposure to air and water pollution, and to extreme events.

Children, women, and the elderly are especially vulnerable. Biodiversity loss has severe adverse impacts on the health of indigenous peoples and their unique interdependent relationship with local ecosystems, impacting physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health.

The [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#) (Biodiversity Plan) was agreed by all countries to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity by 2030. Its four goals aim to protect and restore nature, to prosper with nature, to share benefits fairly, and to invest and collaborate for nature.

This Biodiversity Plan is underpinned by a human rights approach, and it recognizes that the health of humans, animals and plants, wild and domestic, and the integrity of ecosystems are all linked and interdependent.

Achieving the goals and targets of the Plan is essential to realize our right to health.

This World Health Day, as we promote “My health, my right”, let’s all be part of the Plan. Let us redouble our efforts to protect life on earth. Our health and that of future generations depends on it.