Convention on Biological Diversity

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Excellency,

I acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your letter dated 18 November 2020, inviting me, as Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, to provide inputs to the thematic review of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which will meet under your leadership from 6 to 15 July 2021.

In this regard, I am pleased to submit herewith a document summarizing the Convention's contribution. Furthermore, we informed the National Focal Points of the Convention of the opportunity to highlight the importance of biodiversity and nature for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in their statements during the Forum.

I am also pleased to share that the Government of the United Kingdom, in cooperation with Sir Partha Dasgupta and his team at the University of Cambridge and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, are preparing a side event to the Forum on the findings of this ground-breaking report on the economic value of nature.

I offer our continuing support and wish you a fruitful Forum and every success in advancing the contribution of nature to the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema
Executive Secretary

Enclosure

His Excellency
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Input to the 2021 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

"Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development"

17 March 2021

The finalization and adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, at the upcoming fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 15) in China, continues to be the key input of the Convention to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2011-2020 UN Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, which backs SDGs 14 and 15 remains a guide for action until the adoption of the new framework. CBD COP 14, which took place in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, agreed on a comprehensive and participatory process for the preparation of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Ministers at COP 14 committed to supporting the development and implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework in a manner aligned with the UN's 2030 Agenda, and with a level of ambition and practicality that will facilitate the transformational changes needed to achieve the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity of "Living in harmony with Nature".

The negotiations to develop the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, prior to CBD COP 15, are being undertaken by a dedicated open-ended intersessional working group under the leadership of two co-chairs and overseen by the COP Bureau, which is chaired by Egypt as the current President of the Conference of the Parties. As mandated by decision 14/34, the co-chairs seek to ensure the coherence and complementarity of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework with other existing or upcoming international processes, in particular with regard to consistency and coherence with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and other related processes, frameworks and strategies.

1. Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of the SDGs under review in the 2021 HLPF from the vantage point of the CBD

The multiple benefits of biodiversity intersect many of the SDGs under discussion in 2021 – from food security, climate mitigation and adaption, to sustainable consumption and production as well as human health and well-being, to name a few. Ecosystems and biodiversity have extensive and complex value for our well-being, health, food, culture, education, economics, security and integrity of our natural environment. COVID -19 signaled the risks in mismanaging biodiversity and the natural systems they underpin. The role of biodiversity – from gene, species and ecosystems- in regulating the planet's material and energy flows and responding to abrupt and gradual change is irreplaceable.

<u>Linkages between biodiversity loss and pandemics risk</u>

The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the importance of the relationship between people and nature. While the relationship between biodiversity and infectious diseases is complex, it is clear that the loss and degradation of biodiversity undermines the resilience and integrity of the web of life, making society more vulnerable to socio-economic risks, including increased risks of disease spillover from wildlife to people. The recent report of the Workshop on Biodiversity and Pandemics convened by IPBES, in its Executive Summary, noted that *"Pandemics have their origins in diverse microbes carried by animal reservoirs, but their emergence is entirely driven by human activities. The underlying causes of pandemics*

are the same global environmental changes that drive biodiversity loss and climate change. These include land use change, including habitat loss and deforestation, agricultural expansion and intensification, and wildlife trade and consumption. These drivers of change bring wildlife, livestock, and people into closer contact, allowing animal microbes to move into people and lead to infections, sometimes outbreaks, and more rarely into true pandemics that spread through road networks, urban centers and global travel, and trade routes. The recent exponential rise in consumption and trade, driven by demand in developed countries and emerging economies, as well as by demographic pressure, has led to a series of emerging diseases that originate mainly in biodiverse developing countries, driven by global consumption patterns." The report identifies a number of policy options to reduce the role of land-use change and the wildlife trade in pandemic emergence, among other conclusions.

Biodiversity provides ecosystem goods and services that are essential to human health and well-being (SDG3)

From a health perspective, biodiversity and human health are closely interlinked across a wide range of scales, from the planetary to that of individual human microbiota. Ecosystems depend on a great diversity of organisms to provide the necessary services for life, including food, clean air, the quantity and quality of fresh water, medicines, spiritual and cultural values, climate regulation, pest and disease regulation, and disaster risk reduction, each of which are fundamental for both mental and physical human health. Human microbiota – the symbiotic microbial communities present in the gut, respiratory and urogenital tracts and on skin – help regulate human health at an individual level, contributing to nutrition, aiding immune system function and preventing infection. Biodiversity is thus a key environmental determinant of human health. By maintaining healthy ecosystem services and benefits for the future, the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity benefit human health in multiple ways. Its loss poses a high cost to society and jeopardizes decades of investment and progress on many of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Impact of COVID-19 on the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity

In this respect, UNDESA released a policy brief on the impact of COVID-19 on SDGs in August 2020 (Impact of COVID-19 on SDG progress: a statistical perspective (un.org) and the UN Development Programme provided possible scenarios; COVID-19 baseline, high damage, SDG push, see Impact of COVID-19 on the Sustainable Development Goals | SDG Integration (undp.org).

On the one hand, lockdown measures, travel restrictions and the slowdown of economic activities may have a positive impact on environment and biodiversity: reduced GHG, reduced pollution, noise reduction, increased air quality, less pressure in tourism destination that favors ecological restoration. However, despite estimated reduction in the annual global emission between 4.2% and 7.5% for 2020 (WMO), the industrial slowdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic has not curbed record levels of greenhouse gases which are trapping heat in the atmosphere, increasing temperatures and driving more extreme weather, ice melt, sea-level rise and ocean acidification. On the other hand, the health response to COVID-19 has increased medical waste, haphazard use and disposal of disinfectants, masks, and gloves; the burden of untreated wastes continuously endangering the environment and biodiversity. This highlights the need to increase current efforts to design, test and target interventions, including enforcing safeguard measures, to address growing interconnected response implications within and across sectors, and to work in partnerships, in line with SDG 17. It is essential to join forces with the health sector to ensure the proper disposal and segregation of waste to avoid a contamination or pollution of ecosystems while ensuring such practices do not create a risk for disease transmission and ensure health workers and patients' safety.

In addition, lockdowns and the loss of tourism revenue create challenges for protecting wildlife. Studies estimate that the cost of COVID-19 to zoos could mean extinction for the 77 species of plants and animals

(at least) that are extinct in the wild and exist only in zoological and botanical collections[1]. Lastly, travel restrictions due to COVID-19 led to the postponement of major meetings for biodiversity governance last year, when 2020 was expected to be a global momentum for nature with the adoption of a 'post-2020 global biodiversity framework'.

2. Actions, policy guidance, progress, challenges and areas requiring urgent attention in relation to the SDGs

Based on the above, this section describes several specific issues that pose challenges requiring urgent attention while linking directly to the SDGs under in-depth review by the HLPF in 2021. It also refers to applicable guidance developed under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

SDG 2 (zero hunger):

Biodiversity underpins the ecosystem functions and services that are essential for the productivity and sustainability of our food systems. Examples of ecosystem services provided by biodiversity include pest control, pollination, water and air quality regulation, soil fertility and climate regulation, amongst others. Food systems encompass all activities related to food, including production, processing, transportation and consumption. Many of the world's food systems are currently unsustainable and vulnerable to external shocks, in part due to biodiversity loss. Biodiversity further contributes to food security and nutrition by providing nutritionally diverse foods. Cultivated species are an important source of nutrition, yet of the more than 6000 plant species that have been cultivated for food, only 9 species account for 66% of total crop production. Wild species are also an important source of nutrition, rich in micronutrients, for many households around the world, yet many are under threat of overexploitation and habitat loss.[2]

Food systems based on the sustainable use of biodiversity have the potential to provide food security and livelihoods in a sustainable manner, making them an important lever in attaining the SDGs. The Sustainable Agriculture Transition presented in the 5th edition of *Global Biodiversity Outlook* highlights how incorporating a greater diversity of crops and livestock, creating and maintaining well connected habitat for associated biodiversity, practicing sustainable soil management and avoiding the use of pesticides and excess fertilizers, can increase biodiversity and ecosystem services in food production systems. It also recognizes the importance of enabling sustainable and healthy diets with a greater emphasis on a diversity of foods, mostly plant-based, and more moderate consumption of meat and fish, as well as dramatic cuts in the waste involved in food supply and consumption.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant negative effects along the food supply chain, from producers to processors, marketers, transporters and consumers to food and farm workers. This reinforces the need to support and promote diversified agroecological systems that reconcile economic, environmental, and social dimensions thus building resilient food systems. The Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations has been a steadfast partner of the CBD, and its contribution spans several of the issues described.[3]

SDG 3 (good health and well-being):

[1] Extinct-in-the-wild species' last stand | Science (sciencemag.org)
[2] FAO. 2019. The State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture. J. Bélanger & D. Pilling (eds.). FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture Assessments. Rome.
[3] https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/fd9c/5857/d37e2562d7f204604a1ad4ec/sbi-03-inf-06-en.pdf

Biodiversity underpins nature's contributions to people and provides ecosystem goods and services that are essential to human health and well-being. Biodiversity is also integral to key development sectors that modulate health outcomes directly or indirectly, such as pharmacy, biochemistry, agriculture, or tourism.

The fair and equitable access and benefit sharing derived from genetic resources, including pathogens, remain important as do continued efforts to ensure rapid sharing of microbial samples to facilitate vaccine and therapeutic development. Vaccine and therapeutic development rely on access to the diversity of organisms, molecules and genes found in nature. Many important therapeutics are derived from indigenous knowledge and traditional medicine.

There is a need to accelerate and upscale efforts towards the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity to ensure health and well-being for all, in harmony with nature, and to respond to challenges that threaten the health of the planet, human beings, animals, plants, and our shared environment through One Health approaches, among other holistic approaches. Understanding the complex linkages between biodiversity, ecosystem services and human health, and promoting co-benefits require integrated policies mainstreaming biodiversity and health linkages and greater collaboration with the health sector.

The issues identified above are largely reflected in the fifth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* which outlines a biodiversity-inclusive One Health transition as one of a series of fundamental shifts necessary for a realignment of people's relationship with nature towards sustainability. To some extent, they are reflected in decisions XIII/6 and 14/4 of the Conference of the Parties. For example, decision XIII/6 notes that consideration of health-biodiversity linkages could contribute to improving many aspects of human health and reinforces the rationale for the conservation and sustainable development of biodiversity. It invites Parties and others, among other things, to facilitate dialogue between health and environment agencies, to strengthen monitoring capacities to anticipate, prepare for and respond to public health threats from ecosystem change, to consider health-biodiversity linkages in various health and environmental assessments, and to consider the need to strengthen capacity to address health-biodiversity linkages to support preventative approaches to health.

A coordinated, cross-sectoral approaches such as One Health would help address the common drivers of biodiversity loss, climate change, and negative health outcomes to mitigate future increased pandemic risks. Achieving a biodiversity-inclusive One Health transition[4] that supports the full range of linkages between biodiversity and human health, and addresses the common drivers of biodiversity loss, disease risk and negative health outcomes, will enable a virtuous cycle – reducing the loss and degradation of biodiversity and enhancing human health and well-being.

CBD works closely with WHO to advance the mainstreaming and understanding of biodiversity-health linkages, through a joint programme of work and Inter-agency liaison group on Biodiversity and Health.

With a view to further strengthen transdisciplinary collaboration, a One Health high-level expert council has been announced at the Paris Peace Forum in November 2020, bringing together UNEP, WHO, FAO, OIE, to be launched at the World Health Assembly.

Sustainable wildlife management for food security and nutrition

There is a need to improve the regulation and management of the use of, and trade in, wildlife, such that it is safe (from a human health perspective) as well as being legal and sustainable. This may involve, for example, reducing or removing species in wildlife trade that are high-risk for disease emergence, improving

[4] One Health is one of eight areas of transition that may be needed to achieve living in harmony with nature by 2050 identified in the 5th edition of the Global biodiversity outlook, https://www.cbd.int/gbo/gbo5/publication/gbo-5-en.pdf, 2020.

biosecurity and sanitation in markets and conducting disease surveillance of wildlife, and of wildlife hunters, farmers, and traders, as well enhancing law enforcement on all aspects of the illegal wildlife trade.

There is also a need to enhance and review regulations on bushmeat, wet markets, and livestock production practices including through the implementation of hygienic practices, while refraining from total bans which would negatively affect communities that depend on wild animals and potentially open the door to illegal trade practices. Strengthened biodiversity policies as part of a global pandemic prevention strategy will have important implications for the design and implementation of sustainable wildlife management and trade that is pro-poor, leaves no one behind, and is undertaken with the involvement and consent of indigenous peoples and local communities. The CBD has a long-standing work programme of sustainable wildlife management and engaging with the Collaborative Partnership on Sustainable Wildlife Management (CPW) as partner in its work, which can be usefully harnessed to this effect.

In 2018, the CBD, in collaboration with the CPW, welcomed voluntary guidance for a sustainable wild meat sector in decision 14/7. While it does not apply to all the Parties, its aim is promoting the sustainability of supply at the source, managing the demand along the entire value chain, and creating the enabling conditions for legal, sustainable management of terrestrial wild meat in tropical and subtropical habitats, taking into account the traditional use by indigenous peoples and local communities to safeguard their livelihoods without adversely affecting them.

The voluntary guidance for a sustainable wild meat sector also works to enhance policy coherence across biodiversity-related conventions[5] and other conservation agreements. Other bodies and entities are encouraged to use the guidance when developing, revising and implementing governance approaches on wildlife and when developing and updating national development plans and national biodiversity strategies and action plans. Cross-sectoral dialogues and joint trainings on sustainable wildlife management, among relevant sectors, including the forestry, agriculture, veterinary and public health, natural resources, finance, rural development, education, legal and private sectors, food processing and trade, as well as indigenous peoples and local communities, and other relevant stakeholders will be undertaken with a view to promote the application of the voluntary guidance for a sustainable wild meat sector in accordance with national circumstances. Sustainable harvesting, hunting, trading and use of wild species require tailored interventions, regulation, enforcement and monitoring to ensure practices are legal, sustainable and safe, and that alternative sources of protein and livelihoods are addressed, if necessary.

Complementary guidance was also requested at COP 14 to be developed to apply such guidance to other geographical areas, other species and other uses, since the voluntary guidance for a sustainable wild meat sector is applicable only to some areas of terrestrial tropical and subtropical habitat, biomes and ecosystems.

SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth):

Recent economic analyses, undertaken by major partners of the Convention (WWF, the World Bank, and the WEF), provide strong evidence that the net benefits in human and natural well-being could be significant if ambitious conservation efforts are taken over the next decades. This could include annual business opportunities worth $10 trillion, which would create up to around 400 million jobs by 2030. Conversely, the continued loss of nature and its ecosystem services under business-as-usual would lead to a global economic cost of almost 10 trillion USD (in discounted terms) over the period 2011 to 2050, or half a trillion annually.

[5] See https://www.cbd.int/brc/

The upcoming post-2020 global biodiversity framework will incorporate and reflect these considerations, by promoting the mainstreaming of biodiversity into economic sectors and facilitating the mobilization of adequate financial resources from all sources. It will be a key international tool in the coming decade, not just to advance on biodiversity but to implement the 2030 Agenda as a whole, and as a crucial component of building back better strategies.

More generally, reducing disease risk through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is highly cost-effective. Pandemics and other emerging zoonoses continue to cause widespread human suffering, and likely more than a trillion dollars in economic damages annually (with COVID-19 already costing tens of trillions). On the other hand, global strategies to prevent pandemics based on reducing wildlife trade and land use change, and increasing One Health surveillance, are estimated to cost one or two orders of magnitude less than the damages pandemics produce. The fifth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook* provides strong arguments, along with recommendations for economic incentives for transformative change across health, agriculture and broader economic and financial sectors to outline and invest in evidence-based interventions that effectively reduce the risk of future pandemics. Investing in conservation, sustainable use and restoration of biodiversity can help to mitigate pandemic risks, while providing jobs, business opportunities and other benefits to society. There is a need to ensure that decision making on national COVID-19 stimulus measures and broader recovery efforts integrate biodiversity assessments and risk mitigating interventions.

SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production):

Pandemics risk could be significantly lowered by incentivizing responsible consumption and traceable and sustainable production patterns, while disincentivizing unsustainable harvesting of commodities, and providing support to emerging disease hotspots to mitigate risks based on unsustainable wildlife consumption and/or wildlife-derived products. Measures to reduce excessive consumption of meat from livestock production will also require further attention. Livestock in 2016 occupied 3.28 billion hectares of global agricultural land (67%). This figure does not include the approximately 35% of crop production for livestock feed (*Foley et al. 2011*). If that were included, the proportion of agricultural land devoted to livestock would become 77%[6].

From a food productive angle, if we consider how agricultural land have replaced woodlands and forests, grasslands and shrubs, wetlands and swamps, and take into account the discharge of waste linked to food production and consumption, the magnitude of the tension between our demand for provisioning services, in particular food production, and our need for regulating and maintenance services can be better understood. As the Dasgupta Review notes, as the global population grows, the problem of producing sufficient food in a sustainable manner will only intensify. For example, approximately one-third of food produced is lost or wasted (FAO, 2014, 2019). Even as more than 10% of the world's population suffer from hunger each day, food remains under-priced for the wealthy.

Moreover, at COP 14, the Convention has requested the development of a long-term strategic approach for mainstreaming biodiversity through an Informal Advisory Group, with the request that the approach be appropriately integrated in the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The approach for mainstreaming biodiversity within and across sectors and a Plan of Action will be examined by Parties at the third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation for adoption at COP 15.

[6] Klein Goldewijk et al. (2017), https://essd.copernicus.org/articles/9/927/2017/essd-9-927-2017.html, and Poore and Nemecek (2018),https://science.sciencemag.org/content/360/6392/987?fbclid=IwAR1bYxbyriTj9q089RjHd62piw9qtjmvwZYtrLXlBuzbfDlK0P1PeUyrw0s

SDG 13 (climate change):

The COVID-19 pandemic highlights the urgency of addressing the biodiversity crisis alongside the climate crisis, and the need for transformative change. In accordance with the above, an inclusive, transdisciplinary and cross-sectoral One Health approach is required. Among other things, this requires strengthening of the environmental dimensions of the approach. The IPBES Workshop Report on Biodiversity and Pandemics further suggests launching a high-level intergovernmental council/panel on pandemic prevention.

Ecological restoration, which is critical for conservation, climate adaptation and provision of ecosystem services, should also integrate One Health related considerations to target appropriate sites and restoration interventions, and buffer potential implications from human-livestock-wildlife contact in mosaic landscape restoration using agroforestry, silvopasture or mono-culture tree plantations.

Forests provide substantial benefits to the health and well-being of many people, playing vital roles in food security, for example; 2.4 billion people, particularly within indigenous communities, use firewood for cooking and nearly 800 million use it to sterilize water. 100 million Europeans consume edible products derived from forests and 50% of the fruits we consume come from trees. Forest ecosystems also harbor sources of natural medicine: close to 28,000 plant species listed with medicinal virtues come from forest ecosystems. These ecosystems also protect against pollution and heat islands, and constitute a public health solution for cities and urban areas, being home to more than 55% of the world's population.

Globally, forests also absorb and store around 30% of current levels of carbon emissions in their biomass, soils and derived wood products. According to the Signatory States of the New York Declaration on Forests for 2014, they represent the most complete and economical climate solution available today. According to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), deforestation alone contributes to about 10% of all man-made greenhouse gas emissions. The decline of forests worldwide contributes to global warming, which currently is leading the world towards a 3°C temperature rise by 2100.

Scaling the conservation and restoration of forests, while sustainably using forest derived products, is becoming an urgent global climate, biodiversity and sustainable development priority. The role of nature-based solutions for climate change and sustainable development has gained recognition and attention from public and private actors, as it represents an opportunity to promote actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, to address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits (IUCN, Commission on Ecosystem Management, definition of NBS).

In January 2021 the One Planet Summit, under the leadership of the French President, reached ambitious agreements on various action tracks related to biodiversity. Among them was the launch of the High Ambition Coalition on Nature and People - an intergovernmental and interregional group of over 55 countries established to achieve an ambitious deal under the Convention on Biological Diversity in order to reverse the severe trend of biodiversity loss and revive ecosystems that are critical to species and humanity’s survival. The goal of the coalition is to ensure the inclusion and adoption of the language on protecting at least 30 percent of the world’s land and ocean by 2030, at CBD COP 15. This target also promotes indigenous-led conservation, prioritizes intact ecosystems, with a focus on areas most important for biodiversity and climate.

Other relevant announcements that address the synergies between climate and biodiversity include: a multi-sectoral initiative to make the Mediterranean an exemplary sea by 2030; a coalition for convergence on biodiversity and climate funding; and the Task Force on Nature Based Disclosures to better gauge firm’s impact on biodiversity to achieve greater transparency and to redirect investment to nature-positive

businesses. In addition, from a land base perspective, the accelerator for the Great Green Wall brings together public stakeholders and private firms to restore and preserve agricultural and farming areas in the Sahara and Sahel regions, and the Alliance for the conservation of tropical forests and rainforests brings donors and forest nations to address the connections between deforestation and human health.

3. Situation regarding the principle of "ensuring that no one is left behind" at the global, regional and national levels, within the respective area addressed by the CBD

Seventy per cent of the global poor live in rural areas, with as much as 50% to 90% of livelihoods sourced from non-marketed goods and ecosystem services. The rural poor depend directly on biodiversity as source of food, income and insurance against various risks, such as external economic shocks, environmental disasters, impacts of climate change, and food insecurity. For instance, bushmeat and other edible wild animals can account for up to 85% of the protein intake of people living in or near forests. Accordingly, the UN Human Rights Council, at its 34th Session, recognized that *"the full enjoyment of human rights, including the rights to life, health, food and water, depends on the services provided by ecosystems. The provision of ecosystem services depends on the health and sustainability of ecosystems, which in turn depend on biodiversity. The full enjoyment of human rights thus depends on biodiversity, and the degradation and loss of biodiversity undermine the ability of human beings to enjoy their human rights."*

The Council observed that:

- The loss of biodiversity-dependent ecosystem services has disproportionate effects on people who are vulnerable for other reasons, including gender, age, disability, poverty or minority status;

- The degradation and loss of biodiversity often result from and reinforce existing patterns of discrimination. Although everyone depends on ecosystem services, some people depend on them more closely than others. For indigenous peoples, forest-dwellers, fisherfolk and others who rely directly on the products of forests, rivers, lakes and oceans for their food, fuel and medicine, environmental harm can and often does have disastrous consequences;

- Many religions call on all human beings to be stewards of the riches of the natural world. However, the loss of particular places is felt predominantly by those who associate their sacred rituals and sites with those locations. Food and shelter may be replaced, but the destruction of a sacred grove may cause irreparable harm;

- The loss of biodiversity-dependent ecosystem services is likely to accentuate inequality and marginalization of the most vulnerable sectors of society, by decreasing their access to basic materials for a healthy life and by reducing their freedom of choice and action. Economic development that does not consider effects on these ecosystem services may decrease the quality of life of these vulnerable populations, even if other segments of society benefit;

Specifically, with regard to addressing the linkages between the management of biodiversity and pandemics risk, it is thus important to keep in mind that there are multiple dimensions to health and multiple interlinkages between biodiversity and health. Accordingly, policy measures should take into account the points above with a view to reduce inequalities and, at minimum, not further exacerbate them. Many people are dependent on the sustainable use of biodiversity and benefit from contact with nature. This is especially true for indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as for many vulnerable groups more broadly.

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of the right to a healthy environment and equitable access to health products, as well as the need to build stronger and resilient health systems. Ensuring the access of

indigenous peoples and local communities to primary health care is essential for their livelihoods, in line with the 'leave no one behind' and the universal health coverage agendas.

The Convention has issued guidance addressing many elements raised above, which could be put to good use in the present context. The CBD COP at its twelfth meeting encouraged Parties to "…*integrate biodiversity and nature's benefits to people, including ecosystem services and functions, into poverty eradication and development strategies, initiatives and processes at all levels, and vice versa, to integrate poverty eradication and development concerns and priorities into national biodiversity strategies and action plans and other appropriate plans, policies and programmes for the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and to monitor, evaluate and report on these integration efforts, through appropriate indicators and tools,…"*

The outcomes from the Dasgupta Review are of particular relevance in this discussion:
https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-economics-of-biodiversity-the-dasgupta-review

4. Cooperation, measures and commitments at all levels in promoting sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic

The CBD COP has addressed the interlinkages between biodiversity and human health in its decisions based on a joint programme of work between the CBD and the World Health Organization (WHO). This work undertaken as reflected in the guidance contained in decisions XIII/6 and 14/4, is highly relevant in the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the development of economic stimulus measures and programmes to "build back better" as well as for the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

In 2016, further to a comprehensive state of knowledge review entitled *Connecting Global Priorities: Biodiversity and Human Health*, co-published by the WHO and the CBD, the CBD COP adopted decision XIII/6 on biodiversity and human health, providing information and guidance to Parties and other Governments to promote the understanding of health-biodiversity linkages with a view to maximizing health benefits, addressing trade-offs, and addressing common drivers for health risks and biodiversity loss.

Further, the Convention has developed guidance on integrating biodiversity considerations into One Health approaches, with a view to assist Parties to the Convention and other relevant stakeholders in the process of developing policies, plans, programmes and research aligned with One Health approaches, with more balanced consideration of biodiversity and ecosystem dynamics and management. In decision 14/4, the Conference of the Parties encouraged Parties, and invited other Governments and relevant organizations, to make use of the guidance, in accordance with national circumstances.

This work is supported by an Inter-Agency Liaison Group on Biodiversity and Health established pursuant to a memorandum of cooperation between the World Health Organization and the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Convention and the World Health Organization have also organized a series of capacity building workshops on the interlinkages between biodiversity and human health in the Americas, Africa, Europe and South-Est Asia. In 2021, at its twenty-fourth meeting, the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) will consider the development of a draft global plan of action on biodiversity and health, which also reflects on the impact of COVID-19 and the need for a sustainable recovery, with a view to achieve the vision of Living in harmony with nature by 2050.

Building upon the Convention's ongoing programme of work on biodiversity and health, there have been further efforts in the context of the current pandemic to better understand the linkages between biodiversity and health and how the drivers of biodiversity loss increase the risk of zoonotic disease emergence. For

example, a second meeting of the Inter-Agency Liaison Group on Biodiversity and Health was held in 2020, which included discussions on the shaping and aligning of the narrative on biodiversity and health in the context of COVID-19. The CBD Secretariat contributed to the aforementioned report of the IPBES workshop on Biodiversity and Pandemics. The fifth edition of the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*, launched in September 2020, includes a section on "The Biodiversity-inclusive One Health Transition" – one of eight areas of transition that may be needed to achieve the Vision of Living in harmony with nature.

Lastly, a special virtual session of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and the Subsidiary Body was convened in December 2020 to further discuss interlinkages between biodiversity and health, the One Health approach, and the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The importance of a more integrated, cross-sectoral and biodiversity-inclusive One Health approach that would address the common drivers of biodiversity loss, climate change, increased pandemic risk while supporting better health and well-being outcomes were raised (documents are available at https://www.cbd.int/meetings/SBSTTA-SBI-SS-02).

In addition to its direct impacts on human health and the requisite policy response described above, the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent measures taken to build back better provide additional opportunities to synergize with biodiversity policies. This is taken up in the next section, in the context building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

5. Various measures and policy recommendations on building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development

Recommendations from subsidiary bodies

At its twenty-third meeting in November 2019, the Convention's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 23) stressed the need for urgent action to address the drivers of biodiversity loss, as well as those of climate change and land degradation, in an integrated manner, in line with the findings of the IPBES Global Assessment, in the context of achieving sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda. The IPBES findings were reflected in detail in our 2020 submission to ECOSOC.

SBSTTA 23 also recognized that a key element in the development of pathways for living in harmony with nature includes making changes in global financial and economic systems towards a globally sustainable economy and ensuring the full implementation of the three objectives of the Convention. It requested the Co-Chairs of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the Executive Secretary to consider the information provided in the IPBES Global Assessment, amongst others, in the preparation of documentation for the Working Group, and invited the Working Group to consider this information in its deliberations.

The process to develop the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, as described above, is ongoing. Further to the second meeting of the Open-ended Working Group, which took place in Rome, Italy, from 24-29 February 2020, the Co-Chairs of the Working Group and the Executive Secretary, under the oversight of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties, prepared a first draft of the global biodiversity framework, taking into account the outcomes of its second meeting as well as of other consultation processes and relevant meetings of the Convention's Subsidiary Bodies, for consideration by the Open-ended Working Group at its third meeting.

The Open-ended Working Group also requested the Convention Secretariat to prepare an analysis of the linkages between the proposed goals, targets and monitoring framework of the post-2020 global

biodiversity framework and the Sustainable Development Goals within the scope of the Convention. This analysis is available at https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/b5e2/ca0f/95c81d34eb0e4d710b74c649/sbstta-24-inf-12-en.docx .

The current COVID-19 pandemic and the efforts to build back better points to the imperative to explore further avenues for building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. In addition to its direct impacts on human health, the COVID-19 pandemic and the policy measures taken to reduce its spread have led to major social and economic impacts including losses of jobs and revenue. Accordingly, Governments are implementing measures to protect jobs and incomes and to promote economic stimulus and recovery. Given the links between biodiversity loss and pandemic risk, as well as the importance of biodiversity for sustainable development more generally, it is imperative that such recovery measures address the common drivers of biodiversity loss, to invest in activities that reduce the risks of future pandemics, build resilience and safeguards to achieve long term sustainable development.

There are opportunities to integrate biodiversity into stimulus and recovery measures, and for responses to COVID-19, including both short term stimulus measures and longer-term approaches to 'build back better' to contribute to sustainable development more broadly while reducing the risk of future pandemics.

This is also reflected in the work of CBD partners. Indeed, the World Health Organization's "Manifesto for a healthy recovery from COVID-19" includes "Protect and preserve the source of human health: Nature" as its first prescription. As part of its COVID-19 response, UNEP is promoting building back an inclusive green economy, which expands options and choices for national economies, using targeted and appropriate fiscal and social protection policies. Further opportunities in the context of the UN decade of action and delivery for sustainable development can be explored in the context of the launch of the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration on World Environment Day (5 June 2021).

The special virtual session of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, on biodiversity, One Health and COVID-19 identifies a range of options to integrate biodiversity considerations into such stimulus and recovery measures. https://www.cbd.int/meetings/SBSTTA-SBI-SS-02 .

The UN Biodiversity Summit

On the road to COP 15, an unprecedented success was reached at the UN General Assembly Summit on Biodiversity, held virtually on 30 September 2020. Convened by the President of the General Assembly, in accordance with the General Assembly resolution 74/269 and decision 74/562, its theme was "Urgent action on biodiversity for sustainable development". The summit was also guided by the theme of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations "The future we want, the United Nations we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism". The summit consisted of an opening segment, a plenary segment for general discussion, two leaders' dialogues on "Addressing biodiversity loss and mainstreaming biodiversity for sustainable development" and "Harnessing science, technology and innovation, capacity-building, access and benefit-sharing, financing and partnerships for biodiversity", and a brief closing segment. Over 150 high-level speakers participated in the Summit, including over 72 Heads of State or Government, demonstrating strong commitment and highlighting the need for urgent action at the highest levels in support of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Two spillover events were organized by the President of the General Assembly to accommodate statements of Member States. The summit also provided an online platform "Voices for Nature", which featured statements, messages and commitments from a wider range of stakeholders. The summit demonstrated strong commitment and highlighted the need for urgent action at the highest levels in support of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework that contributes to implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and places the global

community on a path towards making a reality of the goal of the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity, "Living in harmony with nature".

As an initiative of the President of the General Assembly, the Summit also provided an online platform "Voices for Nature", which featured statements, messages and commitments from a wider range of stakeholders. A summary of the Summit was prepared by the President of the General Assembly, in accordance with resolution 74/269, to reflect such discussions.

The Sharm El Sheikh to Kunming Action Agenda for Nature and People

In view of shared common goals to protect and sustainably use biodiversity, and recognizing the urgency of action to promote systemic transitions across sectors, to leverage actions and solutions that work with, and not against biodiversity, the Presidencies of COP 14 and COP 15, respectively the Governments of Egypt and China, with support from the CBD Secretariat, launched "the Sharm El-Sheikh to Kunming Action Agenda for Nature and People" [7], at COP 14, in 2018.

Through engagement strategies with non-state actors, the Action Agenda informs, inspires and showcases voluntary commitments, linked with measurable and intermediary actions, to highlight ways to reduce the drivers of loss of biodiversity and shift toward nature positive outcomes within this decade. The Action Agenda profiles commitments from all types of non-state actors, in support of the three objectives of the Convention, helping to catalyse integrated actions, partnerships and impact. To this end, the Action Agenda aims to encourage and boost positive ambition loops for biodiversity, between countries and non-state actors, to influence more ambition from the bottom to the top, and the reverse.

Given the interconnections and underpinning of biodiversity in economic, social, and ecological systems, as the infrastructure supporting life on Earth, the Action Agenda seeks to build awareness on commitments and actions that promote systems transitions and mainstreaming of biodiversity across socio-economic decision making. The Action Agenda online platform currently hosts commitments on 11 action areas[8] to show transformational shifts in support of the post-2020 process and why cross-sectoral implementation of the global framework for biodiversity is critical for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, as well as to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

This extraordinary moment in history reveals how inclusive and equitable solutions are needed throughout all aspects of the COVID-19 crisis – from immediate response to preparedness and prevention and eventual long-term sustainable economic recovery. It is in the context of this pandemic and our ongoing mission to conserve and restore our natural heritage and ecosystems that the Action Agenda provides a vehicle to recognize actions that promote sustainability, and to advance multi-partner solutions to reach the CBD Vision of "Living in Harmony with Nature by 2050".

6. Key messages for inclusion into the Ministerial Declaration of the 2021 HLPF

In light of the above, the HLPF may wish to consider, as appropriate, providing further guidance on the possible role of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, in presenting biodiversity-related targets as a

[7] Launched at the UN Biodiversity Conference 2018 - COP14, Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt Announcement: Sharm El-Sheikh to Beijing Action Agenda for Nature and People.

[8] Action areas include: food systems and health; freshwater, coastal and ocean ecosystems; conservation and restoration of land ecosystem; climate change mitigation and adaptation; conservation and sustainable use of species; sustainable consumption and production; stewardship/ good governance; urban sustainability; green finance; biosafety; and access to benefit-sharing.

successor to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets which are reflected in the SDGs targets with endpoints of 2020. It may also wish to

- re-emphasize the essential role of biodiversity in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals;
- express its support for the ongoing process, under the Convention on Biological Diversity, of developing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework as the global policy framework for achieving accelerated action and transformative pathways for biodiversity in the coming decade, and as an essential contribution to the UN Decade of Action on the SDGs;
- welcome the convening of the Summit on Biodiversity on 30 September 2020, at the level of Heads of State and Government, in order to highlight the urgency of action at the highest levels in support of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework that contributes to the 2030 Agenda and places the global community on a path towards realizing the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity, "Living in harmony with nature."

Finally, the Secretariat has developed a set of key messages that can be consulted at https://www.cbd.int/development/doc/Key-messages-en.pdf, and past contributions can be checked at https://www.cbd.int/development/implementation/hlpf/.
