

Second input from the Word Federation and Compassion in World Farming on the draft Ministerial declaration of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its resumed fifth session
“Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”

Specific language suggestions in red (with relevant paragraphe indicated):

3. We are deeply concerned about the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on human lives and health, economies and societies, further threatening our ability to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals and are aware that we face heightened risks of future pandemics and other health threats if we maintain the current patterns of interaction with nature and do not take a One Health approach moving forwards. [We emphasize in that regard the need for an integrated approach that fosters cooperation between environmental conservation and the human, animal and plant health sectors.]

Justification:

We welcomed the insertion of One Health approach in the ministerial declaration text, which recognizes the inextricable relationship between humans, animals, and the environment as identified in various UN reports such as [UNEP’s report Preventing the Next Pandemic](#) and [IPBES’ report](#) on pandemics. These issues must be addressed to prevent future pandemics and their impact on human health and well-being, and efforts need to extend beyond surveillance and mitigation. Prevention of the next pandemic requires that we re-envision global systems in ways that avoid abuse and exploitation, and instead promote social and environmental justice.

We suggest adding a sentence emphasizing the need for an integrated approach that fosters cooperation between environmental conservation and the human, animal and plant health sectors. As noted in the [2021 Joint World Health Organization Global Study](#) of the Origins of SARS-CoV-2, approximately three quarters of emerging and reemerging infectious diseases found in humans are attributable to zoonotic diseases, and these spillover events are driven by “large-scale environmental and socioeconomic changes, including land use change, deforestation, agricultural expansion and intensification, trade in wildlife, and expansion of human settlement.” Furthermore in the report [Preventing the Next Pandemic: Zoonotic diseases and how to break the chain of transmission](#) by UNEP and the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), increased demand for animal proteins, unsustainable agriculture intensification and increased use and exploitation of wildlife are among the seven major anthropogenic drivers of zoonotic disease emergence. Any efforts to prevent future pandemics must also address these factors through a primary prevention foster cooperation between these sectors. This was recognized in paragraph 36 of the [Ministerial declaration](#) of the high-level segment of the 2021 session of the Economic and Social Council and the 2021 high-level political forum on sustainable development, on the theme “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”

5. We note therefore with profound concern that nature is facing severe pressures from human activities, and stress the urgent need to halt the global decline and fragmentation of biodiversity and habitats, which is unprecedented in human history, its main indirect and direct drivers being changes in land and sea use, direct exploitation of organisms, [animal agriculture intensification,] unsustainable consumption and production patterns, climate change, invasive alien species and pollution of ocean and fresh water, air, and soil.

Justification

We suggest adding “animal agriculture intensification” as it constitutes a direct and indirect driver of biodiversity and habitat loss, and land use change.

As stated in the [SUSTAINABLE LIVESTOCK SOLUTIONS CLUSTER, Stakeholder Group C](#), of the Food System Summit, “*Most of the livestock sector’s detrimental environmental impacts stem from land use change, including deforestation and the use of human-edible cereals and soya as feed. (...) Intensification of crop and animal production has led to soil degradation, biodiversity loss, including declines in pollinator numbers, overuse and pollution of water and air pollution. Demand for soya has led to the expansion of farmland into forests, with concomitant biodiversity loss and the release of stored carbon.*”

In the SUSTAINABLE LIVESTOCK SOLUTIONS CLUSTER, Stakeholder Group C it is also stated that “*Research shows that the production of animal sourced foods needs to be reduced by at least half globally to stay within environmental limits and planetary boundaries*”

Furthermore, the Chatham House report “[Food system impacts on biodiversity loss](#)” (2020), launched in partnership with UNEP, states that “*The ‘cheaper food paradigm’ has driven the expansion of agricultural land and intensive farming. Failure to account for the environmental cost of food production has led to habitat destruction and pollution, driving wildlife loss.*”, suggesting “*to change dietary patterns to reduce food demand and encourage more plant-based diets*” and “*to shift to more sustainable farming*” as two of the three levers for reducing pressures on land and creating a more sustainable food system.

22. We commit to pursuing and joining new and innovative partnerships across sectors, and engage all relevant stakeholders, working with youth, women, [Non Governmental Organizations,] Indigenous Peoples and local communities, business, finance and science sectors to develop actions that are nature positive and reverse the persistently negative long term trend for the environment described by recent scientific reports from the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the International Resource Panel (IPR) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Justification

We suggest adding ‘Non Governmental Organizations’ to the list of relevant stakeholders to engage with as it is one the Civil Society Major Group.

As stated on the [UNEP website - Major group page](#), “*the NGOs Major Group is the most diverse and has the highest number of accredited organizations with UNEP and with the UN system in general. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) make valuable contributions in promoting*

sustainable development through their well-established and diverse experience, expertise and capacity, especially in the area of analysis, sharing of information and knowledge, promotion of dialogue and support of implementation of sustainable development. NGOs have been important partners for UNEP since its foundation in 1972 and are currently involved in almost all UNEP activities, at policy and programmatic level, including implementation of projects through partnerships.”

24. We reaffirm the continued need to strengthen actions for nature and **[we call for increased ambition and urgency of action to protect wildlife and other living species and reversing the trends in environmental degradation through]** our commitment towards the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. ~~and call~~ **[We call]** for an ambitious and transformational post-2020 global biodiversity framework for adoption at the 15th Conference of Parties of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity that inter alia includes a set of clear and robust goals and targets to address the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, as a key instrument to reach the Sustainable Development Goals, and the 2050 vision of the Convention of Biological Diversity of living in harmony with nature.

Justification:

To address threats to biodiversity, halt its loss and ensure its recovery, we suggest adding a reference to increase ambition to protect wildlife and other living species and reversing the trends in environmental degradation. The [2019 IPBES Global Assessment report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#) demonstrated that human actions, such as land- and sea-use change, direct exploitation of wildlife, and climate change, are responsible for the rapid decline in global biodiversity and threaten the loss of a million species, many within decades, under business-as-usual scenarios, even where those scenarios include current global conservation efforts. The [WWF's 2020 Living Planet Report](#) revealed an average 68% decline in animal population sizes tracked over 46 years (1970-2016). We therefore believe it is important that Member States call for more ambitious action to protect wildlife and other living species. This was recognized in paragraph 36 of the [Ministerial declaration](#) of the high-level segment of the 2021 session of the Economic and Social Council and the 2021 high-level political forum on sustainable development, on the theme “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”.