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To:
H. E. Mr. Abdullah Bin Ali Al Amri,
President of United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7)
and Chair of the Environment Authority of Oman

February 2025

Born Free's submission on the Ministerial Declaration for UNEA-7

Dear H. E. Mr. Abdullah Bin Ali Al Amri,

Born Free greatly appreciates the opportunity to provide input on the Ministerial Declaration for the seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7), taking place in December 2025 under the theme "Advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet". The interconnected and cascading effects of the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution are threatening the survival, health and wellbeing of humans, animals and the environment to an unparalleled extent.

We encourage Member States to adopt a **bold, action-oriented** Ministerial Declaration that will serve to ignite **transformational change**, strengthen **global cooperation**, and advance **sustainable solutions to protect ecosystems**, including their **wild species** and the essential services they provide for a resilient planet.

By supporting the integration of **meaningful actions to protect wildlife and their habitats** into and across global and national policy frameworks, UNEA-7 can help the world advance towards an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future for our planet, and for present and future generations.

1. Key pointers and recommendations for the UNEA-7 ministerial declaration

- **Recognising the interdependence of biodiversity, climate, and human well-being, and the need for integrated solutions to address planetary crises** – acknowledging that safeguarding nature is essential for achieving climate resilience, food security, and sustainable development.

- **Stepping up efforts to halt and reverse biodiversity loss –** accelerating both global and national implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, with less than five years remaining to achieve its 4 Goals and 23 Targets.

- **Taking urgent actions to prevent species extinctions and to enhance wildlife protection and welfare** – including by strengthening efforts to prevent and combat the trafficking of wild animals and plants, and their unsustainable use and exploitation, through targeted measures enacted in legislation, policy and/or management. Recognising animal welfare as a crucial component in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development is essential.

Co-Founder Dame Virginia McKenna DBE | **Executive President** Will Travers OBE | **Managing Director** Karen Botha
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- **Recognising the role of wild animals in climate action** – leveraging the critical role of wild animals and plants in maintaining ecosystem health, resilience, and their contributions to climate change mitigation and adaptation, by scaling up investments in ecosystem restoration, species conservation and recovery, and rewilding.

- **Supporting the adoption and operationalisation of 'One Health' and other holistic approaches** – ensuring integrated policies that optimise the links between human, animal, and environmental health and wellbeing to prevent future pandemics and safeguard biodiversity.

- **Strengthening global cooperation and financing for conservation** – ensuring cross-sectoral collaboration and multilateral dialogue, mobilising adequate funding, integrating biodiversity conservation into national and global economic policies, and strengthening governance frameworks to support sustainable development in harmony with nature.

2. Key findings and conclusions from recent scientific reports

- The 2019 **IPBES Global Assessment** estimated that around one million species are now threatened with extinction, and more recent assessments estimate that the true figure could be double this. These alarming findings emphasise the need for a far more precautionary approach to any use of wildlife. The Assessment also identified the 'direct exploitation of organisms' as the second most important driver of nature's decline.

- The 2022 **UNEA Animal welfare–environment–sustainable development Nexus Resolution** noted that the health and welfare of animals, sustainable development and the environment are connected to human health and wellbeing. It acknowledged the increasing need to address these connections through the One Health approach, among other holistic approaches.

- The 2022 **IPBES Nexus Assessment** revealed the deep interconnections between biodiversity, water, food, health and climate. It concluded that bridging knowledge-to-action gaps is essential to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity.

- The 2022 **IPBES Assessment on the Sustainable Use of Wild Species** highlighted that overexploitation represents a major threat to many wild species, which are also negatively impacted by environmental drivers such as climate change, pollution, and invasive alien species. It also confirmed that, at the global level, populations of many terrestrial animals are declining as a result of unsustainable use. The Assessment also warned that global trade in wild species has grown considerably over the past 40 years, and the absence of effective regulations to address supply chains generally increases pressure and results in unsustainable use and, sometimes, in wild population collapses.

- The **2022 IPBES Transformative Change Assessment** reported that current conservation efforts are underfunded, receiving only 0.25% of global GDP.

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It showed that transformative change includes system-wide shifts in views, structures and practices, and presented key strategies to advance deliberate transformative change, such as: conserving and regenerating places of value to nature and people; driving systemic change in the sectors most responsible for biodiversity loss and nature's decline; transforming economic systems for nature and equity; transforming governance systems to be integrated, inclusive, accountable and adaptive; and shifting societal views and values to recognise and prioritise fundamental interconnections between humans and nature.

- The 2024 **World Wildlife Crime Report** found no significant reduction in wildlife trafficking despite two decades of concerted global efforts. The report highlighted the ongoing threats to biodiversity, ecosystem stability, climate resilience, and socioeconomic benefits. Additionally, it showed that wildlife crime fosters corruption, money laundering, and weakens governance and the rule of law.

- The 2020 **IPBES Workshop Report on Escaping the Era of Pandemics** concluded that without significant changes in the global approach to managing infectious diseases, future pandemics are likely to occur more frequently, spread faster, cause greater economic harm, and result in higher death tolls than COVID-19. In the associated press statement, the Chair of the workshop stated that "*Changes in the way we use land; the expansion and intensification of agriculture; and unsustainable trade, production and consumption disrupt nature and increase contact between wildlife, livestock, pathogens and people. This is the path to pandemics*."

- The 2024 **WWF Living Planet report** reaffirmed that wildlife populations, including species that are threatened with extinction, have experienced catastrophic declines over the past 50 years. Primary drivers include habitat destruction, overexploitation, climate change, pollution, and invasive species.

We thank you in advance for considering our views and recommendations.

Sincerely,

Dr Mark Jones

Head of Policy, Born Free Foundation

The Born Free Foundation is a UK-based international charity committed to promoting compassionate conservation to enhance the survival of threatened species in the wild and protect natural habitats, while respecting the needs and safeguarding the welfare of individual animals. As a leading wildlife charity, we oppose the exploitation of wild animals in captivity and campaign to keep them where they belong – in the wild.

For more information, visit: https://www.bornfree.org.uk/

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