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International environmental policy and governance issues

Information on the implementation of resolution 5/6 on Biodiversity and Health

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

The present report provides an update on progress made in the implementation of the United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 5/6 on Biodiversity and Health, specifically the requests in paragraphs 1 (a)-(d), 3, and 4.

UNEA in its resolution 5/6 requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to:

1. through the significant role played by the United Nations Environment Programme in the Tripartite Alliance, and with other relevant partners, to further assist Member States and members of specialized agencies in taking measures to:
 - a) encourage actions that have positive benefits on the environment given the links between human, animal and ecosystem health;
 - b) institute actions to enhance the availability, quality and timeliness of data for monitoring and surveillance, capacity and capability across One Health sectors, and to support timely detection and responses to health risks linked to environmental factors, in accordance with national circumstances and priorities;
 - c) foster cooperation to address the impacts of biodiversity loss, climate change and other related environmental crises to global health in accordance with the One Health approach;
 - d) foster cooperation in the context of pandemic preparedness, prevention and response and more broadly in the context of health-related research and development, including those that involve

* UNEP/EA.7/1.

genetic resources while taking into account Access and Benefit-Sharing frameworks as appropriate;

3. In collaboration with the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations, the World Health Organisation, and the World Organisation for Animal Welfare and other relevant partners, to support Member States and members of specialized agencies in raising awareness of the drivers of biodiversity loss and their interlinkages with emergence and spread of infectious and noncommunicable diseases, and of the importance of investing in nature and in ecosystem services related to human health, based on the best available science.
4. In partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, and the World Organisation for Animal Health and other relevant partners, subject to the availability of financial resources, to support Member States and members of specialized agencies, upon their request, in assessing the environmental dimensions of health and to highlight these matters within the forthcoming One Health Joint Plan of Action

The resolution does not request the Executive Director to report to UNEA. However, the Executive Director considers it important to appraise Member States on progress in the implementation of the resolution.

II. Progress in the implementation of resolution 5/6

UNEP is fulfilling its mandate under this resolution through three initiatives, namely the Quadripartite Collaboration on One Health (comprised of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), UNEP, the World Health Organisation (WHO), and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)); the Nature4Health initiative; and the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health. These are discussed in turn below.

A. The Quadripartite Collaboration on One Health (The Quadripartite)

In March 2022, UNEP formally joined FAO, WHO, and WOAH to form the One Health Quadripartite Collaboration on One Health through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. In March 2023, UNEP took on the role of Chair of the Quadripartite and led the development of its four strategic priorities, namely implementing the One Health Joint Plan of Action (OH JPA); strengthening science and evidence; advancing political engagement and advocacy; and mobilizing investment to sustain and expand One Health implementation. These priorities were endorsed by the Heads of the four organizations at the Second Quadripartite Executives Annual Meeting, which was held on the margins of UNEA-6 (Nairobi, February 2024). At that meeting, UNEP handed over the Chair of the Quadripartite to WOAH. At the third Quadripartite Executive Annual Meeting (Paris, March 2025), WOAH handed the Chair to FAO, who will continue efforts to strengthen and sustain One Health implementation.

Prior to joining the Quadripartite, UNEP actively participated in the development of the OH JPA, leading the development of its sixth action track, which focuses on integrating the environment into the One Health approach. This action track emphasizes the importance of addressing the drivers of biodiversity loss, climate change, and pollution to reduce risks and negative impacts on human and animal health. UNEP also participated in the development of the Guide to Implementing the One Health Joint Plan of Action, which has been jointly published by the Quadripartite in all six UN languages.

Together with Quadripartite partners, UNEP has supported the implementation of the OH JPA through the rollout of One Health workshops at country and regional level, as well as by providing technical support to countries on embedding environmental considerations into health strategies. In June 2025, a Quadripartite workshop was held to refine the methodology of OH JPA implementation to support uptake and sustainability.

The Quadripartite jointly convenes the One Health High Level Expert Panel (OHHLEP). In its first term, OHHLEP produced several impactful outputs, including a new and broader definition of One Health¹; a One Health theory of change; an inventory of One Health tools; and a definition of the

¹ OHHLEP definition of One Health: "One Health is an integrated, unifying approach that aims to sustainably balance and optimize the health of people, animals and ecosystems. It recognizes that the health of humans, domestic and wild

prevention of zoonotic spillover. UNEP has continued to actively engage in the development of OHHLEP's work plan and outputs in its second term, which focus on identifying barriers and enablers for implementing the OH JPA; mapping governance instruments of relevance to OH; and updating the inventory of One Health tools.

UNEP supported the development and dissemination of knowledge and evidence on One Health. This includes, together with the Quadripartite partners, supporting a global Community of Practice (CoP) on Return on Investment on One Health, as well as establishing and launching a CoP on One Health Governance. In addition, the four Quadripartite partners supported the 8th World One Health Congress (Cape Town, September 2024). UNEP contributed to agenda development, ensuring the inclusion of environmental aspects; participated in the scientific committee by reviewing submissions; and led panel discussions, including a plenary session on environment and health.

UNEP has been instrumental in supporting political engagement and advocacy for the environmental dimensions of One Health, including through joint Quadripartite engagements in high-level political fora. For example, UNEP participated in the G20 Health Ministerial Working Group, which resulted in a G20 health ministerial declaration on climate change, health and equity, and one health in October 2024. As part of that process, UNEP, together with the Quadripartite partners, co-hosted a G20 One Health High-Level Seminar with the government of Brazil under its G20 Presidency, highlighting the importance of strong and coordinated One Health governance.

UNEP was an observer in multiple sessions in the negotiation of the Pandemic Treaty, which was adopted by the World Health Assembly in May 2025. UNEP, together with Quadripartite Partners, also supported the One Health Group of Friends, an informal coalition of Permanent Missions in Geneva with an interest in ensuring that pandemic prevention and the One Health approach were reflected in the Pandemic Treaty.

The Quadripartite continues to pursue solutions to ensure long-term resourcing for One Health efforts to anticipate, prevent, and respond to health threats. To support this, and based on its four strategic priorities, the Quadripartite has developed a Joint Offer that calls for targeted investment to support national and global One Health initiatives.

UNEP is grateful to the generous contributions from Germany (USD 1 million provided by its Ministry of International Cooperation (BMZ) through GIZ; and a Junior Professional Officer provided by its Ministry of the Environment (BMUV)); and Sweden (USD 214 thousand provided through earmarked contributions to UNEP). Thanks to these contributions, UNEP was able to engage staff to support UNEP's participation in the Quadripartite Collaboration, both in headquarters and in six regions. The regional focal points actively engaged in advancing Quadripartite regional initiatives and coordination mechanisms.

B. Nature4Health (N4H)

Through a generous contribution of EUR 50 million provided by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV) via Germany's International Climate Initiative (IKI), UNEP established the Nature4Health (N4H) initiative in 2022. Nature4Health brings together UN agencies, intergovernmental organizations and civil society groups in the field of environment and health, namely, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD); the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the World Health Organization (WHO); the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH); and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Nature4Health has been established as a Multi-Partner Trust Fund and is administered by the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office.

As Secretariat and Chair of the Steering Committee of the Nature4Health initiative, UNEP has promoted the adoption of locally-developed Nature-Based Solutions for Health through systemic and

animals, plants, and the wider environment (including ecosystems) are closely linked and interdependent. The approach mobilizes multiple sectors, disciplines and communities at varying levels of society to work together to foster well-being and tackle threats to health and ecosystems, while addressing the collective need for clean water, energy and air, safe and nutritious food, taking action on climate change, and contributing to sustainable development."

participatory approaches. In line with the OHHLEP definition of primary prevention, Nature4Health aims to reduce the risk of future pandemics resulting from zoonotic spillover by addressing the ecological, meteorological and anthropogenic drivers of pandemic emergence, while strengthening the integration of the environment sector into the One Health approach.

In the course of three overlapping phases between 2023 and 2029, Nature4Health is working in up to 18 countries/regions where biodiversity is under threat and there are substantial risks of zoonotic disease spillover with pandemic potential. The selection of countries/regions for each phase is made through a robust Expression of Interest (EoI) process, which includes review against agreed criteria by an independent Technical Advisory Group established by UNEP. These criteria include commitments to primary prevention, meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples as well as local communities and integration of the environment sector in the process. Based on recommendations made by the TAG, the N4H Steering Committee then makes the final selection based on additional criteria, such as geographical balance and risks to successful implementation.

In mid-2023, UNEP and Nature4Health partners launched a call for expressions of interest for the first phase of the initiative. Sixty Expressions of Interest were submitted by governments, out of which six countries were selected. These were Ecuador, Ghana, Mongolia, Rwanda, Vietnam and Zambia. Their selection was announced in the margins of the 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention of Biological Diversity (Montreal, December 2022). Due to unforeseeable circumstances, however, Zambia withdrew from the initiative and was later replaced by Kenya.

With the support of Nature4Health partners and the financial support of the fund, these countries embarked in scoping phases aimed at designing a 2-3 year-long projects, valued at up to USD 2 million each, aligned with Nature4Health's vision and objectives. The scoping phase is designed as a systemic inquiry that brings together multi-sectoral stakeholders, including Indigenous Peoples as well as local communities, to jointly identify and prioritize key activities to holistically strengthen human, animal and ecosystem resilience and adaptation to shifting health risks. Four of the six countries namely, Ecuador, Ghana, Mongolia and Vietnam have completed their scoping phases and submitted project proposals for review by the TAG and the Secretariat, for eventual consideration by the N4H Steering Committee.

In January 2025, Nature4Health launched a second call for Expressions of Interest, for the selection of up to six additional countries by September 2025. At the time of writing, EoIs were being reviewed by the TAG, with the expectation that selected countries would be announced at the 27th Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) to the CBD (Panama, October 2025).

C. Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health

Adopted at CBD CoP16 (Cali, October 2024) through Decision 16/19, the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health (GAP) builds on previous work undertaken under the CBD, including that conducted in collaboration with the WHO on biodiversity and health interlinkages through a joint work programme from 2012 to 2021. It aims to complement and support the implementation of earlier decisions of the Conference of the Parties on biodiversity and health (decisions XII/21, XIII/6, 14/4, and 15/29) and to facilitate the realization of biodiversity and health co-benefits from the implementation of the Convention and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Prior to its adoption, UNEP participated in the peer review of the GAP along with the Quadripartite Partners. UNEP also advocated for the adoption of the GAP at SBSTTA 26 (Nairobi, May 2024) and CoP16 (Cali, October 2024), including through the convening, together with Nature4Health partners, of the Biodiversity and Health Day events at CoP16. Through Nature4Health, UNEP has mobilized some resources to support the SCBD to undertake its mandates arising from Decision 16/19, including the development of indicators for the GAP.

UNEP sees the GAP as a unique opportunity to mainstream biodiversity, pollution, and climate change into decision-making in various sectors, including health and agriculture, in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Leveraging resources from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to support Enabling Activities for the update of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), UNEP is supporting countries to integrate biodiversity and health into their NBSAPs.

III. Lessons learned

The One Health approach has traditionally focused on surveillance, detection, and response to zoonotic diseases and antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Recognising that health risks are inextricably linked to environmental degradation in all its forms (biodiversity loss, climate change, and pollution), UNEP is advocating for a broader conceptualization of One Health that integrates all environmental determinants of health, while shifting the paradigm from reaction to prevention at source. This is in line with the OHHLEP definition of One Health. Shifting the mindsets of those who have long been involved in the more traditional One Health approach is, however, challenging.

Challenges exist in varying degrees, including sectoral differences in understanding of integrated health approaches, policy formulation and implementation. Although cooperation and coordination are feasible where common objectives exist, different modalities for collaboration need to be established where objectives differ but complementarity and co-benefits can be achieved.

As memory of the COVID-19 pandemic fades in collective memory, maintaining a high political momentum on preventative One Health becomes increasingly challenging. UNEP is working to demonstrate proof of concept of the linkages between biodiversity and health to ensure that commitments of Member States translate into concrete results on the ground.

I. Recommendations and suggested actions

The current financial and geopolitical landscape has directly impacted several Quadripartite initiatives, resulting in their decommissioning. The situation is also having a serious impact on the capacity of UNEP to engage in One Health. Without additional extra-budgetary resources, UNEP may not be able to continue its engagement in the global and regional Quadripartite coordination mechanisms beyond 2025. The Environment Assembly may wish to invite Governments, the private sector, foundations, and other organizations to support the work of UNEP on the Quadripartite through voluntary financial contributions.

Nature4Health currently has resources to support up to 18 countries with limited actions focused on upstream prevention of pandemics until 2029. Nevertheless, the initiative has expanded its terms of reference to address other environmental determinants of health more holistically, in line with the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health. The application process for the Fund demonstrates extremely high demand for support from all regions, with demand far exceeding supply.

Nature4Health's ambition is to mobilize additional resources to support up to 150 countries in the longer term. The Environment Assembly may wish to invite Governments, the private sector, foundations, and other organizations to contribute to the Nature4Health Multi-Partner Trust Fund.