

Statement by Astrid Schomaker, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity

World Health Day (7 April 2025)

“Healthy beginning, hopeful futures” is the inspiring theme of World Health Day this year.

Ending preventable maternal and newborn deaths is crucial for human well-being and prosperous societies. The morbidity and loss of life that biodiversity loss, land degradation and desertification, climate change and pollution and waste are inflicting on humanity illustrate the importance of the universal right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

The symptoms of the crisis are unequivocal. The diagnosis is clear: human-induced pressure is pushing Earth’s biophysical systems towards dangerous tipping points. The treatment is well known: transformative change that fundamentally alters prevailing production and consumption patterns. For some, change on that scale may feel like a hard pill to swallow, but economies will adapt and the natural foundation that sustains all life on Earth will thrive.

Biodiversity is crucial for human well-being, a healthy planet and economic prosperity for all people. We depend on it for food, medicine, energy, clean air and water, protection from natural disasters as well as recreation and cultural inspiration. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) sets out an ambitious blueprint for the transformation of our societies’ relationship with nature.

The 23 action targets of the KMGBF are aligned with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and contribute to their achievement. The streams of national implementation of the KMGBF and the SDGs must reflect this alignment through greater integration and synergies, including for the health and wellbeing of all.

The Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health that Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted at COP 16 in Cali, Colombia, embraces a holistic “One Health” approach that recognizes the health of ecosystems, animals, and humans as interconnected. The Action Plan sets out measures to prevent zoonotic and non-communicable diseases and promote healthy ecosystems. Ultimately, the goal is to foster policies that facilitate the realization of biodiversity and health co-benefits from the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the KMGBF.

Halting biodiversity loss lies at the core of the best health insurance policy the world can elect. Today is an opportunity to reflect and plan action to treat the ailments afflicting the planet and taking a hefty toll on people.