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INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEXAS/ OSGOOD CENTER  
LONE STAR MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2023 (LSMUN)  
**UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY (UNEA)**  
**Background Guide**  
**Richardson, Texas / November 4-5, 2023**



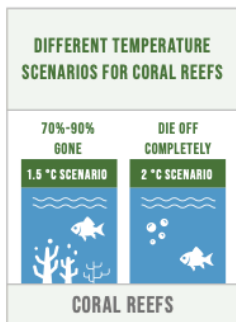
# TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS



## CLIMATE CHANGE

IS HUMANITY'S "CODE RED" WARNING

OUR WINDOW TO AVOID CLIMATE CATASTROPHE IS CLOSING RAPIDLY



ENERGY-RELATED CO<sub>2</sub> EMISSIONS INCREASED

6% IN 2021

REACHING HIGHEST LEVEL EVER

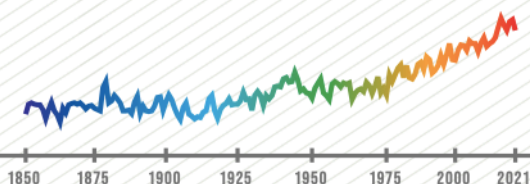


**CLIMATE FINANCE**

FALLS SHORT OF \$100 BILLION YEARLY COMMITMENT

DEVELOPED COUNTRIES PROVIDED \$79.6 BILLION IN CLIMATE FINANCE IN 2019

RISING GLOBAL TEMPERATURES CONTINUE UNABATED, LEADING TO MORE EXTREME WEATHER



Source: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Goal-13-infographic.pdf>

Humanity's environmental challenges have grown in number and severity ever since the Stockholm Conference in 1972 and now represent **a planetary emergency**. While tackling the emergency is demanding, the report, *Making Peace with Nature*, lights **a path to a sustainable future** with new possibilities and opportunities. READ its KEY MESSAGES as you prepare to be a delegate in the UNEA:

#### The top five

- Environmental changes are undermining hard-won development gains by causing economic costs and millions of premature deaths annually. They are impeding progress towards ending poverty and hunger, reducing inequalities and promoting sustainable economic growth, work for all and peaceful and inclusive societies.
- The well-being of today's youth and future generations depends on an urgent and clear break with current trends of environmental decline. The coming decade is crucial. Society needs to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 45 per cent by 2030 compared to 2010 levels and reach net-zero emissions by 2050 to limit warming to 1.5 °C as aspired to in the Paris Agreement, while at the same time conserving and restoring biodiversity and minimizing pollution and waste.
- Earth's environmental emergencies and human well-being need to be addressed together to achieve sustainability. The development of the goals, targets, commitments and mechanisms under the key environmental conventions and their implementation need to be aligned to become more synergistic and effective.
- The economic, financial and productive systems can and should be transformed to lead and power the shift to sustainability. Society needs to include natural capital in decision-making, eliminate environmentally harmful subsidies and invest in the transition to a sustainable future.
- Everyone has a role to play in ensuring that human knowledge, ingenuity, technology and cooperation are redeployed from transforming nature to transforming humankind's relationship with nature. Polycentric governance is key to empowering people to express themselves and act environmentally responsibly without undue difficulty or self-sacrifice.

**PAY ATTENTION** to the third and last messages. With your fellow delegates and your teacher, **ASK** yourself:

**In my words, why do we need to address together environmental challenges together?**

What does it mean that "**polycentric governance**" is key to address environmental challenges and emergencies? **What does this word mean for a globally minded person?**

**CHECK** the whole report:

<https://wedocs.unep.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/34948/MPN.pdf>

## What is the role of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA)?



In a world of interconnected ecosystems and global demands, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) is the highest-level-decision making and universal forum – the only space where representatives from all countries of the world can discuss the environmental threats that the global community faces today. You are probably wondering when UNEA was born, and you will be surprised: UNEA is relatively a “young” body (committee) in the United Nations; **it was created in 2012 at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, also referred to as RIO+20, when world leaders called for UN Environment to be strengthened and upgraded.** In fact, its creation embodies a new era in which the environment is at the center of the international community’s focus and is given the same level of prominence as issues such as peace, poverty, health, and security. Its establishment was the culmination of decades of international efforts, initiated at the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972, and aimed at creating a coherent system of international environmental governance. Today, UNEA plays a significant role in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Goals.

The Assembly meets every two years in person in Nairobi, Kenya, to set priorities for global environmental policies and to develop international environmental law. Due to the COVID-19, the Fifth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly had to meet online for the first part of it. The next meeting (sixth session) of the Assembly is scheduled to take place, in a hybrid format, from February 24 to March 1, 2024. You can also check when the

other UNEA committees and bureaus are scheduled to meet at:  
<https://www.unep.org/environmentassembly/unea-6>

Curious about how things are like? Do you want to hear the real voices of the UNEA representatives? **CHECK** the **MINISTERIAL DECLARATION** for the **SIXTH SESSION** of the United Nations Environment Assembly  
<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/42364/20230505ZerodraftUNEAMD.pdf>

As you might have noticed while reading to declaration, addressing environmental challenges, such as climate change, marine pollution, sustainable management of marine and coastal ecosystems, overfishing, and ocean acidification is at the heart of this once called **“the world’s parliament on the environment”**, included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**READ THE STATEMENTS FROM MEMBER STATES’ REPRESENTATIVES AND REGIONS** as the sixth Environment Assembly, which will meet in 2024, prepares to mobilize its efforts to this global acceleration under the theme of **“Effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution”**:  
<https://press.un.org/en/2023/ecosoc7140.doc.htm>

UNEA is a catalyst for change. Its representatives are convinced that it is urgent for all countries in the world to compromise to promote multilateral actions. For instance, just to understand the urgency, UNEA has conducted research, and it has estimated that **“the volume of plastic pollution entering the ocean each year is expected to double or triple by 2040, threatening all marine life.”** According to the World Economic Forum, plastic pollution is one the five biggest threats to our oceans. **CHECK**:  
<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/06/5-ways-we-can-improve-ocean-health>

**LEARN** about Sustainable Development Goals. **CHECK**: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals> and think about how achieving them requires collective efforts in the global arena. Environmental challenges must be tackled collectively because as Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary, affirmed on the major issue of **ENVIRONMENTAL MULTILATERALISM** three years ago at the Biodiversity Summit, and just days before the UN’s 75th anniversary:

**“Neglecting our precious resources can exacerbate geopolitical tensions and conflicts. Yet, too often, environmental health is neglected or downplayed by other government sectors”.**

THINK about Guterres’ words. They communicate a powerful message biodiversity and its importance. A shift is need to protect our planet’s resources, and especially biodiversity. **Biodiversity is no longer just an environmental issue but is becoming a real geopolitical issue that should no longer be pushed aside in favor of other issues put forward by governments. UNEA is responsible for leading to protect it**

# Environmental degradation threatens the achievement of the SDGs

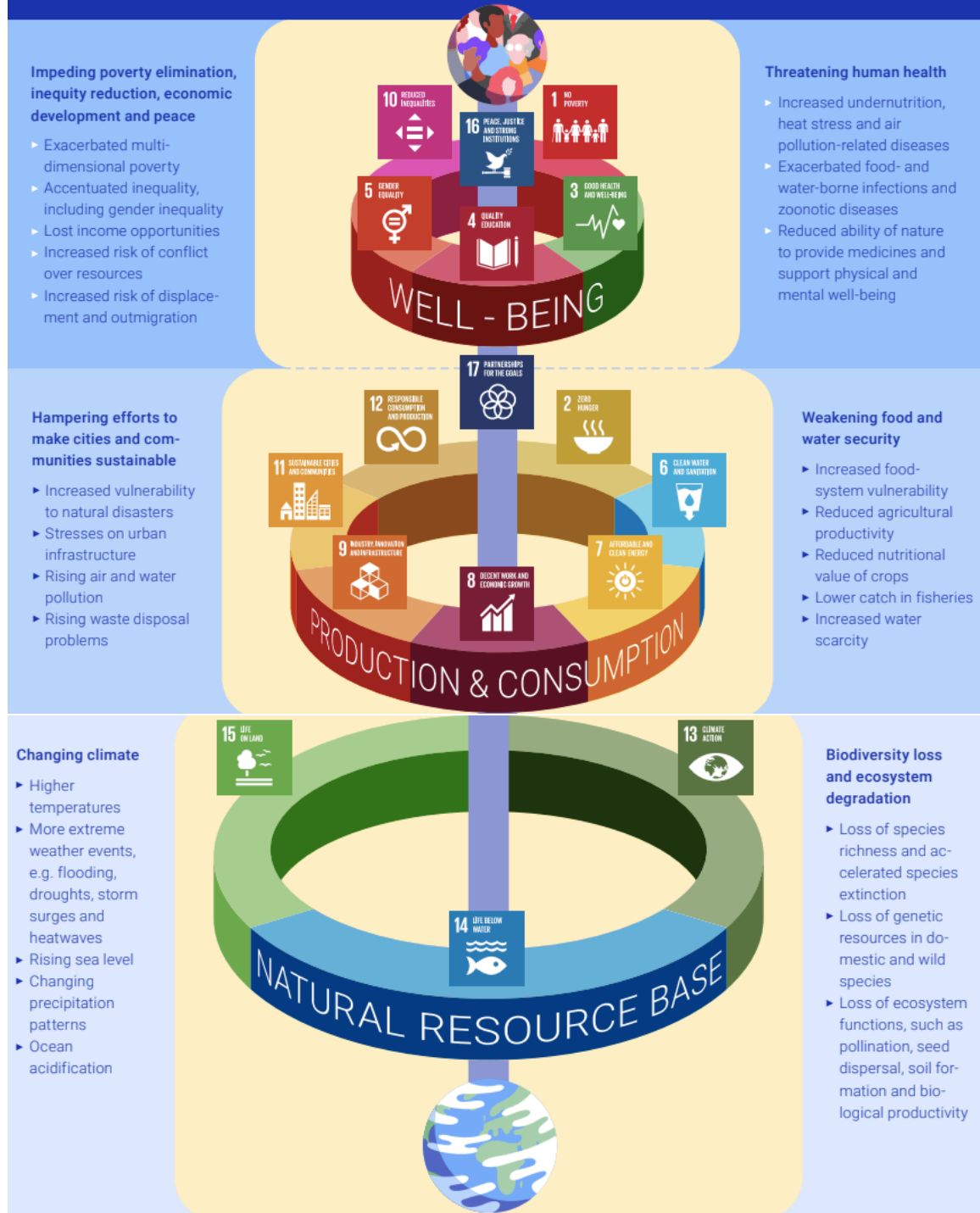


Figure ES.1: Selected environmental changes and related impacts on the SDGs. The clustering of SDGs provides an integrated perspective with the environment as the foundation for the economy, human development and, ultimately, human well-being. Human-induced environmental degradation adversely impacts human well-being.

Source:

<https://wedocs.unep.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/34948/MPN.pdf>

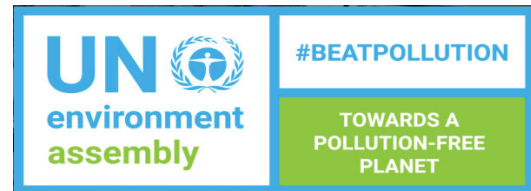
## UNEA matters a lot. Why would that be?

There are a lot of reasons to affirm that this global forum has a relevant job in environmental protection. This entity starts negotiations for new international laws, known as treaties, conventions, and protocols, but its work does not finish in these negotiations (like the ones that you will engage in LSMUN 2023). UNEA experts and stakeholders also identify emerging problems and agree to the next steps to learn and to address them. Its global projects are also of extreme importance because UNEA serves as an international coordinator of their implementation. UNEA oversees the work of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). **LISTEN** to the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, speaking about the importance of UNEA:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uk8-Cu8HW50>

How will average woman benefit from UNEA? **WATCH:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1NpXAO9kIBQ>



## Governance, Structure and Mandate

You can learn more about UNEA in these links:

### Governance and Structure

<https://www.iisd.org/articles/unea-governance> **READ** with these *key words* (acronyms) in mind: OECPR, IPCC, GEO, IPBES and pay attention to the description of its multiple roles as an international organization to protect the environment)

<https://www.unep.org/events/civil-society-events/united-nations-environment-assembly-uneq-uneq>

<https://unfoundation.org/blog/post/the-un-environment-assembly-what-you-need-to-know/>

<https://www.ciel.org/project-update/expanding-engagement-in-international-institutions-the-united-nations-environment-assembly-unea/>

### Mandate and Rules of Procedure

<https://www.unep.org/environmentassembly/un-environment-assembly-rules-procedure>  
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=30022&nr=243&menu=3170>

## RESOURCES TO GET STARTED

### TOPIC 1: PROMOTING EFFECTIVE, INCLUSIVE, AND SUSTAINABLE MULTILATERAL ACTIONS TO TACKLE BIODIVERSITY LOSS, AND CLIMATE CHANGE



#### How can you prepare for multilateral diplomacy to effectively advance the work of UNEA?

<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/21775/Multilateral%20Environmental%20Diplomacy%20and%20Negotiations.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=>

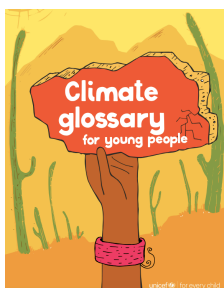
#### What kind of tools and actions are available to promote multilateral actions? What are (MEAs)?

[https://www.sprep.org/acp-meas/what-are-meas#:~:text=Multilateral%20Environmental%20Agreements%20\(MEAs\)%20is,that%20of%20a%20bilateral%20agreement.](https://www.sprep.org/acp-meas/what-are-meas#:~:text=Multilateral%20Environmental%20Agreements%20(MEAs)%20is,that%20of%20a%20bilateral%20agreement.)

#### How can I work with other delegates to produce a MEA or to propose the text of a treaty?

**CHECK:** <http://www.sacep.org/pdf/Reports-Technical/2007-MEA-Negotiators-Handbook.pdf> **PAY ATTENTION** to the timeline in **PAGE 2**

<https://www.unep.org/resources/report/multilateral-environmental-diplomacy>

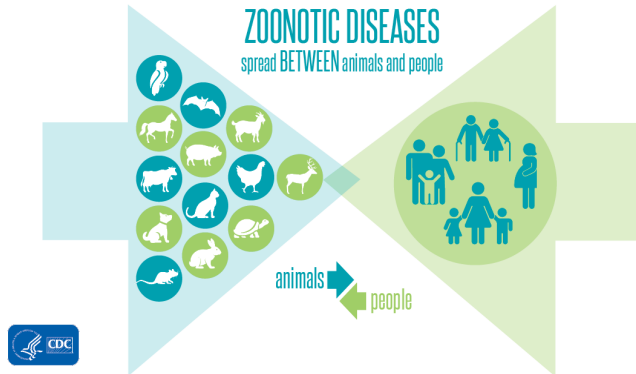


What are other key terms should I know to negotiate global actions to tackle climate change?

**C H E C K** <https://www.unicef.org/lac/media/19321/file/climate-glossary-for-young-people.pdf> to access a complete glossary to be prepared to set goals to advance the work of your committee!



TOPIC 2: PREVENTING THE NEXT PANDEMIC-ZOONOTIC DISEASES AND  
BREAKING THE CHAIN OF TRANSMISSION



**What is zoonosis? Why is it important?**

**WATCH:** <https://www.who.int/initiatives/tripartite-zoonosis-guide#>

**READ** <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/zoonoses>

**CHECK** the resources: <https://www.cdc.gov/onehealth/basics/zoonotic-diseases.html>  
<https://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/publications/print-materials.html#all>

**What should delegates (as decision makers) think about to tackle zoonotic diseases in the UNEA?**

**CHECK:**

<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/32860/ZPKMEN.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

## TOPIC 1: PROMOTING EFFECTIVE, INCLUSIVE, AND SUSTAINABLE MULTILATERAL ACTIONS TO TACKLE BIODIVERSITY LOSS, AND CLIMATE CHANGE



Vanuatu's Prime Minister Ishmael Kalsakau speaks prior to a vote on a resolution aimed at expanding legislation to prevent climate change, at the general assembly hall of the United Nations (UN) headquarters in New York on March 29, 2023.

© Ed Jones, AFP

**Source:** <https://www.france24.com/en/environment/20230329-un-adopts-landmark-resolution-to-define-global-legal-obligations-on-climate-change>

**“We are asking too much of our planet to maintain ways of life that are unsustainable,”** said United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres in June of 2022. He continued stating **“History has shown what can be achieved when we work together and put the planet first.”** These words remind us about the power of collective actions to address environmental problems. In the international arena and as our planetary challenges increase, there is no denial that nations need to work together to solve global problems that transcend the geographical boundaries and affect all of us. **Multilateralism is one answer to engage in meaningful collaboration and to create alliances to achieve environmental goals.**

Our world is not the same as it was when the UN was created over 75 years ago. It isn't 1945. **To better equip the multilateral system for the future, we need to encourage more collaboration and partnerships with experts and stakeholders across sectors.**

Claudette Salinas Leyva, Mexico, 23 years old | Fellowship Focus: Future Generations  
<https://unfoundation.org/blog/post/reimagining-a-multilateral-future-with-by-and-for-young-people/>

### If you are wondering...what is multilateralism?


**Multilateralism** is a process of organizing relations between groups of three or more states. But more than the number of countries involved in concrete actions and agreements, multilateralism speaks about certain principles that guide these countries' actions as they tackle problems together. These guiding principles are an **indivisibility of interests** among

participants, a **commitment to diffuse reciprocity**, and a **system of dispute settlement** intended to enforce a particular mode of behavior. In other words, when nations engage in multilateralism, they work to find common grounds to reach agreements with shared goals and principles to solve conflicts.

- In a multilateral system, the costs and benefits of international cooperation cannot be judged on a single interaction. Multilateralism creates a mechanism for constant bargaining that generates concessions and gains, with opportunities to balance their gains and losses over the long term.
- It allows all parties to participate in the decision-making process and to make their voices heard. Moreover, multilateral decisions are based on collegial agreements.
- The core of multilateralism is cooperation. The multilateral system provides a space for international actors to coordinate. It also fosters the exchange of information as well as good practices. It is space to settle disputes through dialogue, persuasion and respect for collective norms.
- In short, under multilateral negotiations, no party gets everything, but all parties get something.

## Multilateralism and deodorant.... CHECK:

<https://sites.ungeneva.org/multiwhat/#daily-life> to read examples of how multilateral actions have influenced your life...deodorants, emails, ATMs, weekends...**all have in common...multilateralism...**



## Multilateralism in your daily life

**A few examples of how multilateralism shapes and enhances our lives**

### MULTILATERAL COOPERATION AND OUR DEODORANT

Many of us start the day using hairspray, shaving cream, or deodorant. Did you know that all of these are connected to one of the most successful multilateral initiatives?

In the 1970s scientists started studying the effects of an accumulation of certain gases in the atmosphere's stratospheric ozone layer. Chlorofluorocarbon gases (CFCs) used in aerosol cans and refrigerators were identified as the main cause of the 'ozone hole'. The dangers of increased UV radiation to human and animal health posed by ozone depletion led to the international community coordinating a response through the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone in 1985.

This convention aims to promote cooperation through the exchange of information on the effects of human activities on the ozone layer and measures to prevent further harm to the ozone layer. The Vienna Convention was complemented by the Montreal Protocol in 1987 which controls the production and consumption of specific chemicals, particularly CFCs. To help states achieve their obligations to eliminate the use of these chemicals a multilateral fund was established to provide financial assistance to developing countries. With the successful

**WATCH** these videos to hear UN representatives speak about the power behind **multilateral actions**: [https://youtu.be/trGJF\\_ms9B4](https://youtu.be/trGJF_ms9B4)  
<https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/speech/multilateral-action-human-rights-and-healthy-environment>

Environmental multilateralism is vital because it provides a platform for global consensus on key environmental issues. I work backend, enabling Member States representatives to meet and advance the green agenda virtually.  
--Granham Janji, UN Volunteer ECT Assistant and Development Officer with UNEP in Kenya

**CHECK some examples of MEAs currently in force in the United States**  
<https://www.epa.gov/international-cooperation/selected-multilateral-environmental-instruments-force-us>

An essential point to remember is that, because climate change, and ecosystem degradation do not respect frontiers national, **actions and policies (norms) should reflect global, not just local impacts.** This makes it unlikely that unilateral (one side) national policy actions would be enough—even assuming they could overcome domestic political obstacles. **Multilateral cooperation is crucial. Multilateralism helps countries contribute to the wellbeing of those outside their borders, knowing that other countries are doing the same.** Just to cite an example, this was the spirit that motivated the breakthrough at **COP-21** in 2015—whereby countries committed under the **Paris Agreement** to contain the increase in global temperatures above pre-industrial levels to well below 2 degrees Celsius. And this spirit underlies ongoing efforts to implement and strengthen that agreement, which requires a shift to a zero-carbon economy over the next few decades.

Multilateralism tries to ensure that everyone has a seat at the table. **However, it needs to address the unequal distribution of power and resources among countries and ensure that marginalized groups and voices are heard — not only at a special summit, but in every decision that's taken.**

Claudette Salinas Leyva, Mexico, 23 years old | Fellowship Focus: Future Generations

As our planet heats, and its ecosystems fall apart, there is no denying humanity's collective responsibility and even failure. The triple planetary crisis is a manifestation of greed over solidarity; inequality over equity; short-term gain over long-term loss. Multilateral actions in 2022 have shown how international human rights law is a vital tool to attempt reverting this situation too.

The recognition of the right to a healthy environment by the Council was an important step in this direction – one which was called for and welcomed by rights-holders across the globe. The Human Rights Council reminded States of their obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights.

## What is a multilateral environmental agreement (MEA)?



The term **multilateral environmental agreement (MEA)** refers to the legally binding international tools that are used by Members States to commit to the achievement of specific environmental goals. These agreements have multiple names, such as conventions, treaties, agreements, and protocols. Nonetheless, the difference in their names does not change the legally binding nature of the agreement. So long as the agreement is intended to be governed by international law and creates binding international obligations, it is an international treaty. The 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties makes this clear. It defines a treaty as an international agreement concluded between States in written form and governed by international law, whether embodied in a single instrument or in two or more related instruments and whatever its designation. **As a principle of international treaty law, multilateral environmental agreements, like any treaty, bind only those States that have agreed to be bound by it. However, multilateral environmental agreements can affect non-Parties, for example by prohibiting or restricting trade by Parties with non-Parties.** Multilateral environmental agreements might be stand-alone documents that name all the relevant requirements, or they can provide a framework for future and more specific agreements. Some multilateral environmental agreements heavily rely on **appendices** that are updated from time to time by the Conference of the Parties established to supervise the agreement.

**CHECK** to learn more about MEAs:

<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/21491/MEA-handbook-Vietnam.pdf?sequence=1&amp%3BisAllowed=>

**We Must Follow Science, Engage in Multilateral Action to Make Peace with Nature, Secretary-General Tells United Nations Environment Assembly**

**CHECK:** <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sgsm21165.doc.htm>

**What is needed to promote environmental multilateralism?**

**CHECK:** [https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/Note\\_CED\\_Multilateralism\\_0.pdf](https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/Note_CED_Multilateralism_0.pdf)

**REINVIGORATING MULTILATERALISM**  
to protect the environmental commons

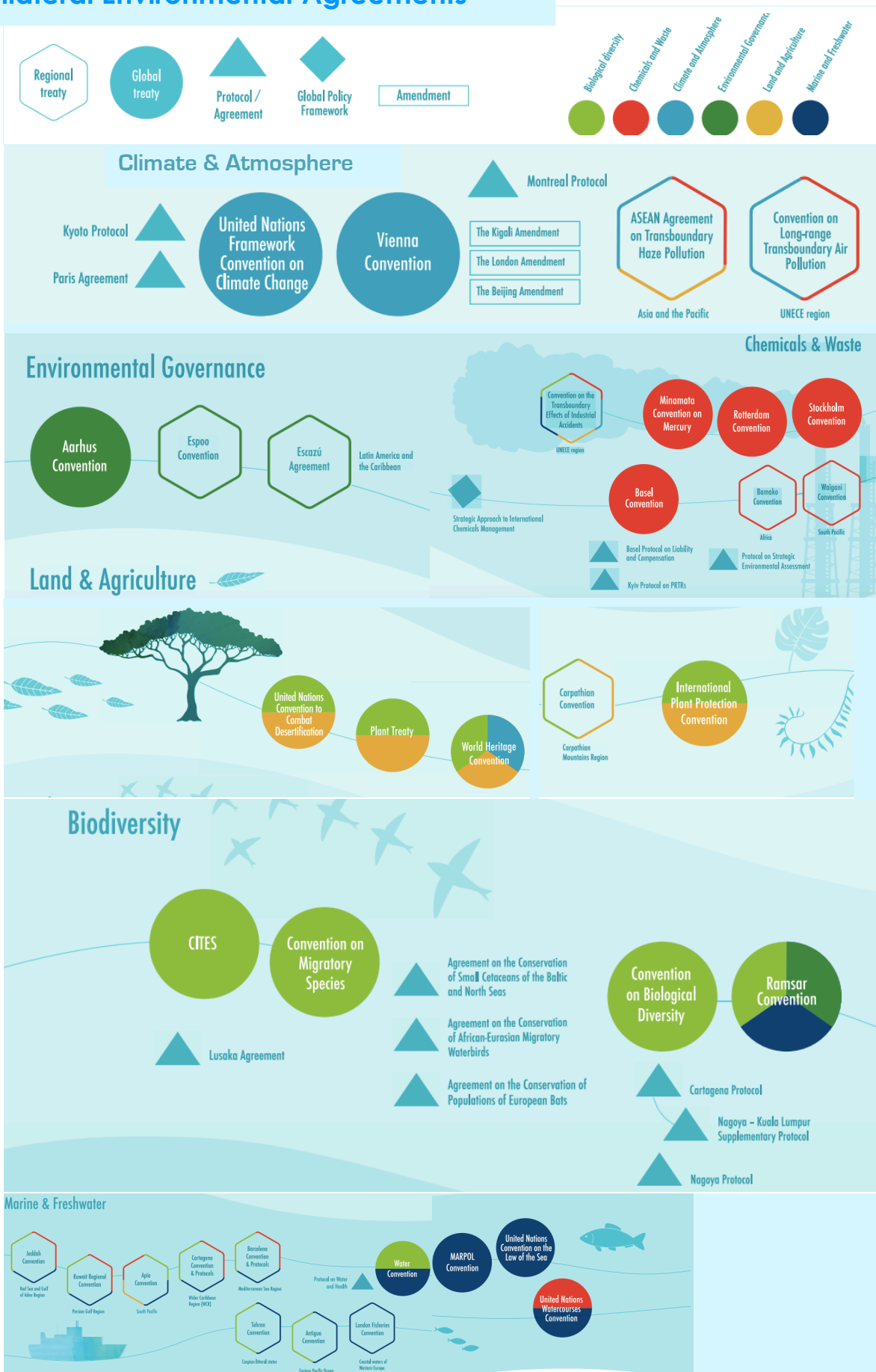


**Figure 1: Key elements for reinvigorating multilateralism.**  
Source: ESCAP, 2022.

<b>Table 1.</b> <b>Reinvigorating multilateralism for protecting the environmental commons</b>				
<b>Solidarity</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote equitable regional actions to address vulnerability and marginalization</li> <li>Ensure equitable access to, and influence on multilateral cooperation for all countries and stakeholder groups                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Climate justice and environmental rights mainstreaming</li> </ul> </li> <li>Mainstream integrated approaches including green growth, sustainable blue economy, One-Health and related health-environment concepts through sub-regional, regional, and international collaboration</li> </ul>				
	<b>Information sharing, transparency and evidence for action</b>	<b>Accountability measures</b>	<b>Coordinated, networked &amp; participatory action</b>	<b>Economics system &amp; financing interventions</b>
 <b>Climate action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement “blue carbon readiness assessments”, including valuation of coastal wetlands’ mitigation and adaption benefits</li> <li>Support city level climate action plans which localize Nationally Determined Contributions through regional platforms such as the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have an accountability process in place to ensure countries implement obligations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and Paris Agreement</li> <li>Harmonize NDC targets and goals across the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a regional Carbon Neutrality Partnership</li> <li>Establish a regional GHG emissions inventory community of practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate regional cooperation in the development of carbon pricing instruments such as carbon taxes or emissions-trading system</li> <li>Facilitate regional climate finance incubators to support decarbonization projects</li> </ul>
 <b>Nature action (including biodiversity, marine &amp; terrestrial ecosystems)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish regular scientific dialogues and assessments to address contentious regulatory vacuums around environmental issues, such as deep-sea mining, carbon dioxide removal, marine pollution</li> <li>Establish multi-country and multi-stakeholder data-sharing platforms to better understand transboundary challenges including incorporating artificial intelligence to better manage marine plastics, freshwater use, landscape restoration, among others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen linkages and complementarity between regional and global accountability process to ensure implementation of obligations under agreements such as the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, and the outcomes of the Food Systems Summit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional coordination and synergies across programmes, working towards priority goals aligned with the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030, and the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021–2030, including establishment of regional networks of interconnected marine and terrestrial protected areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multi-stakeholder regional expert body on financing for sustainable agriculture and ecosystem restoration</li> <li>Regional cooperation initiatives to promote green and blue economies</li> </ul>

**CHECK** the guiding questions in **pages 30-34** to address matters of effectiveness, representation, accountability, neutrality when engaging in multilateral actions:  
<http://rio20.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/multilateralism.pdf>

# Multilateral Environmental Agreements



Source: [https://zoinet.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/InforMEA\\_A1\\_FA.pdf](https://zoinet.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/InforMEA_A1_FA.pdf)

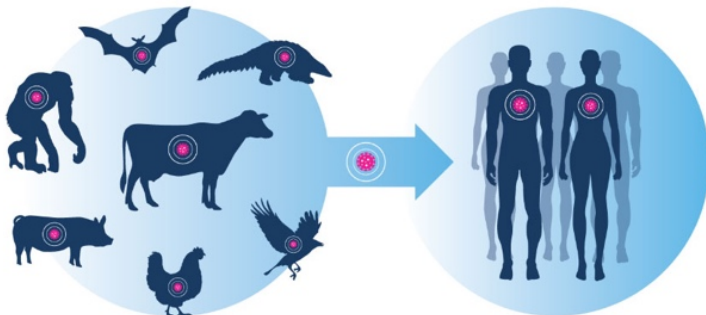
## TOPIC 2: PREVENTING THE NEXT PANDEMIC-ZOONOTIC DISEASES AND BREAKING THE CHAIN OF TRANSMISSION

### What is the problem? What is zoonosis?



You have probably heard of **Louis Pasteur**, the French biologist who succeeded administrating the first vaccine against rabies on July 6 of 1885. You probably have not heard of the **World Zoonoses Day**, which takes place annually on July 6th, and you have not heard about **zoonosis**. A zoonosis is an **infectious disease** that has transitioned (travelled) from a vertebrate animal to humans. **Zoonotic pathogens (tiny organisms (called microorganisms) that invade the body and make it sick)** can be bacterial, viral, or parasitic, and can spread to humans by direct contact with domestic, agricultural, or wild animals, or through food and water. **They can cause many different types of illness in people ranging from mild to serious, and even death.**

**Zoonoses such as COVID-19 are diseases that are transmitted from animals to humans**



**75%** of newly emerging infectious diseases are zoonoses

**60%** of infectious diseases in humans are spread from animals

Zoonotic diseases are responsible for an estimated **2.5 billion cases of illness** and **2.7 million deaths** worldwide, each year

Some of the most dangerous zoonotic diseases include the **COVID-19, AVIAN FLU, SALMONELLOSIS, AND THE EBOLA VIRUS.**

**Source:** <https://www.gavi.org/vaccineswork/what-are-zoonotic-diseases-and-how-dangerous-are-they>





**WATCH** this video to get additional information and to **LEARN** how the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**, another agency of the United Nations, is working to combat **zoonotic diseases**:

<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/multimedia/videos/zoonosis-is-what-is-a-zoonotic-disease>

## What is the nature and the scale of the problem?



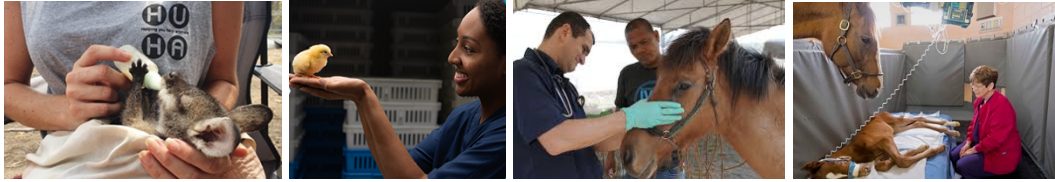
**WATCH:** <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/13082020/zoonotic-diseases-coronavirus-climate-change-video/>

“There is overwhelming scientific proof that the triple environmental crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution are an existential threat for Nature, animals, and humankind. At the global level, the COVID-19 pandemic has been the worst social, environmental, and economic crisis of our lifetimes. Outbreaks of **zoonotic diseases have increasingly been recognized as the results of current unsustainable production and consumption patterns and humankind’s vulnerable relationship with Nature and animals, and they require us all to urgently transform our food systems.**

The pandemic was a wakeup call to speed up global environmental decision-making, to step up ambition and to increase the pace and scale of implementation efforts. Global leaders affirmed that we need to learn from the experience of the pandemic and invest in the safe, sustainable management of natural resources, conservation, and restoration of ecosystems. It is critical that all governments take courageous and transformative decisions and actions now, based on foresight and precaution, in line with scientific evidence and human rights. **CHECK:** <https://eeb.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/MG-joint-statement-UNEA-5.1-FINAL.pdf>

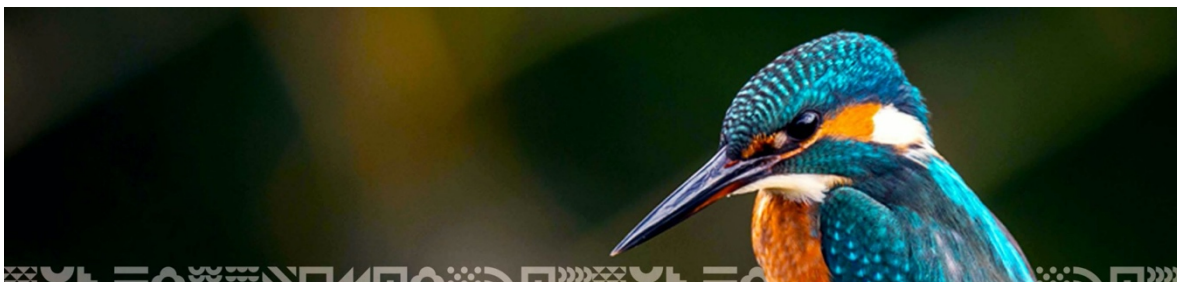
## What does zoonotic diseases have to do with the environment?

### Animal Welfare



On March 2 of 2021, **Member States at United Environment Assembly (UNEA) adopted a pioneering resolution recognizing the link between animal welfare, environment, and sustainable development.** This resolution dubbed Animal Welfare – Environment – Sustainable Development Nexus resolution was adopted at the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA). **It is the first-ever resolution to be tabled and approved with explicit reference to animal welfare.**

The resolution was sponsored by seven member states – Ghana, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and Pakistan – and called on the Executive Director of the UN Environment Program (UNEP) to produce a report in close collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Health Organization (WHO), World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), One-Health High-Level Expert Panel, and other stakeholders on the nexus between animal welfare, the environment, and sustainable development.



**This resolution matters a lot.** The Sustainable Development Agenda set out in UN General Assembly Resolution 70/1 envisaged a world in which **“humanity lives in harmony with nature and in which wildlife and other living species are protected”**. However, dedicated action to protect animals and their welfare in the UN policy process has been insufficient to date, with devastating consequences for biodiversity loss, climate change, pollution, and global public and environmental health. With this resolution, the Assembly is now providing the much-needed leadership to catalyze intergovernmental action for the environment.

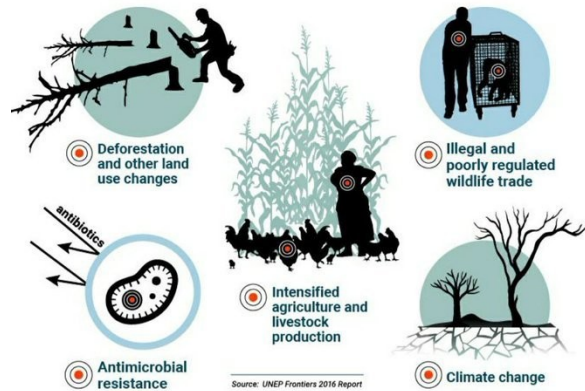
#### **CHECK:**

<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/39795/ANIMAL%20WELFARE%E2%80%93ENVIRONMENT%E2%80%93SUSTAINABLE%20DEVELOPMENT%20NEXUS.%20English.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>  
<https://www.anaw.org/index.php/details/item/114-an-animal-welfare-nexus-resolution-for-sustainable-development-adopted-in-march-at-unea-5-2>

Researchers say that the destruction of natural habitats caused by urbanization has increased the risk of zoonotic diseases due to greater contact between humans and wild animals.

As global trade and travel expands, zoonoses are posing increasing concerns for the international community - as most prominently borne out by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), markets selling the meat or by-products of wild animals are especially high-risk due to the large numbers of undocumented pathogens known to exist in some animal populations.

#### What factors are increasing zoonosis emergence? (Diseases transmitted from animals to humans)



#COVID19

UN  
environment  
programme

#### Is it part of the problem how we frame the problem and its solutions?

It is fair to say that part of the problem has to do with the way in which we look at the risks of zoonotic diseases. Is the spread of zoonotic diseases a local problem? Is it a global threat? Do we have to think about connections and cycles? Do we need to isolate the variables? **Combating zoonotic diseases requires a broader approach to combine the knowledge and experiences of people and communities from different fields and diverse perspectives.** One approach that brings together this multiplicity of resources from various disciplines, sectors, individuals, and communities is the **ONE HEALTH** approach.



Do you need an example of this **ONE HEALTH** approach? **WATCH:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57T2eoPAwTs> The video provides an example of a **ONE HEALTH APPROACH** applied to a zoonotic disease called the Pork Tapeworm.



# Why is **ONE** Health IMPORTANT?



Human health is closely connected to the health of animals and our shared environment.



Changes in climate and land use affect animal habitat and movement.



**SOURCE:** <https://www.cdc.gov/onehealth/pdfs/why-one-health-is-important-P.pdf>

But **ONE Health** isn't just about zoonotic diseases.  
Other issues that can benefit from a **ONE Health** approach include:



#### ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE

Antibiotic-resistant germs can quickly spread through communities, the food supply, healthcare facilities, and the environment (soil, water), making it harder to treat certain infections in animals and people.



#### VECTOR-BORNE DISEASES

Vector-borne diseases are on the rise with warmer temperatures and expanded mosquito and tick habitats. Vectors are mosquitoes, ticks and fleas that spread disease. A person who gets bitten by a vector and gets sick has a vector-borne disease.



#### FOOD SAFETY AND SECURITY

Diseases in food animals can threaten food supplies, livelihoods, and economies.



#### MENTAL HEALTH

The human-animal bond can help improve mental well-being.



#### ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINATION

Contamination of water used for drinking, recreation, and more can make people and animals sick.

Recognizing these connections means a healthier world for all.  
The **ONE Health** approach can:



**Prevent** outbreaks of zoonotic disease in animals and people



**Improve** food safety and security and economies reliant on livestock production



**Reduce** antibiotic-resistant infections and improve human and animal health



And **protect** global health security

The **ONE Health** approach helps protect the health of all living beings by bringing experts across fields together to solve problems threatening humans, animals, and the environment.



# ONE HEALTH

## BY PROTECTING ANIMALS, WE PRESERVE OUR FUTURE

Animal and human sectors work together to protect health and ensure food safety and security

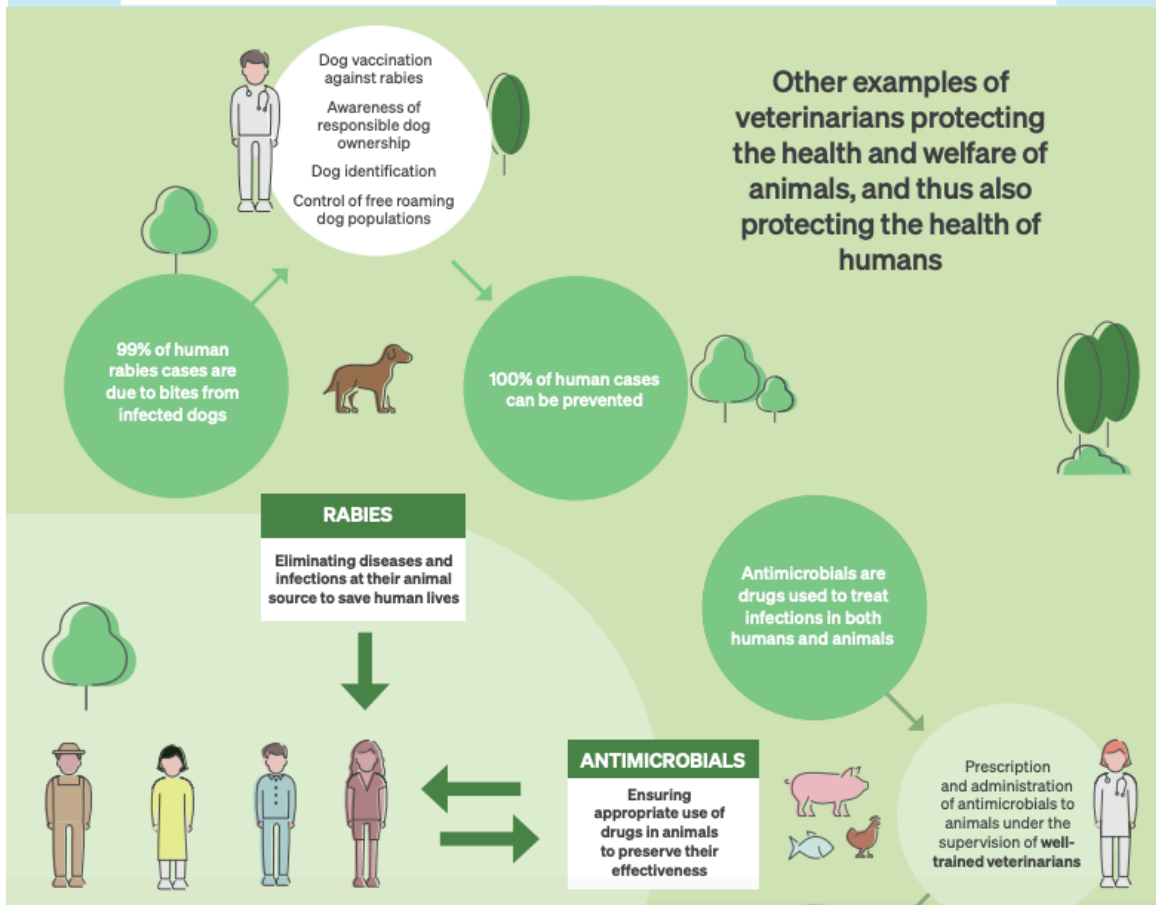
60% of human pathogens are of animal origin

5 new human diseases appear each year

20% of animal production losses are caused by diseases globally

With regards to animal health, veterinarians are key players of the 'One Health' approach

Early detection of diseases and infections at their animal source can prevent transmission to humans or introduction of pathogens into the food chain



What can governments and different authorities do to embrace a ONE HEALTH approach to deal with zoonoses? Check this example:

## Preventing and controlling neglected parasitic zoonoses

A key role for the animal health sector

### 1 NEGLECTED PARASITIC ZOOSES

These diseases are caused by parasites such as *Taenia solium*, *Trichinella*, *Echinococcus* and *Fasciola*. They are often forgotten or overlooked because:

- they cause mild, chronic or no disease in animals
- economic losses might not be evident
- primarily affect the most vulnerable and marginalised communities

Animals are crucial in the transmission of neglected parasitic zoonoses. The animal health sector\* plays a vital role in breaking parasitic cycles by leading and implementing control measures in animals.

\*includes veterinarians and animal health practitioners, veterinary authorities, meat inspectors, animal traders, policy-makers and others.



### 3 ACTIONS FOR THE ANIMAL HEALTH SECTOR

The animal health sector can contribute to preventing and controlling neglected parasitic zoonoses.

Field veterinarians and other animal health practitioners can:

Create awareness among farmers and local communities.

Provide guidance to animal owners on how to prevent and control the diseases.

Diagnose the diseases and alert animal owners and authorities.

Tailor the prevention and control measures to the local and epidemiological conditions.

Ensure that the recommendations are feasible for the farmers to implement.



Veterinary authorities can:

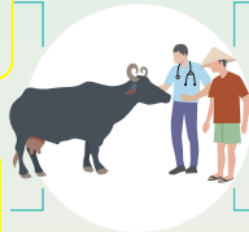
Establish surveillance programmes.

Provide an enabling policy environment.

Conduct awareness campaigns.

Set up and support control programmes.

Liaise with human health authorities and others as needed.



Veterinary authorities should provide leadership, support and resources to implement the needed actions

SOURCE: [https://rr-asia.woah.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/13-poster-ts-preventing-controlling-npzs-web-version\\_rebranded.pdf](https://rr-asia.woah.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/13-poster-ts-preventing-controlling-npzs-web-version_rebranded.pdf)

The first outbreak of COVID-19 was initially suspected to have originated in a market in Wuhan, China. However, this has still not been confirmed and the WHO Director General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said that **“all hypotheses remain on the table”**.

### Heightened disease transmission risk

The UN estimates the global population will grow to 9.7 billion by 2050. A growing global population means a rising demand for food. This has led to an increased susceptibility to food-borne zoonoses, according to the Lancet scientific journal.

Pathogens in the livestock production chain have caused repeated outbreaks of disease from meat and dairy products, as well as meat by-products used for food flavoring, oils or stock. Farming practices in some parts of the world - in terms of method of confinement, mixing species, feeding, and slaughtering, as well as inadequate disease-control methods - increase the likelihood of zoonotic diseases spreading in livestock and can provide a source of new infections in human populations, says the Lancet. How products are stored, packed, transported, and prepared for consumption also affects the chances of outbreaks of disease.

Although consumption of wildlife products for food globally is considerably less than it is for domestic livestock, estimates of annual meat consumption in Central African countries alone total around 1 billion kg. The Lancet says reducing demand isn't straightforward, as increasing “livestock production in countries without adequate disease-management practices could lead to the emergence of new pathogens due to the introduction of new hosts”.

“Effective mitigation of the impact of endemic and new zoonotic diseases requires multisectoral collaboration. The World Economic Forum has worked with different sectors to establish public-private partnerships to help identify pathogens through proper surveillance and data sharing which will help us prevent, diagnose and treat zoonotic diseases.”

### What should your committee discuss?

What global agreement is needed to protect the world from future zoonotic diseases?

<https://www.who.int/news/item/03-03-2023-countries-begin-negotiations-on-global-agreement-to-protect-world-from-future-pandemic-emergencies>

[https://apps.who.int/gb/inb/pdf\\_files/inb4/A\\_INB4\\_3-en.pdf](https://apps.who.int/gb/inb/pdf_files/inb4/A_INB4_3-en.pdf)

<https://www.four-paws.org/our-stories/blog-news/human-animal-planetary-health>



# Why is an international treaty on pandemics needed?

## 10 incentives and benefits of an international treaty on pandemics

1



Faster and better information for signatory countries about pandemic threats

2



Greater certainty for citizens regarding equitable access to pandemic countermeasures (e.g. diagnostics, medicines, vaccines)

3



Cost-effective solutions, based on regional and global planning, for stockpiling and production of pandemic supplies in, or near, a given country

4



A guaranteed "seat at the table" for national leaders at all treaty fora where decisions on pandemic preparedness and response will be taken

5



More secure global supply chains and sufficient healthcare workers during pandemics

6



Clarity about each country's core capacities

7



Insight into research and development on pandemic solutions, and better sharing of R&D solutions

8



Greater confidence that all partners are doing their part, through fair accountability systems

9



Integration of the 'one health' approach into the global health architecture, thereby improving prevention by connecting the health of humans, animals and the planet

10



Partnership and networking with national counterparts in overcoming the threat of future pandemics, and with all other relevant actors (international organisations, civil society, private sector)

