

ACT NOW TO PREVENT NEW PANDEMICS

APPEAL TO G20 LEADERS: REDUCE RISK OF NEW PANDEMICS BY ADDRESSING THEIR ROOT CAUSES

THREE STEPS TO GLOBAL RECOVERY AND REGENERATION

As the world continues to reel from the harmful impacts of COVID-19, it is imperative that our leaders urgently find ways to prevent new devastating zoonotic outbreaks.

Global experts and change leaders convened on September 2nd, 2021 at a roundtable co-hosted by the Vatican COVID-19 Commission, EndPandemics and United for Regeneration to discuss specific recommendations that G20 Leaders can take up at their summit in Rome in October 2021. These discussions build on earlier expert proceedings, including the recently published *Roadmap to End Pandemics*,¹ the WC20 Declaration,² and other reports,³ and are summarized by the roundtable co-chairs as follows:

- Acknowledging that COVID-19 has inflicted more acute harm to the planet than any terrorist act or natural disaster in the last 100 years, thereby representing the greatest current threat to national and international security;
- Acknowledging the limitations of post-spillover interventions, such as vaccines, that are only good for one disease, benefit the rich first, and offer no ancillary benefits;
- Acknowledging the root cause of pandemics is over-exploitation of nature, including commercial trade of wild animals, and conversion of wild habitat for commercial use -- factors that also drive biodiversity loss and climate change;
- Acknowledging that the annual cost of preventing pandemics is less than 1% of the cost of recovering from COVID-19;
- Acknowledging that all of these threats can be mitigated by investing in nature-based solutions that also positively impact local communities;
- Acknowledging that G20 and other nations have already committed to environmental targets that, if implemented, will mitigate the risk of pandemic recurrence;

The Co-Chairs of this Roundtable recommend the following two sets of actions enabled by a finance mechanism that will save the global community trillions of dollars:

¹ EndPandemics. June 2021. Roadmap to End Pandemics: Building It Together.
<https://endpandemics.earth/roadmap>

² WC20 Declaration. 20 November 2020.
<https://www.independent.co.uk/world/wc20-declaration-wildlife-conservation-g20-b1759552.html>

³ Harvard Global Health Institute. August 2021.
<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/c-change/news/PreventingPandemicsResearch/>

1. Prevent Risk of Pandemics from the Trade in Wild Animals:

i. Create an Independent Panel to determine the legality of commercial trade of wild animals (including wildlife farming) going forward. Options to consider should include:

- a. Ban all commercial trade in wild animals;
- b. Ban only trade in “high risk” species;
- c. Amend CITES to include non-detriment-to-human-health findings before trade.

Note: No level of ban would impact indigenous use and/or subsistence hunting.

- ii. Pause cross-border trade in wild animals until the Independent Panel concludes.⁴
- iii. Institutionalize campaigns to reduce commercial demand for wild animals.⁵
- iv. Add Wildlife Crime to United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

2. Prevent Risk of Pandemics Caused by Destructive Land Use Practices

i. Adopt and implement the 30x30 target of the UN Biodiversity Convention’s Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to ensure at least 30 percent of each country’s land areas and sea areas are conserved by 2030.⁶

ii. Support UN Food Systems Summit 2021 recommendations for a sustainable food future, namely: (a) increase food production without expanding agricultural land; and (b) protect and restore natural ecosystems and limit agricultural land-shifting.⁷

iii. Incentivize regenerative agriculture practices because they strengthen biodiversity, mitigate risk of zoonotic outbreaks, sequester carbon, sustain livelihoods, and produce healthier foods that improve individual and global immunity. Reduce and convert a portion of industrial agriculture subsidies to investments in regenerative agriculture, saving significant money and mitigating pandemic risk.

3. Establish Planetary Health Defense Funding Mechanism

Using existing expertise, including that convened by this Roundtable, finance the above-listed nature-based solutions through a Planetary Health Defense Fund by pooling \$50 billion a year (less than 1% the cost of repairs from COVID-19) for 10 years, drawing from existing G20 nation budgets, including national security and agricultural subsidies.

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⁴ Offer legal dealers one-off compensation for their loss in income and to help transition into new livelihood. Use funds from the new Planetary Health Defense funding mechanism described in 3.

⁵ Increase government support for, and involvement in, social behavior change communications campaigns, partly by transitioning to safer and more sustainable alternatives.

⁶ UN CBD Secretariat 2021. CBD/WG2020/3/3. With due priority to areas where diseases are most likely to emerge.

⁷ World Resources Report 2019. Creating a Sustainable Food Future.