

## Press Release

### Six countries join Nature for Health to advance global efforts in upstream pandemic prevention

**Montreal, 15 December 2022** – The [Nature for Health Initiative](#) (N4H) hosted a side event at the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP 15) in Montreal to introduce its first partner countries: Ecuador, Ghana, Mongolia, Rwanda, Vietnam and Zambia. These Country Partners will work with the N4H Consortium Partners, leading United Nations agencies, intergovernmental organisations and civil society groups in the field of environment and health, to reduce the risk of pandemics through upstream prevention of zoonotic disease spillover.

Zoonotic diseases such as SARS, Ebola and Zika are emerging as a result of environmental degradation, climate change, land use changes, biodiversity loss, animal husbandry and wildlife trade and consumption. [75% of new human infectious diseases originate with animals](#) and then spill over into humans, and this figure is increasing due to anthropogenic pressures.

The human suffering and economic cost of pandemics are enormous: COVID-19 has already caused over [6.5 million deaths](#) and cost the global economy [USD 12.5 trillion](#). The price of prevention is estimated to be just a small fraction of this cost – [at most 1%](#).

During the side event, countries discussed how prevention can be achieved by investing in the upstream environmental drivers of zoonotic pandemics, stopping them from emerging in the first place. N4H and its Country Partners explored how to overcome potential barriers and advance the post-2020 global biodiversity framework currently being negotiated under the auspices of CBD COP 15.

The side event featured high-level addresses, including by Ministers from new Country Partners and a panel discussion between diverse expert voices in the preventative One Health space. The focus was on preparation for the N4H implementation phase, which will demonstrate the linkages between biodiversity, climate change and pandemic risk whilst advancing the implementation of One Health at the national level. The side event closed with a discussion around next steps and N4H's role in contributing to an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

Steffi Lemke, German Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection, highlighted the importance of N4H's work: "It is very encouraging to see that the rationale on including biodiversity in the One Health approach is receiving more and more attention at all levels and strongly resonates with the needs of our partners. We are impressed by the high interest in partnering with the N4H initiative, also through its fund. The strong commitment of six frontrunner countries is breathing life into the initiative. It will contribute to leveraging ambition for implementation of the GBF."

The event was convened by N4H and the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV), who have generously funded the first phase of N4H's work through an initial contribution of 50m EUR via [Germany's International Climate Initiative](#) (IKI).

**For more information** on the side event please contact [info@nature4health.net](mailto:info@nature4health.net).