

Statement made by DIVERSITAS to the CBD COP12 High level segment Panel 3: Nature-based Solutions to Global Challenges

Thank you Mr/Madam Chair
Ministers, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

DIVERSITAS is the international global scientific programme dedicated to biodiversity science, under the auspices of UNESCO and ICSU, the International Council for Science.

The mission of DIVERSITAS and its projects, bioDISCOVERY, bioGENESIS, ecoSERVICES, ecoHEALTH, and GMBA, is to engage scientists in international collaborative research activities that produce new knowledge to inform decision making on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

DIVERSITAS would like to highlight three CBD-related activities discussed in the context of COP12 in which we have been honoured to be involved, and which demonstrate the contribution of biodiversity to addressing the global challenges.

One, contribution to the Global Biodiversity Outlook 4.

- a) DIVERSITAS and its partners coordinated this development and publication of the technical document in support of the Global Biodiversity Outlook 4 and published as the Technical Series 78. This document paves the way for further actions to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets by 2020. The assessment has highlighted many ways in which conservation of biodiversity contributes directly or indirectly to several Sustainable Development Goals such as food and water security, poverty alleviation, disaster risk reduction, or climate mitigation and adaptation. Based on the current knowledge, the biodiversity community is in a position of developing biodiversity-based solutions not only through the maintenance and restoration of the foundation of Earth's life support systems, but also through the provision of benefits for all nations, rich and poor, such as good mental and physical health, fertile soils and food, clean water and air, and a safe and secure climate and environment in which to live.

As an example, the conservation of crop wild relatives (CWR) is important to maintain food security under changing climatic and environmental conditions, as these species contain the genetic material to improve the adaptation of crops to new environmental conditions, or to develop new crops. Conserving traditional live stock breeds and landraces of crops, as well as their genetic diversity, contributes in similar ways to food security by helping farmers adapt to changing climatic and environmental conditions.

Further examples can be found in the technical support document.

- b) DIVERSITAS believes that mainstreaming the GBO-4 findings is a priority to increase its impact on policy- and decision-making. In this context, DIVERSITAS happily welcomes and supports the Global Youth Biodiversity Network's project: "Youth Voices – Mainstreaming GBO-4: Catalyzing the implementation of Aichi targets and the Pyeongchang Roadmap".

Second, Biodiversity and health

The underlying drivers of emerging diseases such as Ebola are also the drivers of biodiversity loss. These shared drivers include habitat loss such as deforestation, overexploitation of wildlife, and other human-driven actions that place wildlife and humans in more contact and increase pressures on ecosystems. Both emerging disease and biodiversity loss threats will be worsened with growing anthropogenic changes to our environment.

The outcomes of the *State of Knowledge Review on the Interlinkages between Biodiversity and Human Health* that DIVERSITAS has proudly supported show that urgent work is still needed to provide the sound knowledge that will inform policymaking and implementation of solutions on health and biodiversity, especially around emerging diseases. This work should be undertaken collaboratively by the biodiversity and health

communities. A formal mechanism for scientific experts to inform the CBD-WHO Joint Work Programme on Biodiversity and Human Health would be key at providing an urgent step forward.

We note that there are important nature-based solutions that can be appreciated in addressing shared health and biodiversity concerns. Importantly, wild species can serve as sentinels for disease risks to humans, enabling early detection, and ideally, prevention of disease spillover. Emerging diseases do not only affect people, but in many cases are often detrimental to the conservation of wildlife, as in the case of Ebola. Thus, health monitoring and surveillance systems that consider the mechanisms and pathways for disease transmission in humans and wild species can provide cost-effective opportunities to track and proactively address disease risks.

Additionally, ecosystems provide health-promoting services, many of which have not been fully characterized yet. Working together across conservation and public health in a One Health approach can move us forward toward more fully realizing and protecting nature-based benefits for health of societies and ecosystems. Importantly, a One Health approach will also enable mainstreaming of biodiversity in the many sectors that feed into health.

Three, Implementation of the Nagoya Protocol

It is with great enthusiasm that DIVERSITAS sees the entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol. DIVERSITAS would like to flag a pilot project in Latin America and the Caribbean that was led in collaboration with the S-CBD, and other partners. This project assessed opportunities for a facilitated access for academic research in compliance with Article 8(a) of the Nagoya Protocol. The Project participants in this science-policy dialogue were unanimous in calling for a continuity of the science-policy dialogue this the project initiated in the region as well as in other regions of the world.

This type of project has not only the capacity to support the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol but also to promote academic research needed for the provision of new knowledge and especially on nature-based solutions. This project was based on case studies from different countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru), which may also be used to draw lessons learned on biodiversity-based solutions for the future.

To conclude, DIVERSITAS is entering in a new phase under the Future Earth programme for global sustainability, which aims at co-designing and co-producing the knowledge needed to address societal issues such as food and water security or emergence of infectious diseases. This integrative research will lead to an improved knowledge on the development of nature-based solutions.

DIVERSITAS, its worldwide network of thousands of biodiversity scientists, and the broader Future Earth community stand ready to continue these fruitful collaborations with the CBD.

Thank you for your kind attention.