

Statement made by DIVERSITAS at CBD-SBSTTA16, on 1st May 2012, in the context of discussions of paper UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/16/16

Reports on collaborative work on Biodiversity and Agriculture, Forests, and biodiversity and health

Thank you Mr Chair.

This is a statement on behalf of two international scientific organisations:

- First, DIVERSITAS, the international programme of biodiversity science, under UNESCO and ICSU, the International Council for Science;
- Second, EcoHealth Alliance, a US-based NGO working on biodiversity and health.

DIVERSITAS and EcoHealth Alliance welcome document 16/6.

This statement addresses section III of this document regarding collaborative work on Biodiversity and Health, and the related draft recommendations.

DIVERSITAS and EcoHealth Alliance welcome the activities organised by the Secretariat of the CBD and presented in detail in document Inf/34. DIVERSITAS and EcoHealth Alliance recognise that these activities have greatly benefited from the secondment of a Technical Officer provided by the State Government of Victoria in Australia.

DIVERSITAS and EcoHealth Alliance would like to make the following comments on the importance of the topic of biodiversity and health for the work of the CBD and the implementation of its strategic plan for 2011-2020:

- 1) Biodiversity and health linkages have many facets including clean water, food security and nutrition, infectious disease regulation, medicines, physical, mental and cultural well-being.
- 2) Aichi target 14 explicitly mentions health, yet many of the other targets also have an implicit link to health. Health can thus be seen as a unifying theme for the Aichi targets.
- 3) Because of the complex interrelations of wildlife, livestock, humans and our environment, and the health implications of this, it is critical to take an ecosystem approach – also called an EcoHealth or a One Health approach – to improve our understanding of the links between biodiversity and health.
- 4) The cross-sectoral (health and biodiversity) approach is fundamental to this issue, as well as multi-disciplinary work to develop sound and efficient biodiversity conservation and public health policies. The collaboration between CBD and WHO is thus seen as key in the work of both organisations.

DIVERSITAS, EcoHealth Alliance and the Secretariat of the CBD is organising tonight at 6:15 a side event on this topic. This side event aims to showcase examples of the relationships between biodiversity and health, and how sound scientific outcomes can be used in environmental and health policy development.

DIVERSITAS and EcoHealth Alliance are proud to have contributed, with other partners, to some of the CBD activities organised on the topic of biodiversity and health. Based on this collaboration, DIVERSITAS and EcoHealth Alliance see the topic of health and biodiversity as a unique opportunity for the work of the CBD. Health is a major concern for people both in developing and developed countries. In addition, because health is related to many of the Aichi targets, it provides a framework for:

- 1) Integrating the implementation of these targets, and
- 2) Fostering support from the general public for biodiversity conservation through improving their own health and well-being.

Because of this, DIVERISTAS and EcoHealth Alliance would like to urge SBSTTA and the broader community to form new linkages around this issue, develop collaborations, and in particular bring together cross-sectoral support from the environment, forestry, agriculture, health, and development sectors. These should build on the excellent linkages between CBD and WHO. We urge that these collaborations seek the support of the scientific community engaged in biodiversity and health research, including our own, to continue the work CBD has begun:

- 1) Advise – as appropriate – the Parties of the CBD on emerging or not well-understood processes related to the topic of biodiversity and health;
- 2) Strengthen collaboration between CBD and WHO to develop wise policies for both biodiversity conservation and public health.

DIVERSITAS and EcoHealth Alliance look forward to continuing the collaboration with the CBD on this major topic and to contributing to the implementation of the Aichi targets.

Thank you Mr Chair.