



DEAD OR ALIVE : TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE WILDLIFE TRADE

One World One Health Recommendations

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In 2015, all members of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as urgent actions needed to ensure peace and prosperity for people and the planet. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the health of the planet is critical to achieving sustainable development and conservation directly supports health and wellbeing. Globally, nearly half of the human population is directly dependent on natural resources for its livelihood.

Today's world is characterised by an increasing anthropogenic pressure which alters most natural ecosystems. Globalisation, which is '*the process by which the world is becoming increasingly interconnected (...)*' is reshaping both trade and movements of people. This new global landscape has led to the emergence of new health and biodiversity threats, which are interlinked. Degradation of natural ecosystems and

the loss of biodiversity have become a global issue, exceeding the purely environmental arena. A sustainable solution can only be achieved in a synergetic and multi-disciplinary manner involving all the various stakeholders concerned.

It is for this reason that the United Nations Member States are urged to take action to meet these new challenges through the "One World One Health" approach, as embraced by the World Health Organization: "*One World One Health" is an approach to designing and implementing programmes, policies, legislation and research in which multiple sectors communicate and work together to achieve better public health outcomes*". Because beyond the regulatory aspect, a public health policy, if it is to be effective, cannot be reduced to a purely biomedical approach and must take into account the health impact of environmental, animal or plant determinants. Similarly, an effective environmental policy must be able to mobilize human, animal and plant health stakeholders.

In order to achieve a sustainable health objective, closer cooperation and exchange between all public health actors must be established, whether in the different sectors (human health, animal health, plant health and environmental health), by the different levels of government (local, federated, federal and international entities) or by societal actors (academic, economic and voluntary). The Federal Public Service Health, through its inter-federal mission, crosses the four pillars of health, and develops this intersectoral approach. Food safety and the prevention of zoonoses are areas of work in which a "One World One Health" approach is particularly relevant.

Wildlife trade can be defined as '*(...) commercial trade in non-domesticated wild animals and plants – both alive or dead – and any products that are derived from them. Some of this trade is legal and regulated by the United Nations' Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), but much of it is not*'. Where such commercial activities are illegal, these are referred to as wildlife trafficking or wildlife crime. The line between legal and illegal trade is not always clear-cut, as unlawful activities could be hidden behind the smokescreen of the legal trade.

Wildlife trade has an impact on biodiversity and health issues. Diseases can be transmitted to various wildlife species, domestic animals and even humans, with 75% of human diseases being of animal origin.

Wildlife trade can contribute to the over-exploitation of species in the wild, disrupt the balance of ecosystems and affect the services provided by nature to the population. The issue of bushmeat or wild meat, where wild animals are caught for consumption, is a clear example of activities with long term impacts on the balance of tropical forests.

The trade in exotic animal species, being wild or captive-bred, can facilitate the transmission of pathogens with detrimental impacts upon wild populations. The worldwide spread of the fungus *Batrachochytrium dendrobatitis* (Bd) is a good example of trade playing a pivotal role in the decline of amphibians. Besides biodiversity conservation and disease control, such trade is also becoming a growing problem of general interest with regard to animal welfare. The entire supply chain, from harvesting to keeping, may put the animal welfare of exotic species at risk, especially when it comes to illegal wildlife trade.

This conference represents an excellent opportunity to address an in-depth analysis of two trade case studies in line with the "One World One Health" approach. It will focus on the bushmeat trade through the illegal importation of meat into the European Union as well as on the trade in live reptiles and amphibians to keep as pets. During workshops, recommendations will be discussed and should emerge to set targets for achieving a more sustainable wildlife trade.



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