



EndPandemics
Investing in Planetary Health



PRESS RELEASE

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Act now to invest in nature or face biodiversity collapse and further pandemics, ‘Wildlife Conservation 20’ tells G20

- *‘WC20’ is unprecedented gathering of the world’s 20 top conservation groups*
- *Covid-19 points to invest in “planetary health”, joint declaration warns*
- *Time to act is now to protect health of people and planet*

LONDON / BANGKOK / HANOI, Country - A new initiative involving 20 of the world’s leading conservation organisations today issued an unprecedented joint declaration to the G20 calling for urgent action to dramatically boost investment in nature to avoid future disastrous pandemics.

Scientists agree that COVID-19 is yet another zoonotic (animal to person) outbreak, following previous ones such as HIV, Ebola, SARS, MERS, and Bird Flu. Experts further agree that the two biggest drivers to such zoonotic outbreaks are (a) rising commercial trade in wild animals, and (b) destruction of wild habitat, both of which pull and push wild animals from their natural environments, bringing them into unnaturally close contact with human populations, which often have no resistance to pathogens these animals carry.

Left in their natural environment, these wild animals do not threaten people. On the contrary, they serve valuable, unique services to ecosystems on which we all depend. The COVID-19 pandemic is therefore a stark warning that our unsustainable relationship with nature requires critical investment in the future health of ourselves and our planet. If that investment does not occur, then pandemics will recur, with similar or worse human, ecological and economic impact.

Covid-19 has highlighted the connection between our treatment of nature and zoonotic diseases, which has led to a pandemic that has claimed the lives of more than a million people, destroyed livelihoods, and threatened the world’s economic and social stability.

Yesterday, in advance of the G20 Leaders' Summit this week (21 and 22 November in Riyadh), the leaders of Education for Nature Vietnam (ENV), Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), and Freeland (all participants of the EndPandemics alliance) were convened by Space for Giants and ESI Media, together with CEO's of 17 other conservation groups, for a high-level summit to formulate a common message to the G20.

This initiative, called the Wildlife Conservation 20 or the "WC20", agrees that it is imperative that governments act urgently to invest in nature and prevent pandemics – and for the conservation community to speak with one voice to articulate the steps needed to do so.

The WC20 issued a joint declaration that will today be delivered to the Governments of all G20 nations, the Riyadh G20 organising committee, and representatives of the Italian Government as hosts of the next G20 Leaders' Summit:

- Nature protection has seriously lacked the requisite political and financial investment required to prevent ecological deterioration and resulting pandemics.
- The impact of this under-investment and lack of urgency has been compounded by Covid-19 movement and travel bans that have stalled tourism, which help fund significant portions of critical conservation activities.
- Political leaders must act to provide the necessary resources that can reverse the current trajectory of biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse, natural capital depletion, and prevent pandemics.
- Signing up for new commitments is ineffectual if not implemented. G20 nations must enable robust action to deliver solutions on the ground, while monitoring and evaluating their impacts and championing best practice and success. Our organizations stand ready to assist.

The WC20 issued a joint declaration identifying priority actions that world leaders must take immediately. These include:

- **Policies: (1)** Adopt a "One Health Policy" that simultaneously safeguards the health of people, animals and ecosystems to mitigate the risk of zoonotic outbreaks. **(2)** Adopt "Non-Hazardous Detriment Findings" that bar any commercial trade in wild animals until and unless it can be guaranteed that such trade will not facilitate transmission of viruses and spark more pandemics.
- **Law enforcement:** Scale up financial and technical support for law enforcement in key wildlife source states, transit hubs and destination countries/territories and adopt a collaborative and multi-organisational approach.
- **Safeguarding natural ecosystems:** Secure adequate finances and technical expertise, and government support, for the effective protection and management of natural ecosystems and wildlife so that they are valued and supported and become generators of economic wealth.
- **Supporting Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs):** Work to respect the rights of IPLCs living within and/or depending on natural ecosystems, to improve human well-being, alleviate the pressures of human-wildlife coexistence,

and reduce and halt the loss of natural habitat loss and the associated wildlife they hold.

- **Reduce Demand:** Work with government authorities, stakeholders, civil society, and major influencers to warn the public about the dangerous risk of zoonotic spillovers from consuming or trading wild animals.

[INSERT ORG REPRESENTATIVE QUOTE. EXAMPLE: “The G20 Summit’s three key areas of focus this year are to empower people, safeguard the planet, and shape new frontiers: acting now to tackle the unregulated wildlife trade and its global impacts would mark major progress on all three,” said REPRESENTATIVE NAME, TITLE, ORG NAME.]

Quote by ENV

Quote by EIA

Quote by Freeland

“We are grateful to the convenors of the WC20 process for their proactive outreach and engaging a diverse set of perspectives toward a converging outcome. The WC20 declaration specifically calls upon the G20 leaders ‘to create the enabling framework for effective actions to deliver solutions on the ground, while monitoring and evaluating their impact, and recognising and championing success and deterring transgressions,’ which is exactly the core mission of our solutions-driven alliance, said Dr Andrey Kushlin, rotating chair of EndPandemics and senior advisor with Transparent World in Moscow.

“Ending this illicit trade protects us all from future pandemics, conserves the biodiversity we all need to survive, opens up sustainable businesses to improve the wellbeing of people living in natural landscapes, and helps define the world we want in the future. Achieving all that would be the greatest legacy this G20 summit could leave us all.”]]

These organisations make up the WC20:

African Parks	African Wildlife Foundation	BirdLife International	Born Free Foundation
Conservation International	Education for Nature Vietnam (member of EndPandemics)	End Wildlife Crime	Environmental Investigation Agency (member of EndPandemics)
Flora & Fauna International	Frankfurt Zoological Society	Freeland (member of EndPandemics)	International Union for Conservation of Nature

Jane Goodall
Institute

Space for Giants

The Nature
Conservancy

TRAFFIC

Wild Aid

Wildlife
Conservation Society

WWF

Zoological Society
London

ESI Media co-hosted the WC20 summit as part of its global campaign to Stop The Illegal Wildlife trade, in partnership with co-host and WC20 member Space for Giants.

EndPandemics (<https://endpandemics.earth>) is a global alliance and action campaign that strives to reduce the risks of pandemics by addressing the root causes of zoonotic outbreaks – commercial wildlife trade, disruption of wild habitats, and wildlife dependence of poverty-affected livelihoods. The alliance was launched in April 2020 and comprises a fast-growing array of organizations (presently over 60) that operate across five continents in conservation, agriculture, climate, health, business, technology, security, media, and other sectors.

ENDS

Notes for Editors

Media Contacts

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Full text of the declaration is available here: [INSERT LINK](#)