

ACT NOW TO PREVENT NEW PANDEMICS

APPEAL TO G20 LEADERS: REDUCE RISK OF NEW PANDEMICS BY ADDRESSING THEIR ROOT CAUSES

THREE STEPS TO GLOBAL RECOVERY AND REGENERATION

As the world continues to reel from the harmful impacts of COVID-19, it is imperative that our leaders urgently find ways to prevent new devastating zoonotic outbreaks.

Global experts and change leaders convened on September 2, 2021, at a roundtable¹ co-hosted by the Vatican COVID-19 Commission, EndPandemics and United for Regeneration to discuss specific recommendations that G20 Leaders can take up at their summit in Rome in October 2021. These discussions² build on earlier expert proceedings, including the recently published *Roadmap to End Pandemics*,³ the WC20 Declaration,⁴ and other reports,⁵ and are summarized by the roundtable co-chairs as follows:

→ Acknowledging that COVID-19 has inflicted more acute harm to the planet than any terrorist act or natural disaster in the last 100 years, representing the greatest current threat to national and international security;

→ Acknowledging the limitations of post-spillover interventions, such as vaccines, that are only good for one disease, disproportionately benefit the rich, and offer no ancillary benefits;

→ Acknowledging that the root causes of pandemics are over-exploitation of nature, including commercial trade of wild animals, and the conversion of wild habitat for commercial use – factors that also drive biodiversity loss and climate change;

→ Acknowledging that the annual cost of preventing pandemics is less than 1% of the cost of recovering from COVID-19;

→ Acknowledging that all of these threats can be mitigated by investing in nature-based solutions and green recovery that also positively impact local communities;

→ Acknowledging that G20 and other nations have already committed to environmental targets that, if implemented, will mitigate the risk of pandemic recurrence;

The Co-Chairs of this Roundtable recommend the following three sets of actions enabled by a finance mechanism that will save the global community trillions of dollars:

1. Prevent Risk of Pandemics from the Trade in Wild Animals

i. Create an Independent Panel to determine the legal options for international and domestic trade in wild animals (including wildlife farming) going forward, including whether to ban all commercial trade in wild animals, or to ban trade in 'high-risk' species only.

¹ [Vatican IHD. 2 September 2021.](#)

² [The Independent. 4 September 2021.](#)

³ EndPandemics. June 2021. [Roadmap to End Pandemics: Building It Together.](https://endpandemics.earth/) [https://endpandemics.earth/.](https://endpandemics.earth/)

⁴ [WC20 Declaration. 20 November 2020.](#)

⁵ [Harvard Global Health Institute. August 2021.](#)

Note: No ban would impact indigenous use or subsistence hunting.

- ii. Pause international and domestic trade in wild animals until the Independent Panel concludes.⁶
- iii. Institutionalize campaigns to reduce commercial demand for wild animals.⁷
- iv. Support amendments to: (a) CITES to include additional requirements to address health risks; (b) the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime to address wildlife crime; and (c) the International Criminal Court's Rome Statute to include ecocide as an international crime.

2. Prevent Risk of Pandemics Caused by Destructive Land Use Practices

- i. Adopt and implement the 30x30 target of the UN Biodiversity Convention's Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to ensure that at least 30 percent globally of land areas and of sea areas are conserved by 2030.⁸
- ii. Support UN Food Systems Summit 2021 recommendations for a sustainable food future, namely: (a) increase food production without expanding agricultural land; and (b) protect and restore natural ecosystems and limit agricultural encroachment and land-shifting.⁹
- iii. Incentivize regenerative agriculture practices because they strengthen biodiversity, mitigate risk of zoonotic outbreaks, sequester carbon, sustain livelihoods, and produce healthier foods that improve individual and global immunity. Reduce and convert a portion of industrial agriculture subsidies to investments in regenerative agriculture, saving significant money and mitigating pandemic risk.

3. Establish Planetary Health Defense Funding Mechanism

- i. Finance the above-listed nature-based solutions through a Planetary Health Defense Fund that can be established by repurposing certain items within the existing national budgets at the levels equivalent to a tiny fraction of the costs of the current pandemic.¹⁰ Most of this funding will also benefit climate, biodiversity, local economic development, rule of law and other shared priorities.
- ii. Mandate that any pandemic recovery and preparedness program shall include targeted funding for context-specific pandemic prevention solutions.

Steven R. Galster, Roundtable Co-Chair

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⁶ Offer legal dealers one-off compensation for their loss in income and to help transition into new livelihood. Use funds from the new Planetary Health Defense funding mechanism described in 3.

⁷ Increase government support for, and involvement in, social behavior change communications campaigns, partly by promoting transition to safer and more sustainable alternatives.

⁸ [UN CBD Secretariat. 5 July 2021](#). CBD/WG2020/3/3. Especially areas where diseases are most likely to emerge.

⁹ [World Resources Report 2019. Creating a Sustainable Food Future](#).

¹⁰ [Science Magazine. 24 July 2020](#). Gross prevention costs are estimated between US\$22 and 31 billion per year.