

RESWCC3.011 Addressing the linkages between conservation, human and animal health, and security

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NOTING that recent outbreaks of zoonotic diseases – pathogens that move from animals to people – including bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE – ‘mad cow disease’, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), Ebola, West Nile virus and avian influenza – pose a serious threat to human and animal health and to economic development;

CONCERNED that the health threat posed by the movement of millions of live animals and animal parts through markets annually within the global wildlife trade has not yet been recognized, and that efforts to regulate this trade fall far short of the imperative for action;

ALARMED that some of the measures intended to control and reverse the spread of such diseases include mass eradication programmes targeting wild species and livestock, with serious long-term consequences for human health, food security and biodiversity wellbeing, while failing to address the chain of transmission or the sources of vulnerability and exposure;

FURTHER ALARMED that the alteration of ecosystems and their normal processes due to development can lead to changes in populations of vectors and potential hosts, to new types of host-pathogen interactions, and thus to new patterns of disease spread in ways which are often unforeseen, and with real individual and societal costs that remain unaccounted for, with potentially catastrophic effects;

MINDFUL of a number of key decisions on the role of IUCN in addressing the links between health and conservation, including:

(a) Resolution 14.5 *Eradication of disease-transmitting vectors* adopted by the 14th Session of the IUCN General Assembly (Ashkabad, 1978), which recognized that “proposals for blanket eradication of disease vectors over very large areas of African savanna... pose direct threats to the future of [certain] parks” and recommended that eradication be undertaken only “as part of an integrated development programme, planned in accord with recognised conservation principles in precisely circumscribed areas...[with] the strictest measures... taken to ensure that the effects do not damage the characteristics of protected areas”;

(b) The Recommendation 18.17 *Human population dynamics and resource demand* adopted by the 18th Session of the IUCN General Assembly (Perth, 1990), which encouraged IUCN members and the IUCN Secretariat “to continue to take the lead in exploring and initiating actions on the relations between... natural resources management and human health, particularly the morbidity and mortality of infants and young children”; and

(c) The Vth IUCN World Parks Congress, (Durban, 2003), which identified *Disease and Protected Area Management* as a key ‘Emerging Issue’: “...improvements in the health of domestic and wild animals and thus their productivity can lead to dramatic improvements in human livelihoods and thus the reduction of poverty. Alien invasive pathogens should be addressed with vigour equal to that devoted to addressing more ‘visible’ alien invasive species. The role of disease in protected areas and the land-use matrix within which they are embedded must be recognised and addressed within the context of protected area and landscape-level planning and management....”;

NOTING that wildlife health and conservation biology are areas of expertise that have heretofore been largely overlooked in decision-making on human public health and domestic animal health, and that these fields of expertise must be viewed as epidemiologic ‘parts of a greater whole’; and

AIMING to promote a healthier and more secure world for all living beings;

The World Conservation Congress at its 3rd Session in Bangkok, Thailand, 17–25 November 2004:

1. RECOMMENDS that the world's leaders, civil society, and national and global health-related and other scientific institutions:

(a) establish formal communication channels among the global institutions responsible for human, domestic animal and wildlife health, and forge linkages to non-governmental organizations with relevant expertise;

(b) draw upon the broader multidisciplinary expertise available from within the IUCN network in policy development, decision-making and planning related to human and animal diseases;

(c) build capacity within national and global institutions responsible for public health and animal health to analyse and address issues at the nexus between human, domestic animal, and wildlife health;

(d) support action to better regulate and monitor wildlife trade and eliminate illegal wildlife trade that threatens not only biodiversity but also animal and human health worldwide;

(e) develop a global wildlife health surveillance network that can collect and exchange disease-related information with public health and animal health communities in 'real time' for early warning of potential new and emerging disease threats to humans and animals;

(f) limit the mass cull of free-ranging wildlife species for disease control to situations where there is scientific evidence that a wildlife population poses an urgent, significant threat to public health and safety;

(g) recognize that land- and water-use decisions have real implications for public health and animal health as well as biodiversity wellbeing, and integrate these implications for health risks into project and programme impact assessment and management; and

(h) invest in awareness-raising and education on the animal health–human health link, and in policy development and implementation within and among governments; and

2. REQUESTS the Director General, in consultation with Commissions and Members, to:

(a) recognize the importance of the interactions between animal health and human health and ecosystem integrity, and

(b) systematically review the IUCN Intersessional Programme 2005–2008 to identify areas where human health, animal health and biodiversity wellbeing linkages can be incorporated into IUCN activities to improve conservation outcomes.