



WWF Statement to INB Briefing, 27 October 2023

WWF welcomes many aspects of the current draft. We welcome the requirement in Article 5 for Parties to monitor and mitigate environmental factors associated with the risk of zoonotic disease spill-over and spill-back. We also welcome the reference to actions at national and community levels that encompass whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to control zoonotic outbreaks, including through the engagement of communities in outbreak surveillance. And, in particular, we agree with the reference to the relationship between this Article and Article 12, on sharing of benefits.

We follow with some comments of detail.

Paragraph 8 of the preamble is still very human-centric. We need a holistic approach that puts animal and human health on an equal footing if we are to be effective in preventing spillover and spillback. We, therefore, suggest revision as follows:

Reaffirming the importance of multisectoral collaboration at national, regional, and international levels for a holistic approach to safeguard human health, detect and prevent health threats at the animal and human interface, zoonotic spill-over, spill-back and mutations, and to sustainably balance and optimize the health of people, animals, and ecosystems, in a One Health approach,

In Article 5, paragraph 3, we regret the lack of specificity in the reference to drivers for the emergence of disease at the human–animal–environment interface. We appreciate that a conscious decision was made not to cite examples in this version. However, at least in this case, we believe that Parties would benefit from such illustrative guidance, as included in the zero draft, to inform them as to what the likely drivers are and guide their implementation. Otherwise, when it falls to others in the future to implement an agreement that they had no part in negotiating, they may struggle to interpret this article effectively. With this in mind, we suggest the paragraph should read as follows:

The Parties commit to identify and address the drivers of pandemics and the emergence and re-emergence of disease at the human-animal-environment interface, including but not limited to climate change, land use change, wildlife trade and desertification, by identification and integration of interventions into relevant pandemic prevention, preparedness plans, and, where appropriate, according to national legislation and capacity, through strengthening synergies with other relevant instruments.

Article 7 only addresses public health care workers; it should also address veterinary health staff. Accordingly, we suggest that Paragraph 1 should read as follows:

Each Party, in line with its respective capacities, shall take the necessary steps to safeguard, protect, invest in and sustain a skilled, trained, competent and committed health and care workforce, including veterinary health workers, with the aim of increasing and sustaining capacities for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, while maintaining quality essential health services and essential public health functions, during pandemics...

Finally, Article 9 paragraph 2 focuses only on improving human health and not animal health diagnostics, while paragraph 3 addresses improvement in information sharing between public health networks, but not between public health, environment and animal health databases.