

Statement* by Astrid Schomaker, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

79th World Health Assembly (18-23 May 2026, Geneva)

* to be delivered by the UNEP representative in attendance

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**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,**

The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity has requested the Executive Secretary to report the outcomes of its work on biodiversity and health to this Assembly.

First, a reminder that biodiversity and health are inseparable. Put simply, there is no human health without the health of nature, of biodiversity.

Second, I am happy to provide an update on the work underway under the Convention on Biological Diversity:

Building on the recently adopted Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health, the CBD Secretariat is working with the World Health Organization and other partners to support countries in recognizing and acting upon the linkages between biodiversity and human health.

Thirdly, we have an announcement. “Biodiversity and health” will feature prominently on the agenda of the forthcoming COP 17 in Armenia, where Parties will continue exploring how to generate co-benefits for both nature and human health.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Strong cooperation with the World Health Organization is essential to ensure that these messages reach and resonate within the public health community, and that we reach our common goals in a symbiotic manner.

Today, public policies and private sector investment are more critical than ever. We must recognize that the linkages between biodiversity and human well-being are fundamental to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and advancing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework sets out an ambitious pathway to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 with a long-term vision of living in harmony with nature. Delivering on this vision demands swift, transformative action across all sectors, including the health sector.

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Success requires transformative change through a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach.

Integrating biodiversity considerations into health policies and development planning is vital to ensuring that the benefits of nature are maintained and shared equitably.

On behalf of the Secretariat to the Convention on Biological Diversity, I would like to reaffirm our commitment to working closely with the health community to advance policies and practices that reflect the interdependence of biodiversity and human health.

Together, we can build resilient, inclusive approaches that protect nature, safeguard communities, and secure a healthier, more sustainable future for generations to come.

Thank you.