



## Platform Note: Preventing the next pandemic

### Commitment

We will support global initiatives to ban wildlife markets and curb the global and domestic commercial trade in wild animals, products and derivatives that could contribute to the spread of zoonotic diseases and biodiversity loss.

### Background

It is widely acknowledged that a wildlife market in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, played a significant role in the COVID-19 outbreak.<sup>1</sup> This market had a section which sold many live and dead wild animals including snakes, hedgehogs, crocodiles and raccoon dogs. The latest scientific evidence suggests the coronavirus may have been transmitted from bats to humans via another wild animal that was commercially traded and sold at the market. While scientific research continues to better understand the evolution of SARS-Cov-2, we know enough now to act.

**75% of new or emerging infectious diseases over the past decade originated from animals and principally from wildlife (e.g., MERS, Ebola, HIV/AIDS, H5N1, West Nile, Nipah, COVID-19).**<sup>2</sup> The 2002 SARS outbreak was also linked to a wildlife market and likely transmitted to humans through the Himalayan palm civets sold there. Had these markets, which were temporarily closed after the SARS outbreak, remain closed, the COVID-19 pandemic might never have happened.<sup>3</sup> Studies show the risk of transmitting coronaviruses and other zoonotic diseases can increase significantly as animals are traded up the supply chain and increasingly exposed to stressful conditions and a wider variety of other wildlife species.<sup>4</sup>

Recent reports by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP)<sup>5</sup> and Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)<sup>6</sup> cite the wildlife trade as a main driver of pandemic risk and biodiversity loss. Additionally, recent research shows the costs of preventing zoonotic disease outbreaks, by preventing deforestation and regulating the wildlife trade, could be as little as 2% of the economic costs incurred by the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>7</sup>

**As the health and welfare of animals, our environment and people are interconnected, a holistic One Health, One Welfare approach<sup>8</sup> needs to be adapted to prevent future global outbreaks.**

### Other countries are taking action

China has permanently banned the farming and consumption of many wild animals and are helping farmers transition to alternative livelihoods.<sup>9,10</sup> Australia & US have called for a ban on wildlife markets.<sup>11,12</sup> In the US, a bipartisan bill, *The Preventing Future Pandemics Act* is gaining traction and would, if passed, prohibit the import and export of wildlife for human consumption and medicine.<sup>13</sup> The Netherlands has expedited a permanent ban on fur farming to prevent further COVID-19 outbreaks on mink farms.<sup>14</sup> Germany has agreed to reduce the trade in wild animals for pets, ban the sale of wild caught animals and set up a centralized trade register.<sup>15</sup>

And Italy, which holds the G20 Presidency, recently announced its intention to ban the import, detention and trade of wild and exotic animals.<sup>16</sup>

## Public support

A 2020 poll conducted by Northstar Research found 90% of Canadians believe the global wildlife trade threatens biodiversity, human health and can cause pandemics; 75% support a permanent ban on wild animal markets; 70% support stronger laws to reduce the trade in wild animals in Canada; and 70% support more stringent tracking and monitoring of Canada's wildlife trade.<sup>17</sup>

While there are some very slight differences by demographics (age, region and gender), the overall findings are consistent across Canada, suggesting that there is substantial support for the party to pursue policies on this issue. Recommendations to take a leadership role internationally to significantly curb wildlife markets, while curbing the trade here in Canada, would demonstrate the party's commitment to protect biodiversity, end the needless suffering of animals and help protect the health of Canadians by reducing the risk of global pandemics. and help protect the health of Canadians by reducing the risk of global pandemics.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization (2019) Situation report <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200423-sitrep-94-covid-19.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Jones, K.E., N.G. Patel, M.A. Levy, A. Storeygard, D. Balk, J.L. Gittleman, and P. Daszak. 2008. Global trends in emerging infectious diseases. *Nature* 451:990–994; Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature06536>; World Health Organization. "Neglected zoonotic diseases" [https://www.who.int/neglected\\_diseases/diseases/zoonoses/en/](https://www.who.int/neglected_diseases/diseases/zoonoses/en/);

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hsi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Wildlife-Markets-and-COVID-19-White-Paper-FINAL-6-Apr-2020.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Johnson, C. K., et al. (2015). Spillover and pandemic properties of zoonotic viruses with high host plasticity. *Scientific reports*, 5, 14830; Huong, N. Q., et al. (2020). Coronavirus testing indicates transmission risk increases along wildlife supply chains for human consumption in Viet Nam, 2013-2014. *bioRxiv*; Lee, J., et al. (2020). No evidence of coronaviruses or other potentially zoonotic viruses in Sunda pangolins (*Manis javanica*) entering the wildlife trade via Malaysia. *bioRxiv*; Tu, C., et al. (2004). Antibodies to SARS coronavirus in civets. *Emerging infectious diseases*, 10(12), 2244.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/preventing-future-zoonotic-disease-outbreaks-protecting-environment-animals-and>

<sup>6</sup> <https://ipbes.net/pandemics>

<sup>7</sup> <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/369/6502/379>

<sup>8</sup> The concept "One Welfare" builds on the One Health concept and is a way to recognize the many interconnections between human welfare, animal welfare and the integrity of the environment. See [OneWelfare.org](http://OneWelfare.org) and <https://www.ahwcouncil.ca/work-areas/one-welfare>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asia/china-adds-over-500-species-wildlife-protection-list-14125056#:~:text=SHANGHAI%3A%20China%20has%20added%20517,trade%20and%20destruction%20of%20habitats>

<sup>10</sup> <https://news.mongabay.com/2020/05/china-offers-buyouts-to-wildlife-farmers-in-response-to-pandemic/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-52391783>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2020/04/16/835937420/calls-grow-to-ban-wet-markets>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.booker.senate.gov/news/press/booker-introduces-bipartisan-legislation-to-shut-down-commercial-wildlife-markets-which-pose-a-threat-to-global-public-health>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.economist.com/europe/2020/09/05/covid-19-ends-dutch-mink-farming>

<sup>15</sup> <https://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/19/253/1925345.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> <https://onehealthinitiative.com/victory-italy-bans-the-import-detention-and-trade-of-wild-and-exotic-animals/>

<sup>17</sup> [www.worldanimalprotection.ca/wildlifetradepll](http://www.worldanimalprotection.ca/wildlifetradepll)