Die biologische Vielfalt ist von großer Bedeutung für den Schutz der menschlichen Gesundheit. Wir dürfen die Natur nicht rücksichtslos ausbeuten, weil wir von intakten Ökosystemen abhängig sind. Die Covid-19 Pandemie hat uns unsere biologische Verletzlichkeit deutlich vor Augen geführt. Hier erfahrt Ihr mehr darüber, was die biologische Vielfalt mit Zoonosen wie Covid-19 zu tun hat.

Preventing Future Pandemics Starts with Protecting Our Forests

As **COVID-19** continues to **take lives** and **disrupt economies** across the world, it is almost unfathomable to think about pandemics that may come after this one.

But today, on World Zoonoses Day, we need to do exactly that if we are to reduce the risks of future diseases that may once again devastate lives, damage economies, and change the world as we know it.

At least 60% of emerging infectious diseases are of zoonotic origin, meaning they are caused by pathogens that are shared between humans and other vertebrates – in most cases, wildlife.

There is growing evidence that human actions to change the use of land – such as cutting down forests to make space for crop and livestock production – can be a major driver in outbreaks of zoonotic diseases.

What scientists are finding is that, by destroying wild habitats and encroaching on areas rich in biodiversity, humans have provided new pathways for diseases to spill over from wildlife to humans and livestock. One well-known example is the Ebola virus epidemic of 2014-2016, which killed over 11,000 people in West Africa. The first spill over of the virus happened from fruit bats to a toddler who was playing near trees where bats were roosting. But there are many more.

According to a recent report from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), land-use change is at the heart of over a third of new and emerging diseases reported since 1960.

Lest den verlinkten Text und bearbeitet diese Aufgaben

1. Erklärt den Begriff „zoonotic disease“ .
2. Erläutert den Zusammenhang zwischen der menschlichen Landnutzung und der Ausbreitung von Infektionskrankheiten.
3. Stellt die Handlungsempfehlungen dar, die im Text formuliert werden.
4. Fasst den Kerngedanken des „One-Health-Ansatzes“ zusammen und diskutiert Konsequenzen für den Umgang mit der Natur.

Wenn Ihr ein Wort nicht kennt, könnt Ihr das unten angeführte Glossar nutzen.

The risks are real. It is estimated that around 1.7 million currently "undiscovered" viruses exist in mammals and birds, of which up to 827,000 could have the ability to infect people, according to an article cited by IPBES.

So what can we do?

Put simply, healthy forests are essential to reduce the risks of future zoonotic diseases. In the words of UN Secretary-General António Guterres, we need to "turn the tide on deforestation," which is one major upstream cause of zoonotic disease emergence and a contributor to the climate and biodiversity crises. Deforestation continues at an alarming rate, and is responsible for the loss of an estimated 420 million hectares of forests since 1990 – an area the size of India and Portugal combined.

To effectively induce change, we need to create context-specific solutions that build on our extensive knowledge of the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation, including the fact that they typically originate from *outside* the forest sector. Transforming agriculture and food systems is key to halting deforestation – and mining, infrastructure, and urban development all have a role to play. Policy responses require cross-sectoral coordination.

A common call to halt deforestation was recently issued by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) – a group of 15 international organisations working on forestry, chaired by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN (FAO).
The joint statement clearly outlines the range of actions needed to meet and scale up commitments from the public and private sectors to zero deforestation. Sustainable production practices and a shift to sustainable consumption and healthier diets can reduce pressure on forests.

This transformation requires coherent policy reforms, re-purposing of agricultural subsidies, and more strategic public and private investment because the true value of standing forests is currently not reflected in policies, prices, and investment decisions.

We need to focus our attention on the vital role healthy ecosystems play in the prevention of zoonotic diseases. The 'One Health' approach, advocated by the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), and FAO, calls on public health, animal health, plant health, and environment experts to come together to reduce disease transmission risks and improve the health and well-being of all people, wildlife and livestock, and the ecosystems they live in.
We also need to ensure that other sectors directly responsible for driving land-use change, habitat degradation or deforestation in a given geographic location also have a seat at the table. Linking existing initiatives, such as countries' efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+), might be one entry point to connect with One Health objectives.

Zoonotic diseases cannot be regarded in isolation. They are part of the delicate balance between people, nature, and animals. It is clear that we cannot hope to achieve the global good health and well-being, outlined in SDG 3, without achieving many of the targets of SDG 15 (life on land), including the sustainable management of the world's forests, and halting and reversing land degradation and biodiversity loss.

If we are to limit the occurrence of future pandemics – with all the associated loss of life, economic disruption, and social isolation – we need to start with a commitment across all sectors to prioritize and protect our forests and to halt deforestation.

Quellenangabe

Wertz-Kanounnikoff, S. (2021). Preventing Future Pandemics Starts with Protecting Our Forests. In: *SDG Knowledge Hub. A Project by IISD.* https://sdg.iisd.org/commentary/guest-articles/preventing-future-pandemics-starts-with-protecting-our-forests/ (zuletzt abgerufen am: 10.07.2021).

Glossar:

unfathomable – unergründlich

crop – Frucht, Ernte

livestock – Nutztiere, Vieh

to encroach – eindringen

to spill over – sich ausdehnen

fruit bat – Fruchtfledermaus

toddler – Kleinkind

to roost – sich niederlassen, schlafen

turning the tide – das Blatt wenden

deforestation – Abholzung

contributor – Mitwirkender, Ursache

to halt – anhalten

mining – Bergbau

to repurpose – etw. umfunktionieren, einen Zweck ändern

subsidy – Subvention