



## Statement from the Secretariat of the Preventing Pandemics at the Source Coalition in response to the IPCC Working Group II contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report

March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022

The IPCC Sixth Assessment<sup>1</sup> is clear: some of the impacts of human-induced climate change on natural and human systems are already irreversible. We must act now if we want to avoid further irreversible impacts on the systems we depend on. If governments don't adopt mitigation and adaptation actions in the next decade, we will face increasing climate hazards, including more frequent and intense extreme events. And the more we wait to take these actions, the less effective they will be.

Many of the same human activities that are causing climate change are at the root of another existential crisis we are facing: the increasing emergence of deadly pandemics. All viral pandemics over the last one hundred years are zoonotic in origin, initiated by the spillover of viruses primarily from wildlife to humans. These spillover events are driven by human activities that create increased contact between people, domestic animals, and wildlife. Many of these actions also negatively impact biodiversity and ecosystems, such as deforestation, forest degradation, and wildlife markets and trade.

This opens the way to a win-win strategy: by safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystems, we can simultaneously mitigate and adapt to the severe threats that climate change poses and protect ourselves from the devastating impact of future pandemics. Recent research<sup>23</sup> and analysis<sup>4</sup> produced by our Coalition and members of our Coalition shows that specific climate actions can effectively reduce the risk of future pandemics of zoonotic origin. These actions include:

- Stopping large-scale deforestation and forest degradation
- Shutting down or regulating commercial wildlife markets and trade that pose health risks.

Global leaders, health and environment actors must join forces and act now to jointly mitigate climate change and reduce the risk of future pandemics. The One Health approach<sup>5</sup> underlines that our health is closely linked to the health of animals and ecosystems. Ignoring this interconnection at such a critical time could prove catastrophic.

For more information, please visit the [Preventing Pandemics at the Source website](https://www.preventingpandemics.org/) or contact [secretariat@preventingfuturepandemics.org](mailto:secretariat@preventingfuturepandemics.org)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-working-group-ii/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.abl4183>

<sup>3</sup> <https://cdn1.sph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2343/2021/08/PreventingPandemicsAug2021.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [https://518e5d64-0420-46bf-af00-ae9ccb35a974.usrfiles.com/ugd/518e5d\\_40b62fb5ff104a1a806276bc9bf54a2a.pdf](https://518e5d64-0420-46bf-af00-ae9ccb35a974.usrfiles.com/ugd/518e5d_40b62fb5ff104a1a806276bc9bf54a2a.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/37600/JTFOWU.pdf>