

Keynote Speech

'UNEP's Initiative of One Health and Future Perspective

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Doreen is the Head of Biodiversity and Land at UNEP's headquarters in Nairobi, leading work in biodiversity, people and landscapes, one health and sustainable food systems transformation. She joined UN Environment Programme in 2018 as the Chief for Wildlife Management. She was the Regional Chief for Environment with the United States Agency for International Development in Southern Africa for nearly a decade overseeing programs in biodiversity, climate change, water and energy in 14 countries. She also served as Director of the Office of Environment, Rural Development and Food Security in Madagascar and a Senior Advisor for biodiversity policy and programs in Washington DC for USAID.

She worked with NGOs earlier in her career, including World Wildlife Fund and spanning a range of locations around the world. She holds degrees in Conservation Biology and Sustainable Development from the University of Maryland and Animal Science from Cornell University.

A healthy planet is a prerequisite for healthy people and animals, but humanity's broken relationship with nature is driving up our health risks. The triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste threaten our health and well-being. By acting on these environmental issues, we can protect human health and reduce the pressure on healthcare systems.

UNEP works on strengthening the environmental dimensions of One Health that have lagged behind human and animal dimensions. After endorsing a new definition of One Health developed by the One Health High-Level Expert Panel, UNEP and the other members of the Quadripartite Alliance for One Health launched a Joint Plan of Action on One Health and a Strategic Framework for collaboration on antimicrobial resistance.

UNEP along with other partners also recently launched the Nature for Health initiative, which focuses on investments in nature as a basis for reducing the risks of pandemics. In the Asia Pacific Region, UNEP is also actively engaged in One Health initiatives and supports countries in enhancing readiness and rapid response systems for zoonotic pathways and risks.

One Health is not easy to implement, and we need to deal with the root causes behind changing health risk profiles and invest more in prevention. But it is a critical part of moving us toward achieving sustainable development and the future we want. A future of living in harmony with nature.