

PS 2.3

INTEGRATING HEALTH INTO NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

| BACKGROUND

Many of the solutions to common public health and environmental threats can only be found through cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary knowledge exchange, action and policy. This session will showcase how coherent and inclusive, evidence-based policies at the public health, environment, and climate nexus – through the lens of Nature-based solutions – can help prevent future health risks associated with ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change, and chart a common path toward the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Nature-based solutions are actions to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use and manage natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems which address social, economic and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being, ecosystem services, resilience and biodiversity benefits (UNEP/EA.5/Res.5). Ecosystem health underpins human well-being, from climate resilience, to food and water security, to human health – and investing in NbS can offer catalytic opportunity for the health and environment sectors to work together to drive improved health outcomes.

| OBJECTIVES

This session will promote guidance and tools to support health integration into Nature-based Solutions by: (1) identifying co-benefits and trade-offs for human and ecosystem health, (2) strengthening social and ecological resilience and (3) supporting a healthy, green and just recovery from COVID-19. This collaboration focuses on embedding ecosystem health, biodiversity and climate change in One Health policies, plans and projects, and driving knowledge exchange on the environmental and social determinants of health, while systematically integrating health co-benefits in the development, design and implementation of Nature-based Solutions to climate change.

This session will:

- Present an overview of Nature-based Solutions, as aligned with the IUCN Global Standard on NbS 1, and detail how the health sector can drive leadership in the development, design and implementation of these Nature-based Solutions;
- Examine the relationships between biodiversity, ecosystem degradation, climate and (infectious and noncommunicable) disease emergence, with a view to maximizing health co-benefits of sustainable ecosystem management and restoration.
- Assess the role of environmental, social and economic determinants of health and develop tools to strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration, policy coherence and the operationalization of an integrated Nature-based Solutions and One Health Approach;
- Mainstream health and biodiversity to support a transition toward sustainable and healthy food systems in ways that also support: dietary diversity; the sustainable management and use of biodiversity in agriculture, fisheries and forestry ecosystems; regenerative agriculture practices; crop diversity and sustainable harvesting practices; sustainable fisheries; sustainable management of livestock, wildlife, terrestrial, coastal and marine ecosystems; climate change adaptation and mitigation; and the interactions between these drivers, responses, and outcomes;
- Examine the contribution of biodiversity and green and blue infrastructure to support the creation of health-promoting environments and improve mental and physical health outcomes in both rural and urban areas, including the development and implementation of Nature-based climate Solutions focused on health co-benefits;
- Evaluate climate change as a cross-cutting driver and amplifier of ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss and ill health, and developing policy guidance to maximize the health co-benefits of ecosystem-based adaptation and mitigation efforts.

This session will launch a new joint technical publication and key messages for policymaker on the integration of One Health and Nature-based Solutions, laying out concrete ways that actions to protect biodiversity, nature and ecosystem health have far-reaching outcomes for human health. This session will be jointly organised by the World Health Organization, through its Department of Environment, Climate Change and Health, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, and the Friends of Ecosystem-based Adaptation network, in consultation with the experts of the expert working group (EWG) on

Biodiversity, Climate, One Health and Nature-based Solutions.



Panelist

Elizabeth Pleuss

Deputy Division Chief for Maternal and Newborn Health in the U.S. Agency for International Development's Global Health Bureau, and Leads the Global Health Bureau's Engagement on Climate Change

USAID
United States of America

Elizabeth Pleuss serves as the Deputy Division Chief for Maternal and Newborn Health in the U.S. Agency for International Development's Global Health Bureau and leads the Global Health Bureau's engagement on climate change. She champions cross-sectoral efforts to address environmental, social, and economic determinants of health and has managed programs focused on a variety of topics including clinical trials, tuberculosis treatment, maternal and newborn health innovations, health resilience and supply chain management.

Prior to 13 years at USAID, Elizabeth worked at a non-profit organization called Bread for the World, lobbying the U.S. Congress on hunger and poverty issues. She has a Master of Public Health and an MS in Water Resources Management from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and a BA in Anthropology from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa.