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	Compiled by:	Ntakadzeni Tshidada
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1. Background

Biodiversity underpins ecosystem services that are essential to human health and well-being. Services provided by ecosystems include food which underpins nutrition and food security, clean air and both the quantity and quality of fresh water, pharmaceuticals, traditional medicines, cosmetics (i.e. personal care or hygiene), spiritual and cultural values, climate regulation, pest and disease regulation, and disaster risk reduction as these contribute to local livelihoods, health and economic development. Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity including protection of their natural landscapes can benefit human health by providing continuous sources of biological or genetic resources required for research and development of pharmaceuticals, traditional medicines and cosmetics, which results in fair and equitable sharing of benefits with the provider countries.

2. One health Approach initiatives in South Africa

South Africa is home to a vast trade in medicinal plants, with 262 tonnes of wild medicine being harvested from within the city annually. The illicit harvest of plant material from the wild and protected areas, prompted by local demand and the economic marginalization of many healers, has brought herbalists and conservation authorities into a need to advocate for conservation while promoting sustainable use of biological resources. The intersection of conservation priorities, livelihoods based on wild-harvested plants, and health and well-being has resulted in the formulation of the national one health forum made of the government departments. The main purposes of this forum is to identify, advise and monitor mechanisms required to comply to the International Health Regulations for detecting and responding to zoonotic events in South Africa. This forum also ensure the implementation of Human health and Biodiversity Strategy in the country. This forum also contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 3.

3. Legislative guidance

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) creates the overall framework for the environmental governance in South Africa by establishing the right to the environment that is not harmful to health and well-being; to have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that-

- prevent pollution and ecological degradation;
- promote conservation; and
- secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources
- while promoting justifiable economic and social development.

END NOTES