Editorial

The recent epidemic outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in West Africa is a very prominent example for the urgent need for an integrative One Health risk management approach, which acknowledges the systemic interconnections of human, animal and environmental health. The EVD outbreak in West Africa exceeds the capacities of current national health systems and calls for international cooperation to fight the most complex Ebola outbreak to date. Ebola is a zoonotic disease – a disease initially transmitted to a human by contact with an infected animal’s body fluids. Evidence implicates fruit bats as the reservoir hosts for the Ebola viruses. Bats drop partially eaten fruits and pulp; land mammals such as chimpanzees, gorillas, monkeys, or duikers feed on these fallen fruits. Humans are being affected by hunting, butchering or eating of fruit bats, or other animals carrying the virus. The increased pressure of human activities in already stressed ecosystems increases the impacts on health of wildlife animals and humans alike.

The dramatic expansion of humans into terrestrial and aquatic environments, the extraction and depletion of natural resources, or the intensified food production and global trading are increasing the potentials for the spread of deadly diseases. There is a clear link between animal, human and environmental health. A comprehensive approach is needed to effectively and efficiently manage emerging wildlife and human health issues. A trans-disciplinary One Health approach (inclusive to all academic fields, policy, technologies, implementers, the media and affected societies) could provide new remedies for the successful prevention of such a crisis. GRF Davos is promoting this holistic One Health approach through its various activities like the annual GRF One Health Summit or through publications such as this Planet@Risk issue.

In this issue you will find an inspiring collection of case studies and working papers for more resilient public health systems through integrative risk management approaches. These papers shall provide guidance to governments and non-governmental actors alike on why they should and how they can, together, reduce risks and vulnerabilities and to increase resilience and improve sustainability.

I would like to thank the all authors involved in this Planet@Risk issue for their valuable work they share with us. I wish that you may gain a lot of new insights, ideas and solutions.

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