



Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans
European Commission
rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels

7th September 2020

Dear Executive Vice-President Timmermans,

Subject: EU Global Leadership on Biodiversity Finance

We are pleased to write on behalf of a number of the world's leading conservation organisations working in the Global South, including the Wildlife Conservation Society, Conservation International, Birdlife International, Wetlands International, The Nature Conservancy, International Fund for Animal Welfare, African Parks, African Wildlife Foundation, and Global Wildlife Conservation.

First, we would like to express our support for the approach that the EU has taken during the past decades to lead on the fight against environmental degradation and biodiversity loss globally. This has included long-term financial support to some of the most important remaining areas for biodiversity, particularly in Africa, which would be facing a much more perilous situation today without the EU's support. Such investments have also resulted in important socio-economic benefits for local communities, by creating jobs, creating economic opportunities for women, providing clean energy, and securing education and future opportunities for young people. We are encouraged that this approach by the EU will be continued through the new NaturAfrica initiative under the EU Green Deal, and look forward to supporting its implementation.

The new EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030 (a pivotal component of the Green Deal), represents a turning point in EU commitment to tackling the biodiversity crisis. When it comes to action in support of global biodiversity conservation, however, the strategy remains too generic and vague. This is very concerning given the urgent and growing need to address biodiversity loss at a global scale, particularly across the global south where the economic and social well-being and resilience of communities is directly linked to ecosystem health. Understanding and awareness is now growing of the links between ecological degradation and risks of future zoonotic disease outbreaks, for example. Not tackling such issues holistically risks undermining the benefits of EU development cooperation in other areas.

EU leadership on biodiversity finance is particularly important at this moment, with political momentum building in the run up to the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), scheduled to take place in China in 2021.

This CBD COP will be a landmark conference at which global biodiversity targets (including for finance) will be agreed for the next ten years.

We hope to count on your support to ensure that the EU leads the way in facilitating agreement on a strong financial target for global support for biodiversity. We believe that a first step towards this would be an EU target of 10% for biodiversity under the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – NDICI (please see our attached joint briefing for further background). Such an approach is in line with European Parliament request for 15% of NDICI funds to be dedicated to environment, biodiversity and the fight against desertification.

We would like to request a meeting with you to discuss this important issue and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

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Director – EU Strategic Relations
WCS EU

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Regional Managing Director - Europe
The Nature Conservancy

Ariel Brunner
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African Wildlife Foundation

Jean Labuschagne,
Director - Conservation Development & Assurance
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cc. Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen, EU Commissioner for International Partnerships
Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius, EU Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries
Mr Koen Doens, Director-General, DG DEVCO
Dr Florika Fink-Hooijer, Director-General, DG Environment
Ms Carla Montesi, Director, DG DEVCO
Mr Humberto Delgado Rosa, Director, DG Environment
Ms Chantal Marijnissen, Head of Unit, DG DEVCO
Mr Stefan Leiner, Head of Unit, DG Environment