



Brussels, 14th May 2019

Subject: Discussion in the 16th May Foreign Affairs Council Meeting regarding the Commission Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI).

Dear Minister of Foreign Affairs,

We are pleased to write as an informal coalition of non-governmental organisations, in advance of the Foreign Affairs Council (Development) meeting to be held on 16th May 2019, to request that your government supports an ambitious Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI). We believe that the NDICI should play a critical role in promoting inclusive sustainable development and fighting climate change, environmental degradation, and biodiversity loss globally, in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Overexploitation of natural resources and environmental crime are causing extensive damage to our oceans and terrestrial ecosystems, including wetlands, particularly in Africa, Asia and Latin America. At the same time, these actions are depriving communities and indigenous peoples of their sources of food, livelihoods, and cultural values, thereby increasing their vulnerability and insecurity. The recent landmark report from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) which received considerable attention in the media this week, shows that nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history with around one million species now threatened with extinction. As stated by the IPBES' Chairman, "Governments have focused on climate change far more than they have focused on loss of biodiversity or land degradation", although all three are equally important to human wellbeing¹.

According to a study² published last week, 96% of European Union (EU) citizens believe we have a responsibility to protect nature and that this is also essential for tackling climate change. We therefore urge the EU to dedicate a high proportion of its future External Financing Instruments (EFIs) towards promoting the sustainable management of natural resources, biodiversity protection and ecosystem resilience. The EU and its Member States must align themselves with other leading international organisations taking action, for example, the World Bank Group announced in 2018 a major new climate target for 2021-2025, doubling its current 5-year investments to around \$200 billion to tackle climate change³.

We have deep concerns with the split of funding in the current Commission proposal which increases the amount of dedicated geographic funds (€68 billion) at the cost of thematic (€7 billion) priorities, as this will pave the way for significant decreases in biodiversity funding in the future. These amounts have been proposed although the draft proposal itself explicitly recognises that "more needs to be done to address the scale of other environmental challenges such as biodiversity loss and depletion of natural resources". The NDICI should therefore dedicate

¹www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-48104037

²http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-19-2360_en.htm

³www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2018/12/03/world-bank-group-announces-200-billion-over-five-years-for-climate-action

significant budget expenditure towards combating biodiversity loss and the depletion of natural resources.

An increased **50% target for climate and environment** relevant spending should therefore be set across future EU EFIs, to deliver actions with clear and identifiable co-benefits across sectors. Such a high target will contribute to climate adaptation and mitigation, including sustainable agriculture, green transport and clean energy, and strengthen resilience, including to natural disasters; at the same time, it will deliver on multiple environmental, social and economic benefits, such as food and nutrition security, clean water, health and sanitation, economic development, jobs and sustainable livelihoods, peace and human security.

We were pleased to see that the official European Parliament position on the NDICI (adopted on the 27th March 2019), proposes that 45% of NDICI funds should support climate and environmental objectives, which includes 30% specifically for climate change, and 15% for environment, biodiversity and fight against desertification, as well as an increased envelope for thematic programmes.

We therefore call on your government to show leadership and support an ambitious NDICI that builds on the strong position taken by the European Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

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