



NGO Briefing

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# Making the European Green Deal work for International Partnerships

## INTRODUCTION

International Partnerships Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen's first responsibility is to build inclusive and equitable partnerships to reduce global poverty and support sustainable development. This paper undersigned by 14 NGOs considers how she can use the European Green Deal to address the climate and biodiversity emergencies while better supporting people living in poverty in the Global South.

Climate change and nature loss disproportionately affect those least responsible for causing it: the world's poorest 20%, most of whom are women, are responsible for less than 3% of global emissions. Impacts of climate change are placing and will place severe burdens on the poorest countries. That is why ensuring equity is so important. Countries with a higher historical responsibility for and with greater capacity to act against climate change should do more, and Commissioner Urpilainen must ensure the European Green Deal scales up support for the most vulnerable in partner countries.

Civil society and movements all over Europe and the Global South are calling for urgent action. The next 10 years are crucial.

This paper responds to the European Commission's Communication (11 December 2019) and sets out guiding principles and policy recommendations for Commissioner Urpilainen, to ensure the European Green Deal delivers for people in the EU's partner countries, the climate and biodiversity.

## SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

In work in all international fora and to deliver the **Paris Climate Agreement** and the **Convention on Biodiversity**, Commissioner Urpilainen should ensure the needs of marginalised groups and countries in the Global South are at the forefront. This means:

- Raising domestic ambition to reduce emissions and the EU's global footprint
- Supporting an institutional approach to loss and damage finance, and scaled-up financial support for mitigation, adaptation and environmental action
- Ensuring no detrimental impacts and protecting vulnerable groups

The Commissioner should ensure that work towards the **Renewed Partnership and the Comprehensive Strategy with Africa** achieves:

- A partnership founded on principles of climate and environmental action and achieving Agenda 2030

- A human rights based approach which puts communities at the heart of environmental and development efforts
- An inclusive and holistic approach to 'NaturAfrica'

In **funding the transition** and programming the **Neighbourhood, Development & International Cooperation Instrument** (NDICI) the Commissioner should ensure:

- Dramatically scaled-up sources of public climate and environmental finance
- Strong policies to prevent harmful spending
- A people- and planet- focused financial architecture and support for countries to build sustainable domestic resource bases
- A 50% climate and environment spending target in the NDICI
- Strengthened climate and environment mainstreaming and support to NDCs
- Strengthened participation of civil society in all partner countries.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development

We welcome the inclusion of the 'do no harm' principle in the Communication. As per the Lisbon Treaty (art. 208) and Agenda 2030 (SDG 17), EU policies should not harm partner countries' development objectives and should support sustainable development. Limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius is essential to achieving sustainable development, and a central part of the European Green Deal (EGD) is the EU's climate ambition. Therefore, the EU's 2030 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target needs to be significantly revised upward to -65% at the very least. This target should be reached through domestic reductions. The International Partnerships Commissioner should ensure policies to reach this objective do not negatively impact countries in the Global South, in particular through land use change and unsustainable resource extraction. European Green Deal initiatives and legislation should undergo impact assessments and inter-service consultations to respect the 'do no harm' principle and policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD). This includes implementation of the EU's Communication on Stepping up EU Action to Protect and Restore the World's Forests and the possible carbon border adjustment tax, which could impact domestic resources and exports in the Global South.

### Mainstreaming climate and environment

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on 1.5°C and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services show that limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C and reversing nature loss are prerequisites to achieving sustainable development. They also show the climate and biodiversity crises are closely interlinked and require integrated policy responses. In line with the science, the EGD should improve climate and environment mainstreaming and prevention of any harmful activities in EU development cooperation and external action. Mainstreaming also delivers co-benefits, for example for health and well-being, and can increase resilience in anticipation of increasing disaster risks. Nature-based solutions, including forest and wetlands restoration and ecosystem protection, contribute to climate change mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk management, increase community resilience and reduce vulnerability. These should be promoted where possible in a way that contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Dramatically scaling up public climate and environmental finance and phasing-out finance for fossil fuels, including export credits, and environmentally harmful subsidies is essential to support mainstreaming.

### Gender equality

The Communication is alarmingly gender blind. Gender inequality increases exposure to climate change risks and ecosystem degradation. Women and girls are more vulnerable to the impacts of extreme events and of biodiversity loss as climate change reduces vulnerable communities' access to, use of and control over a wide range of resources. But women are also at the forefront of defence of natural resources and first responders in climate disasters. Gender equality and women's rights are a high priority in EU development, as reflected in the Consensus for Development and the EU Gender Action Plan. In all climate change and nature loss activities gender equality should be promoted and safeguarded and women and girls supported as agents of change.

### Human rights-based approach

The human rights-based approach underpins all EU development interventions. Strengthening human rights in partner countries is the pathway to better environmental outcomes. Strong social and environmental safeguards, along with the "do no harm" principle should apply because European Green Deal 'solutions' may have adverse human rights impacts on people in the Global South, as exemplified by biofuels and commodity imports, which cause deforestation and land and water grabs. The Commissioner should take the lead in ensuring solutions comply with and strengthen human rights and natural resources rights, including the right of local communities and indigenous peoples to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), and that development cooperation supports community-led solutions. The EU should adopt robust and binding rules on corporate accountability for human rights violations and environmental degradation and engage constructively in the negotiations for a UN Treaty on Business and Human Rights.

### Inclusiveness and participation

We note the Communication's inclusion of a 'Climate Pact' in Europe. Emphasis should also be placed on dialogue with and support to civil society and grassroots initiatives in partner countries, in line with Agenda 2030, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), indigenous peoples and communities are at the forefront of climate and environmental defence, including suffering murder and attack as human rights and environmental defenders. CSOs play roles in implementing and advocating at local to global levels, and youth movements are calling for urgent action. The Commissioner should ensure that development cooperation reflects their strategic importance. In line with the Aarhus Convention, affected populations and civil society should be supported to participate in dialogue and any solutions supported by development cooperation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS: GREEN DEAL DIPLOMACY & GREEN ALLIANCES

We note the ‘green alliances’ and ‘tailored geographical strategies’ in the Communication. Supporting equitable international policies and frameworks which build synergies between biodiversity, climate action and the SDGs will be crucial to their success. Special attention should be given to least developed countries and leaving no one behind. The following recommendations should guide Commissioner Urpilainen’s and the EU’s approach.

### The Paris Agreement and the Convention on Biodiversity

**Raising ambition:** the EU must drive up Paris Agreement ambition by updating its nationally determined contribution in early 2020 to at least 65% emissions reductions by 2030. It should also champion the adoption of a strong and ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework and take specific action to tackle the EU’s impact on global deforestation and ecosystem conversion.

**Dealing with impacts and providing support:** the EU should champion an institutional approach which ensures new and additional finance is available under the UNFCCC and the Warsaw International Mechanism to address loss and damage caused by climate change. The EU must also continue to contribute to the achievement of the USD\$100 billion annual climate finance goal, and step up contributions to ensure its upward trajectory beyond 2020. Looking to the post-2025 goal the EU should support ambitious goals for mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage, with a central role for public and grants-based finance. Alongside climate finance, the EU should scale up its long-term biodiversity finance commitment, particularly for least developed and fragile countries. They should also strengthen women’s and indigenous peoples’ organisations’ access to funds. The EU should lead global efforts to redirect and align financial flows to the Paris Agreement and nature conservation and restoration objectives. Finance for fossil fuels and other climate and environmentally harmful finance must be urgently phased out.

**No detrimental impacts and protection for vulnerable groups.** The EU should support holistic climate and environment solutions that prioritise ecosystem resilience and restoration, agroecology and agroforestry, based on the rights, needs and aspirations of local groups and communities.

No climate policy can be allowed to infringe on human rights, and UNFCCC rules governing carbon markets and non-market rules must include human rights-based safeguards.

### Renewed partnership and the Comprehensive Strategy with Africa

**Founded on the principles of climate and environmental action,** as well as the SDGs, the Paris Agreement and the Convention on Biodiversity, the strategy must be based on relevant African conventions and environmental policies including the EU Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Voluntary Partnership Agreements with timber producing countries. In line with the Communication’s vow to help partner countries implement their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), the strategy should include a commitment to support the continent to implement ambitious and just climate action, through supporting effective and inclusive stakeholder participation and governance of NDCs, National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and National Agricultural Investment Plans.

**An integrated human rights-based approach** which puts rights and needs of local communities and indigenous peoples at the core of environmental and development efforts, starting with civil society and community consultation. EU investments must comply with the strongest environmental, social, taxation and human rights safeguards, exclude any support for fossil fuels, and promote small-scale businesses and local actors, with inclusive business models whereby profits and benefits stay in the local economy.

**An inclusive and holistic approach to ‘NaturAfrica’.** The NaturAfrica Initiative outlined in the Communication should be developed in consultation with all stakeholders, with particular attention to local communities, indigenous peoples, and women. It should support African governments and local populations to tackle major drivers of biodiversity loss and environmental degradation in a holistic and systematic way, including support for well managed protected area networks that involve and respect the rights of communities and indigenous peoples. The Initiative should include integrated land/seascape approaches to address unsustainable use of natural resources and ecosystem degradation, particularly freshwater and forest ecosystems, tackle illegal wildlife trafficking, corruption and poor natural resource governance.

## RECOMMENDATIONS: FUNDING THE TRANSITION AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD, DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION INSTRUMENT (NDICI)

The Communication shows a worrying reliance on private finance to fill gaps in funding the transition. While we welcome current EU development assistance and climate finance contributions, multiple countries in the Global South intend to enhance their

NDCs in 2020, and the challenges faced by them demand significant scaling up of finance including public and grants-based finance. The following recommendations can guide the Commissioner to a greener and more equitable approach.

## Funding the transition

**Dramatically scaled-up and sustainable sources of public finance.** The Commissioner should work with Member States to deliver scaled-up and sustainable finance for mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage, and take further measures to address the adaptation finance gap. Climate finance should be new and additional to 0.7% Gross National Income (GNI) Overseas Development Aid (ODA) commitments, in order to avoid undermining the aid mandate that is focused on reducing poverty and inequality. They should improve climate and environmental finance tracking, reporting, and impact evaluation.

**A 50% climate and environment spending target in the future NDICI** would promote actions with co-benefits across multiple sectors. To ensure this is integrated with social aims 85% of programmes should have gender equality as principal or significant objectives and 20% of ODA dedicated to human development and social inclusion.

**Policies to prevent harmful spending.** NDICI programming instructions should include an obligation that 100% of programmes are climate/environment-proof and resilient. The instrument should be governed by international human rights standards, social safeguards, and criteria excluding fossil fuels and environmentally harmful activities. Environmental Impact Assessments and Strategic Environmental Assessments, Climate Risk Assessments need to be used systematically and cover international/national climate and environmental objectives.

**People- and planet- focused financial architecture** should prioritise de-risking renewable and energy efficiency projects and offer support for inclusive business models and local micro, small and medium size enterprises to undertake more sustainable and resource efficiency practices. The architecture must include strong environmental and human rights safeguards, and monitoring and complaint mechanisms, which apply to institutions signing guarantee agreements under EFSD+, and to the selection of individual projects and end-beneficiaries.

**Supporting countries to build sustainable domestic resources bases** will enable them to increase financing and investment in just transitions. The EU should support timely and comprehensive restructuring of existing debt and the principle of a multilateral debt workout mechanism and increase efforts to support progressive and effective taxation.

## A programming process which delivers

**Strengthening climate and environment mainstreaming** and integrating it throughout the programming and project cycles would improve delivery across programmes. Targets should be reflected in programming at country and regional level using an ex-ante approach, with annual reporting to ensure corrective action can be taken as necessary. Resilience building, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and preparedness should be mainstreamed into the NDICI and pre-emptive DRR investment at government and community level should be increased.

**Prioritising support to enhancement and implementation of NDCs** in geographic programmes will achieve better climate and environment outcomes, integrated with SDG plans, National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), DRR strategies, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans where available. Programming should support embedding of strong governance principles, participation and concrete milestones within NDCs so they deliver strong and inclusive development, environmental and climate benefits. The EU should seek synergies between NDC processes and the FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreements in timber-producing countries and increase financial and political support for the FLEGT Action Plan.

**Safeguarding funding for thematic programmes** which have a track record of delivering on environment, human rights and civil society will ensure effective targeted action. Programming should also seek to maximise the coherence between EU geographic and thematic priorities for example strengthened support for CSO and indigenous peoples' climate and environmental action through grants and programming.

**EU actors should strengthen their dialogue** with a diverse range of CSOs, indigenous peoples and communities throughout the programming process; best practice consultation in line with the Busan principles must be mandatory for EU delegations; and there should be enhanced efforts to reach more diverse and marginalised groups. Future CSO roadmaps and outreach should incorporate a more diverse range of civil society, from grassroots, indigenous, youth and women's groups, climate justice and environmental defenders.

**Strengthening climate and environmental capacities of EU delegations and counterparts** in partner countries is necessary for enhanced action; clear guidance and support should be provided to EU delegations, they should be mandated to employ a climate and environment specialist and enhance technical support to partner countries.

### List of undersigning organisations:

- ACT Alliance EU
- ActionAid International
- Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe
- Care International
- CIDSE
- Conservation International Europe
- Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA)
- Eurodad
- Fern
- IFAW
- Oxfam
- Wetlands International
- World Vision EU Representation
- WWF European Policy Office

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