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Dear Members of the Committee,

In the new policy for official development assistance, State Secretary Ben Knapen chooses to abandon the direct commitment to management and conservation of forests and other ecosystems. IUCN NL does not regard this as a wise decision. Especially in this area lies a fantastic opportunity and challenge for international cooperation and Dutch businesses. Also in the new partner countries for development assistance, many people depend directly on properly functioning ecosystems with a rich biodiversity in order to meet their daily necessities. For them, for the sustainable economic growth in these countries and for the Dutch economy it is of primary importance that the ecosystems there remain intact.

Scientists have been warning for years that the world economy is facing the planetary boundaries. Due to the increasing scarcity of resources, a large part of businesses realizes that the Netherlands should be moving towards a biobased economy. This awareness is also present in the top sectors which are indicated by the government. The Platform Biodiversity and Business, under leadership of Rein Willems, which was recently founded by the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers [VNO-NCW], SMEs Netherlands [MKB-Nederland], the Dutch Federation of Agricultural and Horticultural Organization [LTO] and IUCN NL, is responsive to these developments. Vital ecosystems guarantee sustainable resources such as wood, fibers and food, the supply of pharmaceutical and biochemical components, they cou

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IUCN NL cannot agree with the environment policy as cross-sectioning theme in some pilot projects. Our experience in our country and abroad is that this results in the loss of attention for ecosystems. The limited effort which is put into so

