

**The Dutch Confederation of Industry and Employers  
VNO-NCW  
Attn. Mr B. Wientjes, chairman  
PO Box 93002  
2509 AA The Hague**

Amsterdam, 16 November 2010

Re.: Declaration of Intent Business and Biodiversity Platform

Dear Mr Wientjes,

We hereby enclose the Letter of Intent which has been prepared by the National committee of the Netherlands of IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) together with your organisation VNO-NCW and a number of IUCN member organisations over the past year. At the 'Biodiversity: Opportunities for a New Economy' congress in Amsterdam on 23 November 2010, this Letter of Intent will be signed by the chairpersons of both our organisations, as well as LTO, MKB NL and various IUCN member organisations.

We are delighted with this first step, which we hope will bring us closer together in order to address the important theme of 'ecology and economy', in which the right choices will have to be made in the coming years for our children, grandchildren, the economy and human welfare. Biodiversity and ecosystems form the basis of our economy and our existence. Their decline not only affects nature but also our economy, as shown by the many studies, including the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species - the barometer of biodiversity – and the WWF Living Planet Report about the ecological footprint. Radical, structural system changes are required for the transition to a sustainable economy and society. Last month, in its report 'Rethinking Global Biodiversity Strategies', the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL) concluded that 'business-as-usual' was no longer an option. These conclusions were shared by the UN study group 'The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity' and are reflected in the agreements reached in this month's Biodiversity Conference in Japan. In partnership with the business community, we see great potential for sustainable development and good policy related to biodiversity and ecosystems. We would therefore like to consider this Letter of Intent in a broader context, such as the recommendations of the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER) endorsed by the VNO-NCW 'Making Sustainable Growth Work' (March 2010), in which the necessity of promoting sustainability is very clearly expressed: "The Council believes that the crisis provides an excellent opportunity to reconfirm the importance of sustainable development. Business-as-usual is not an option, and the structure of the entire economy will have to become sustainable."

During the last meeting of IUCN members in the Netherlands, they agreed on the great importance of dialogue and partnership with the business community aimed at instigating a sustainable approach to the natural environment at home and abroad. We see the Letter of Intent as a step towards this dialogue and partnership. The coming months will show whether this dialogue and partnership can really get off the ground during the elaboration of the Letter of Intent into a document which establishes the goal and approach of the dialogue/partnership and which formulates a joint strategic vision regarding importance and approach. Furthermore, several of the organisations associated with the IUCN have made it clear that they still have problems with several passages in the Letter of Intent, as long as it is not clear whether and how it will be possible to achieve a concrete elaboration of a sufficient ambition level relating to sustainable development and the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems. A periodical (annual) evaluation of the implementation is also essential. In this light, agreements will also have to be made about how we plan to define success and how this will be communicated.

A core group has been formed consisting of IUCN members who will fulfil a leading role for the themes nature, the environment, biodiversity knowledge and international. These are: Vereniging Natuurmonumenten, Stichting

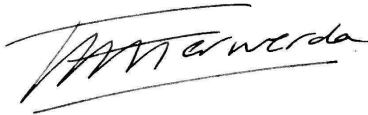
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Natuur en Milieu, de Vlinderstichting en Wetlands International. They will coordinate with other organisations. As the initiator, the IUCN NL office will facilitate this process and liaise with VNO-NCW.

We look forward to the festive signing of this Letter of Intent during the 'Biodiversity: Opportunities for a New Economy' congress on Tuesday 23 November in Amsterdam and to our initial partnership which will bring us closer together in our serious quest for solutions.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Ferwerda', with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

Willem Ferwerda  
Director

Attached: Declaration of Intent Business and Biodiversity Platform