

Open letter to the Leaders of the Dutch Political Parties in Parliament

The Hague, 12 December 2006

Plea for a government with a long term vision on nature and climate policy

Dear political leaders,

The elections have been held, and discussions on the formation of the next government are ongoing. We notice that in the political debate and in the programs of the political parties there is again little attention for nature, biodiversity and climate. Ecosystems - the natural elements that form our planet - are disappearing at an enormous rate around the globe, mainly due to human impacts. Every year more and more plant and animal species go extinct. Scientists regularly point out this harsh reality, such as in the *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment* that was published last year by the United Nations with contributions of more than 1,300 scientists. We, people working for national and multinational companies and institutions, are deeply concerned about these issues, and feel that they have received insufficient attention in the national political debate. Nature is the foundation of our existence and should therefore be conserved - now and in the future.

This is the time when you are making your plans for the coming four years. We believe that the protection of our living-environment, here in the Netherlands as well as worldwide, should be given a higher priority. This is in the interest of our future, our economy and our well-being. The Dutch corporate sector must be stimulated to show leadership and contribute to sustainable development, but must also be given the maneuvering space in which it can prove itself to be responsible. This means that regulations must be implementable, sustainable behavior must be rewarded, and must not be hampered by allowing unsustainable behavior to prevail.

Within the European Union, the Netherlands needs to develop a strategy that focuses on innovation for sustainable technologies, knowledge development, and society-wide commitment to our natural systems. This strategy is needed in order to prevent our wellbeing to be undermined by the further loss of our foundation: nature.

We expect from the new government, from whatever political party, decisive action and policies based on a long term global vision for the sustainable management of our natural systems, as well as clarity on who bears political responsibility for that agenda.

We invite those that will form the next cabinet, the leaderships of our political parties and our politicians to join us and non-governmental organizations in developing a long-term vision and to help each other in the development of an effective and strong policy.

Yours sincerely,

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Ministers and Secretaries of State of Finance; Economic Affairs; Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment; Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality; Education, Culture and Science; Transport, Public Works and Water Management; and Foreign Affairs.

Annex: List of subscribers with position and organization for further identification.

Deze brief is een initiatief van het IUCN NL Leaders for Nature, voor meer informatie zie www.iucn.nl