

Speech Prime Minister Mark Rutte, One Planet Summit, 11 January 2021

Distinguished speakers, ladies and gentlemen,

After the persuasive contributions of the speakers before me, I think we can all agree that we face complex challenges, as we enter a critical decade for people, nature and climate.

One of these is the spread of zoonotic diseases. We in the Netherlands stand ready to share our knowledge and experience, and to invest in global cooperation on One Health. Our research institutes are already working closely with international partners to streamline future research initiatives.

The world's forests play a crucial role in addressing these challenges.

To have any chance of meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris climate goals, we must conserve our remaining forests and restore as many ecosystems as possible.

For that, we will have to agree an ambitious new framework at the UN Biodiversity Conference in Kunming.

[Dutch policy]

The Dutch government has recognised the need to step up and take responsibility.

We are intensifying our diplomacy, increasing funding for international biodiversity and doubling our financial contributions to combating deforestation. The aim is to end global deforestation by 2030.

One of our most recent contributions was to the Central African Forest Initiative (CAFI), which is tackling deforestation in the Congo Basin.

[EU action]

No country can address these complex challenges alone. More collective action is needed.

The Amsterdam Declarations Partnership, established in 2015, has been an important platform for this.

I'm pleased to announce that the Netherlands, together with eight other European countries, has signed the Partnership's new 'Statement of Ambition for 2025'.

By signing it, we underscore our continued commitment to ending agriculture-related deforestation. Working in partnership with consumer and producer countries, and with actors along the entire supply chain.

The European Union is one of the world's biggest importers of agricultural commodities linked to deforestation. That's why we're encouraging the EU to develop more ambitious policies.

We firmly support the EU Communication on Stepping up EU Action to Protect and Restore the World's Forests of 2019, and the development of concrete proposals as part of the European Green Deal.

In December, France, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands called for early adoption of ambitious legislative proposals and other EU initiatives. Including WTO-compliant measures to limit or avoid the risk that products linked to deforestation are placed on the EU market.

Legislation on mandatory due diligence at EU level needs to be a part of those measures, so we can ensure a level playing field for businesses.

Another important element is to make sure that EU trade deals foster the implementation of international environmental agreements and help reduce deforestation. Last year, France and the Netherlands jointly presented proposals in that area.

[International cooperation]

The EU is on the right track, but for a lasting global impact we have to work in close partnership with forest countries, and boost cooperation between all major producer and consumer countries.

And with that in mind, I welcome the initiative by President Macron to develop an Alliance for the Conservation of Rainforests.

The Netherlands supports this Alliance, as well as many other international initiatives, including the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People and the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures, which were also launched today.

The One Planet Summit has provided a timely kick-off for a decade of ambition and collective action.

We are all clear on our goals and plans. Now it's time to make them happen.

Thank you.