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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: World Circular Economy Forum high-level meeting on the circular economy, Climate Nexus (WCEF+climate)
(The Netherlands, 15 April 2021)
- Information from the Dutch delegation

Delegations will find in the [Annex](#) an information note from the [Dutch delegation](#) on the above subject, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council (Environment) meeting on 23 October 2020.

**World Circular Economy Forum high-level meeting on the circular economy, Climate Nexus
(WCEF+climate)
(The Netherlands, 15 April 2021)**

- Information from the Dutch delegation -

On 15 April 2021, the Netherlands will host WCEF+climate, a high-level meeting of the World Circular Economy Forum to address the links between the circular economy, climate and the broader Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It will bring together public and private sector decision-makers from all over the world and will be hybrid in nature (partially in person and partially online). The conference is part of a joint effort by Finland, Canada and the Netherlands to advance the circular economy as key to a sustainable recovery. It is the second conference in a series of three high-level World Circular Economy Forum events: a recent online event on 29 and 30 September 2020, the one in the Netherlands, and one in Canada in September 2021.

WCEF+climate represents a unique opportunity to bring together decision-makers responsible for sustainable development and climate to discuss the crucial contribution that a circular economy can offer in combating climate change and achieving the SDGs. So far the circular economy and climate policies have been dealt with rather separately. In ongoing discussions on and frameworks for combating climate change, efforts focus primarily on the transition to renewable energy and energy efficiency. However, that is only part of the story: energy-related factors contribute to only roughly half of emissions worldwide. The remaining share relates to the production of goods and food that we use and consume daily. A focus on the redesign, reuse and recycling of products is key to reducing energy use and to avoiding CO₂ emissions. It is estimated that circular approaches could reduce CO₂ emissions from materials production in the EU by 56 % by 2050¹. The circular economy is therefore the missing piece in achieving the climate goals of the Paris Agreement.

¹ Material Economics, The circular economy – a powerful force for climate mitigation (2018).

A more circular economy would have many other benefits as well, such as reduced geopolitical risks, local job creation, lower air pollution, and reduced water use. It could therefore contribute to several of the Sustainable Development Goals.

While there is convincing evidence showing how circular economy processes contribute to achieving the SDGs and our climate goals, there is no one-size-fits-all model or blueprint for transition processes. The task ahead differs across regions and countries, depending on where they start from. This is why particular attention will be devoted to various regional circular initiatives, taking into account the perspectives of developing countries.

In order to properly link the circular economy to climate and sustainable development, it is crucial to speak the same language, set shared goals, measure progress and jointly manage trade-offs. The monitoring of the circular economy and the importance of developing a framework that provides insights into the circular economy's contribution to climate goals will therefore also be one of the key issues up for discussion.

It is only with stronger governance, new forms of dialogue among all those involved, and more coherent and coordinated policies that it will be possible to achieve the progress we need by 2030 and 2025, as agreed in the Paris Agreement and the SDGs. The WCEF+climate high-level meeting offers an opportunity to address these issues in an integrated and innovative way. It is a great opportunity that we have to seize. The Netherlands would like to invite all Member States to think about how we can use the potential of the circular economy to its full extent in order to tackle the climate challenge and help fulfil the promise of the SDGs.
