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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Eliminate deforestation
- Information from the French delegation, supported by the Italian delegation

Delegations will find in the Annex an information note from the French delegation, supported by the Italian delegation, on the above subject, to be dealt with under ‘Any other business’ at the Council (Environment) meeting on 17 December 2020.

Eliminate deforestation**– Information from the French delegation supported by the Italian delegation –**

The pace of deforestation around the world calls for strong action at European level in order to provide a response in line with the magnitude of the ecological tragedy we are witnessing.

Deforestation caused by human activity is occurring at an alarming rate, threatening irreplaceable tropical forests which, among other things, are essential to fighting climate change and maintaining and conserving biodiversity. Deforestation causes biodiversity loss, has a negative impact on climate change due to increased carbon emissions, and results in other environmental, societal and even economic losses.

In this context, as signatories of the Amsterdam Declarations, we urge the Commission to strengthen the EU's legal framework to combat 'imported deforestation'.

In particular, we call for ambitious legislative proposals and initiatives to be adopted as soon as possible, in connection with the new Climate Law and as announced in the Biodiversity Strategy and Farm to Fork Strategy, in line with the EU's objective of halting global forest loss by 2030, in order to:

- implement measures to limit or prevent the placing on the EU market of products associated with deforestation in accordance with WTO rules, such as compliance with non-discriminatory deforestation-free standards for entry onto the EU market, mandatory due diligence, a European 'deforestation free' label, a strategy for protein autonomy, and a private-sector alert mechanism based on the work of the Observatory on deforestation, the degradation of forests and changes in the world's forest cover;

- strengthen cooperation and bilateral relations, promoting partnerships with producer and consumer countries, with a particular focus on small-scale producers;
- ensure that existing and future trade agreements between the EU and its external partners do not lead to an increase in imported deforestation and help to reduce deforestation in these partner countries;
- step up action to address ‘zero deforestation’, in terms of governance, transparency, monitoring of commitments, and scientific cooperation.

We are committed to contributing to and supporting the work to be done by the Commission.

We are prepared to share our experience as regards our strategy to combat imported deforestation.
