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NGO advocates for separate LULUCF pillar in 2030 climate and energy framework

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Today the EU Heads of State agreed on the main elements of EU's 2030 climate and energy package and decided that policies for the land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector will be established before 2020. To ensure utmost climate ambition for the 2030 package, FERN advocates for a separate LULUCF pillar that gives an opportunity for a policy approach that reflects the sector's particularities like permanence, long time cycles and natural variability.

LULUCF is well known for being one of the most complex areas of climate change negotiations. Unlike all other sectors, LULUCF – which refers to all land (including wetland) and forests – is not only a potential source of emissions, it is also a sink of emissions (i.e. it sequesters and stores CO₂). Across the EU as a whole, the LULUCF sector is a net sink (i.e. it removes more carbon from the atmosphere than it releases). Counting these emissions towards the same target as other sectors will therefore make the overall target easier to reach, leading to continued carbon dependency of our housing, transport and agricultural sectors.¹ There are also a number of other characteristics (large annual fluctuations and long-time horizons, while there are uncertainties relating to data reliabilities) that make it unfit for inclusion in existing EU climate instruments, since both the EU ETS and Effort Sharing Decision have an annual compliance cycle.²

Hannah Mowat from FERN says “To develop an ambitious climate and energy framework, the EU must ensure the LULUCF sector is not used to water down the overall 2030 climate framework. Any effort from the LULUCF should be additional to the economy-wide greenhouse gas target.”

In a set of principles released today, FERN together with eight other NGOs believe the best approach for including LULUCF in any future EU climate and energy package is to establish a separate LULUCF pillar in the climate and energy framework.

Notes to editors:

For a copy of the NGO principles on LULUCF, visit: www.fern.org/LULUCFPrinciples

1. For more information, see www.fern.org/misleading-numbers

2. Sectors currently are capped by two different instruments that make up EU climate legislation, the EU ETS and the ESD. Under the EU ETS, over 11,000 energy-using installations in the power generation and manufacturing industry are capped as well as flights to and from the EU and the three EEA-EFTA states. Under the ESD, emissions related to transport, buildings, waste and non-co₂ emissions from agriculture, which mostly come from cattle (methane) and synthetic fertilizer (nitrous oxide).

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