

## JOINT OPEN LETTER TO ALL PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT BANKS

**Development Banks:** Show you are truly committed to achieving the SDGs and the Paris Agreement goals by divesting from industrial livestock operations.

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3 November 2020

**Dear Executives of Public Development Banks,**

With this open letter we urge you to commit to divest from the industrial livestock sector, during the upcoming [Finance in Common Summit](#) – the first ever global meeting of all public development banks.

The summit will address the world's need to build new forms of prosperity that take care of the living (people and planet) in a resilient manner. Industrial livestock operations can not be a part of this, as they fuel the climate crisis, are a major cause of deforestation, environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, water and air pollution, increase the risk of antibiotic resistance and new pandemics. These operations undermine food sovereignty, social justice, displace small-scale farmers in low-income countries, destroy the livelihoods of indigenous peoples, and cause tremendous animal suffering.

Yet earlier this year, research revealed that major development banks – such as the World Bank and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development — which should be helping humanity create a more sustainable and safer world, are [lending billions](#) to the worst forms of animal agriculture. As a result, both banks received joint NGO letters asking them to divest from industrial livestock.

The livestock sector is responsible for 14.5% of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions globally and, if nothing changes, experts project it could account for up to half of the world's allowable budget for greenhouse gas emissions, for a 1.5°C temperature increase scenario, by 2030 and [80% by 2050](#). It is also by far the largest driver of deforestation in South America, where natural ecosystems are being destroyed at a rapid pace to be turned into pastures for an ever expanding cattle herd, or transformed into large crop fields to feed farmed animals. Food systems and especially large-scale meat and feed production are also major drivers of biodiversity loss and underlie the increased fragility of numerous ecosystems around the world.

The Covid-19 pandemic is “a reminder of the gravity of biodiversity loss and of our unique interconnection with nature”, according to the [United Nations](#). Its Environmental Program (UNEP) has warned that changes in the environment, such as those caused by deforestation linked to livestock production, are [drivers](#) for the emergence of new zoonotic diseases. Aside from that, industrial animal agriculture, in which animals are raised in overcrowded and cruel factory farms, are [breeding grounds](#) for zoonosis. [UNEP has called](#) for an approach that unites human, animal and environmental health to prevent the next pandemic.

Development banks have the mission to contribute to sustainable development, which enables countries to achieve the SDGs and the Paris Climate goals. You can truly contribute to this by supporting sustainable agricultural practices like agro-ecology, indigenous agricultural systems, agroforestry, organic farming, plant-based food systems, silvo-pastoral systems and low-intensive permanent grassland. By doing this, development banks can support countries to develop a [sustainable food future](#), which is the first principle for investing in sustainable livestock, according to the World Bank.

A [petition](#) asking Development Banks to divest from the livestock sector has been signed by thousands of people from around the world.

We trust you will live up to your mission and take the measures needed to protect our planet, its people and animals, and announce a commitment to divest from industrial livestock and redirect loans to sustainable agricultural practices.

### SIGNATORY ORGANIZATIONS

- 50by40
- A Well-Fed World
- Alliance for Empowering Rural Communities (AERC)
- Animal Legal Defense Fund
- Animal Outlook
- Better Food Foundation
- Born Free Foundation
- Brighter Green
- Center for Biological Diversity
- Compassion in World Farming
- Equalia
- Factory Farming Awareness Coalition
- Farm Forward
- Farm Sanctuary
- FeedBack
- FOUR PAWS International
- Friends of the Earth U.S.
- Fundación Vegetarianos Hoy
- Global Forest Coalition
- Green Faith
- Having Kids
- Indigenous Knowledge and Peoples Network
- Mercy For Animals
- Montreal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA)
- ProVeg International
- Seeding Sovereignty
- Sinergia Animal
- Society for Wetland Biodiversity Conservation Federation of Kirant Indigenous Association Nepal
- Strategies for Ethical and Environmental Development (SEED)
- The Humane League UK
- We Animals Media
- World Animal Net
- World Animal Protection
- Zero Hour
- Sentient Media