

Constituency Address to the Fourth GEF Assembly
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on behalf of Australia, the Republic of Korea and New Zealand

Madame Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Constituency of Australia, the Republic of Korea and New Zealand, I am pleased to have the opportunity to address this Fourth Assembly of the Global Environment Facility.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend our appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Uruguay for hosting this important occasion. I would also like to thank the Secretariat and the Trustee of the GEF for bringing together the members of the GEF network to reflect on, and celebrate, the work of the GEF.

Our constituency welcomes the outcome of the fifth replenishment. GEF5 represents the highest ever commitment of resources to the GEF in any given replenishment round. This is a commendable achievement when one considers the difficult international financial backdrop.

The confidence shown by the international community in making this commitment demonstrates that the GEF has a central role to play in the International Year of Biodiversity and enhanced efforts to address climate change. This replenishment positions the GEF well to deliver on its increased mandate which includes new obligations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, new needs under the Stockholm Convention and pilot activities to remedy mercury contamination.

Our constituency will work actively in the GEF Council over the next four years to support the implementation of the reform agenda proposed during replenishment negotiations. Our collective efforts to improve country ownership in GEF programming and to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the GEF will be important to ensuring that the GEF makes the most of its increased resources. Reform will also enhance the trust of the international community in the GEF's ability to deliver global environmental benefits. Successful reform of the GEF could limit the need to create new institutions and mechanisms in areas such as climate change.

Our particular focus will be on ensuring that organisational reform will further improve the access of Asia and Pacific island countries to GEF funds, for the realisation of significant benefits. We will contribute with interest to discussions on streamlining the project cycle, reforming agency access and improving national engagement in GEF portfolio planning.

We look forward to working with you all during the next two days and over the course of the fifth replenishment to support the GEF to deliver on its catalytic role in tackling some of the most difficult problems faced by the international community.