



Ministry of Environment and Tourism  
NAMIBIA

Country Statement  
by  
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ON THE OCCASION OF THE FOURTH GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Punta del Este, Uruguay

Chairperson,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me, from the onset to congratulate you, on the efficient way in which you are guiding this Fourth Assembly Meeting for the Global Environment Facility (GEF). I would also like to congratulate Uruguay on successfully hosting this event, their hospitality is remarkable.

Namibia has a large biodiversity endowment, which is of global significance. Although predominantly a semi arid country, Namibia contains a remarkable variety of ecosystems, ranging from hyper-arid deserts with less than 10mm of rainfall to subtropical wetlands and savannas receiving over 600mm of precipitation per annum. Four major terrestrial biomes exist, namely: Succulent Karoo, Nama Karoo, Desert and Tree and Shrub Savannah. On a finer scale, 29 different vegetation types are currently recognised, many of which are wholly unique to Namibia or to the southern African sub continent. These biomes are storehouses of high species richness: the country harbours 4,000 species and subspecies of higher plants and 658 species of birds have been recorded, of which approximately 30% is migrant. 217 species of mammals are found including unique arid varieties of desert-adapted rhino and elephant. This biodiversity richness generates global and national benefits through protecting globally important ecosystems. Namibia appreciates and recognizes the significant financial contribution from the GEF which enables us to continue conserving and managing our natural resources. This continued support enhances and protects the existence values, option values and future use values enjoyed by the global community and national stakeholders that might otherwise be forfeited.

Excellencies,

I am happy that at this meeting we are taking stock, and collectively strengthening strategies and actions for protecting the global environment and achieving sustainable development. I would briefly highlight some of the achievements and constraints Namibia realized and experienced over the last four years since the GEF-4 period.

During the last GEF replenishment period (GEF -4), Namibia has made good progress towards the achievement of some of the goals and targets of the Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs) as well as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Namibia also benefited greatly from our partnership with the GEF and specifically continues to address environmental degradation issues in response to both national and global focuses. Our progress towards MDG number 7 is particularly encouraging, considering our inherited past socio-economic and environmental circumstances.

Namibia continues to benefit from the GEF resources in the areas of climate change, biodiversity conservation, land degradation and international transboundary waters. On behalf of our Government and the Namibian people who continue to be primary beneficiaries

of national and global efforts, to attain the MDGs, I would like to thank the GEF for continuing to make Namibia a priority country of the GEF co-assistance. Also, I am pleased to announce that we have assigned all our resource allocation of the GEF-4 allocation, which was 6.5 US\$ for biodiversity and for climate change it was a group allocation, thus there was no predictability. We are optimistic that we will be able to programme and utilize our GEF-5 allocations.

We are particularly glad that Namibia is also one of the beneficiary countries for the Small Grant Programme, which is at the heart of our national interventions -bringing development in its totality to the local and natural resource users themselves- to find solutions, to innovate and to internalize costs and benefits associated with environmental management. Namibia is therefore pleased and welcomes the increasing support to SGP.

While we appreciate the good partnership with the GEF; we are still faced with great challenges; for instance, our country is highly vulnerable to climate change impacts, specifically our coastal areas and our continuous dependency on our fragile ecosystem and related services, which is highly leaning towards subsistence economy that relies heavily on subsistence agriculture and livestock production systems. In order for our Government and the entire nation to prepare and limit potential impacts of uncertain climate change scenarios, we would like to engage the GEF and its partners to come up with accelerated and quick-win approaches in the areas of climate change adaptation; both institutional adaptation and adaptive management capacity.

Excellencies,

Namibia would like to commend the GEF Secretariat, in particular to congratulate its CEO Mrs. Monique Barbut for developing a balanced and transparent system for resource allocation for GEF-5. We welcome this new system to allocate GEF resources, known as the System for the transparent allocation of resources (STAR). Namibia appreciates the removal and elimination of 50% rule and group allocation established during GEF-4 for the Resource Allocation Framework (RAF). We are also pleased that the land degradation has been included in the STAR which enables us to see what is available to us. Namibia is happy to see the flexibility embedded in the STAR. It is our belief that the STAR increases predictability and provides framework for countries to program allocated resources in accordance with their national priorities and enhances transparency in the way GEF allocates resources.

Excellencies,

Accessing funding from the GEF has been a torturing process. It is indeed a major "bottleneck" why many countries, especially in Africa are not drawing resources from the GEF. The transaction cost of such a process is extremely cumbersome, complex and extra ordinarily expensive, in both time and human resources available in our countries. Therefore, I would like to urge an accelerated approval process and specific attention should be given to countries in Africa due to their limited human and institutional capacities. Thus, shortening project cycles will speed up the process of obtaining finance from the GEF.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Similarly, the co-financing in cash requirements by some GEF Implementing Agencies prevents deserving and qualified countries accessing financial resources from the GEF. I therefore would like to request the GEF to review this requirement so that more projects qualify and members of GEF developing countries draw more benefits and implement projects in line with their own country-driven sustainable development initiatives.

Excellencies,

The task ahead will not be easy if the international community does not take concerted actions towards assisting those members who are taking a forward and bold step trying to address the challenges with strategic long-term program approaches. However, good intentions need to be translated into concrete actions therefore tangible steps leading to that need to be taken. Namibia also would like to see up-scaling of what is working and what worked in GEF-4, thus we would like to see transformational up-scaling of good initiatives in GEF-5. Namibia looks forward to the implementation of this approach, in particular in furtherance of our coastal biodiversity conservation and integrated community-based ecosystem management approaches, which have seen greater national and global benefits. We are pleased to share our success in these approaches at this Assembly through our display stand. We would like to have an effective program – which will be responsible to lay a good foundation work for the implementation of our climate change strategy and action plan and the coastal biodiversity conservation policy.

With regard to the climate change focal area: we would like to see a greater move to adaptation activities at community-level; water resource management, renewable energy promotion and synergy with land degradation and biodiversity management.

Excellencies,

We have started our process for national prioritization and the programming of GEF-5 resources. Our first national consultation meeting recently took place on May 20, 2010. We identified existing gaps in Namibia with regard to GEF support in terms of sustainable land management, biodiversity and international water focal areas. We also looked at various options under climate change mitigation and adaptation measures. Our programming is based on five principles that all projects should:

1. Be codified within top national priorities and have full country ownership;
2. Deliver outcome rather than process orientated results- meaning, it must make a 'huge' difference;
3. Demonstrate national benefits (in terms of socio-economic, environmental and cultural issues) which have the greatest contribution to global environmental benefits;
4. Clearly fill particular niches where no other partners are active; and
5. Add value to the advancement of policies and implementation

At all levels, projects and programs are undertaken in a participatory fashion, involving stakeholders partnership from government, civil society, private sector and implementing Agencies and contributing to building successful partnerships.

Namibia is committed to environmental sustainability and will continue to work together with the GEF to achieving our MDG goal 7.

I thank you for your kind attention.