



Ministry of Environment and Tourism
Republic of Namibia

Plenary Statement (five minutes)
Hon. Pohamba Shifeta, Minister of Environment and
Tourism, Namibia

at the 6th Assembly of the Global Environment Facility

16.25 (estimated), Wednesday 27th June 2018

Da Nang, Vietnam

Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Nguyễn Xuân Phúc

Honorable Ministers and Heads of Delegations

Chief Executive Officer of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Ms. Naoko Ishii

Distinguished Delegates

I wish to begin by expressing my warm appreciation to the Government and the people of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for their generous hospitality in hosting this gathering here in the beautiful city of Da Nang.

I would like to take this opportunity to also thank all countries, the GEF Secretariat and other stakeholders for the successful replenishment of the GEF for the upcoming 7th cycle. The overall decline in comparison to the 6th replenishment cycle is concerning but we appreciate the increasing robustness of priorities and strategies adopted under the GEF 7 programming and policy directions.

For this reason, Namibia is optimistic that the increasing focus on integrated programming approaches and the inclusion of impact programmes in GEF 7 will not only deliver global environmental benefits but will most importantly lead to the improved quality of life of our communities on the ground.

These communities are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and the land degradation we are witnessing. As the key managers of our biodiversity and natural resources, it is these communities

that must feel the greatest impacts from projects and programmes engineered under the GEF-7 replenishment cycle.

To date, Namibia has been able to implement over 30 national projects worth approximately US\$71 million and we have participated in 34 regional and global projects. These projects have been an enormous help to Namibia in catalysing innovations and best practice approaches in the areas of biodiversity management, climate change adaptation and mitigation and sustainable land management. We have also gained considerable experience over the course of implementing these projects in terms of what has and what has not worked.

Namibia firmly believes that country ownership is the main driver of success when it comes to the conception, design, implementation and sustainability of GEF projects. For this reason, we would request for the GEF to open up opportunities for the accreditation of national implementing agencies as is being done to good effect by the Green Climate Fund. It is our view that this will be the best approach to strengthen capacities and the long term benefits and impacts to developing countries from the GEF and will ensure better efficiency and effectiveness in overall implementation.

Lastly Chairperson,

I would like to use this platform to express our concern about the application of the classification of Namibia as an upper middle income country and the new co-financing requirements that this entails and the likely reduction in terms of country allocation. The continued reliance on GDP-derived indicators masks the stark past inequalities that continue to prevail in our society. This overlooks the vulnerability of our rural

communities whose livelihoods are so gravely threatened by climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation and who are in greatest need of support.

Thus I would like to call on GEF to continue to deliver necessary project grants in the spirit of the common but differentiated responsibility principle as adopted in the Rio Declaration. This will be critical for us to attain the ambitious targets we have set for ourselves such as in our National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, our Nationally Determined Contributions and our national Land Degradation Neutrality targets.

I thank you for your kind attention.