

STATEMENT FROM THE PHILIPPINES

Sixth GEF Assembly

Da Nang, Vietnam

June 2018

Your excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Since its humble beginnings, the GEF has become one of the major driving force in supporting developing countries to achieve agreed global environmental benefits embodied in various international environmental agreements.

For the Philippines, a total of 113 GEF projects across the different focal areas have been approved since the pilot phase up until GEF-6, wherein fifty-six (56) of which are national projects with a total grant funds of US\$253.06 Million and a US\$3.00 Billion leveraged co-financing. The country has also participated in fifty-seven (57) global/regional projects with a total grant funds of US\$436.22 Million and a leveraged co-financing of US\$1.7 Billion. The implementation of these projects have significantly contributed not just in the conservation and protection of the environment, but also in empowering and improving the lives of Filipinos as effective medium in the sharing of valuable knowledge and experiences through awareness-raising activities, hands-on training, and interactive seminars and workshops. Also through these projects, numerous sustainable livelihoods like the establishment of relevant micro biodiversity enterprises have been supported and provided which allowed for better appreciation of the projects' importance and benefits.

The GEF had also made significant support to the country in formulating, reviewing, and drafting environmental policies and plans such as the: i) Indigenous Peoples' and Community Conserved Areas (ICCA) Bill; ii) an amendment to the Integrated Protected Areas Fund and to the Chemical Control Order for Mercury and Mercury Compounds; iii) policy framework on Access and Benefit-Sharing from using genetic resources; iv) passage of the Renewable Energy Act, v) mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in local development planning processes, and vi) protocols for in-situ conservation of crops on farms, on climate information-sharing, and on Geographic Insurance Units development.

Moreover, GEF support also paved the way for the development and/or further implementation of various MEAs strategic action plans (SAP) such as the i) Philippine Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (PBSAP); ii) National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP); iii) National Action Plan to Combat

Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought; and iv) National Implementation Plans for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. The other SAP developed through GEF-funded projects are: i) the National Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan (NISSAP); ii) the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA); and iii) the Strategic Action Programme for the South China Sea (SAP-SCS).

Considering the GEF's aim of advancing the GEF2020 vision and in seeking maximum impact across its focal areas through integrated programming, the Philippines is ready to take specific actions to achieve this goal, particularly in developing bigger projects with higher impacts exploring enhanced synergies and effective integration across GEF focal areas.

In line with this, the country in its GEF-6 portfolio development has taken a step forward in embarking on a multifocal national impact program by developing two (2) sister projects both focusing on biodiversity and land degradation, entitled i) Integrated Approach in the Management of Major Biodiversity Corridors in the Philippines, and ii) Enhancing Biodiversity, Maintaining Ecosystem Flows, Enhancing carbon stocks through Sustainable Land Management and the Restoration of Degraded Forestlands. The convergence of these projects is hoped to be just the start of a more integrated approach of project development. These two projects have been approved and also enabled the country to access the SFM incentives.

The country also envisioned to continue under GEF-7, the implementation of the Small Grants Programme (SGP) in the Philippines. The SGP, currently under the GEF-5, has proven to be an effective platform in the country for strengthening Civil Society participation in advancing our biodiversity agenda, thus stepping up capacities for achieving biodiversity goals in accordance with national plans and international commitments, as well as building wider constituency at the local level. The SGP-5 in the country had already provided grants to 54 grantees with a total committed funds amounting to approximately US\$2.7 Million.

Given the crucial role of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in achieving the GEF's mission of safeguarding the global environment, particularly in i) governance and policy formulation, ii) preparation and execution of projects; and in (c) advocacy, awareness, and outreach on global environmental issues, the Philippines has already undertaken certain initiatives to strengthen and broaden CSO participation in the GEF. Through various consultations with CSOs from all over the country, a road map was initially developed for the establishment of a GEF-CSO network in the country.

We are pleased to share also that the development of the Philippines's National Portfolio Formulation Document for GEF-7 is now in the works through some support provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Initial multi-stakeholder consultation meetings had already been conducted to inform the document and will also target to hold a Trainers' Training on PIF development that will enhance the government's capacity in GEF proposal writing whilst promoting internal skills development so as not to depend solely on external support from hired consultants and experts.

Additionally, through the assistance of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the Philippines is also currently developing its framework towards a Sustainable Chemicals and Hazardous Waste Management by 2030. This framework, with emphasis on industrial chemicals, will help in identifying focus or priority areas for future GEF projects starting this GEF-7 through the four (4) identified prioritization criteria (*legal, economic, stability and social*). This will allow to effectively develop chemicals and wastes projects that are in harmony to national plans and priorities.

For over 26 years, GEF has become an invaluable partner institution for the Philippines in assisting the country not only in meeting its MEA commitments but also in the growth of the nation and its people. Let me take this opportunity to state that Philippines is truly privileged to be part of this inspiring partnership, and rest assured of our continued and active involvement in all of future GEF endeavors.

Thank you very much for your attention.