

Sixth GEF Assembly 27–28 June 2018 – Statement of the Swedish Delegation

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

As a representative of the Swedish Government, I am pleased and honoured to address the Sixth GEF Assembly here in Da Nang, Vietnam. Let me start by thanking our hosts for the excellent arrangements, their efforts to ensure efficient working conditions and the beautiful setting in this warm and friendly environment. I would also like to thank Dr Ishii, GEF CEO and Chairperson, and Mr van Trotsenburg, World Bank Vice President of Development Finance, for steering the GEF-7 replenishment negotiations to a successful completion in Stockholm in April this year.

I would also like to convey a special thank you to the IEO for its important contribution to GEF-7, providing negotiators, through the OPS 6, strategic recommendations that helped define the future direction of the GEF, and to the STAP, whose analytical work has provided valuable scientific insights and forward-looking advice that has supported the GEF-7 process.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We believe that we achieved an important and solid outcome in Stockholm. Sweden was able to increase its contribution to the GEF by approximately 55 per cent in national currency. We also foresee an extra Swedish contribution to the LDCF this year, amounting to SEK 50 million, which is in addition to the SEK 85 million Sweden already announced at COP23 last year.

It is true that the total GEF-7 replenishment volume in nominal terms is lower than that of GEF-6, but it represents a larger effort from donors, as the US exchange rate in 2014 was more favourable for most donor currencies. Consequently, the efforts of most donors at the Stockholm meeting, no matter how small, are even more impressive. We are convinced that GEF-7 will strengthen our ability to deliver more effectively on the SDGs, the Paris Agreement and global environment goals.

In addition to having the environment and climate at the top of its agenda, the Swedish Government is also pursuing a feminist foreign policy. We expect GEF-7 to further step up its gender-equality efforts and integrate gender equality in all aspects of its activities, as this will strengthen the effectiveness and sustainability of its efforts. We would like to congratulate Dr Ishii for the progress made to date and her commitment to driving this agenda forward in the GEF, and her staff for making GEF projects and programmes more gender-responsive.

Sweden remains fully committed to maintaining the political momentum created by the adoption of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. The fight against global warming underpins all sustainable development, and evidence shows that the best results are achieved when gender equality is at the centre of these efforts. We must transform our societies to low-carbon economies and curb climate change now. Our goal is to make Sweden the world's first fossil-free welfare nation.

To this end, the Swedish Government last year adopted a new historic climate policy framework with new ambitious climate goals, providing long-term conditions for business and society to implement the transition needed to tackle the challenge of climate change.

For the first time, Sweden now has long-term climate goals beyond 2020 and an independent climate policy council that reviews climate policy. But joint efforts at multilateral level are also needed to phase out investments related to fossil fuels within the MDBs.

We expect a lot from the GEF-7 replenishment, the first since the adoption of these global transformational agreements.

Not only do we expect increased integration and innovation to provide needed transformational changes for our societies, making them more climate-efficient, but a more effective use of climate finance leads us to also expect the following: a doubling of the facility's climate action in terms of mitigation, despite a smaller focal area allocation; more value for money; and more efficient implementation of the goals of the UN environment conventions and the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda, working in tandem. The very welcome increase in resources for the chemicals and waste focal area should also help us advance the implementation of the Minamata Convention.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Looking forward, I would like to particularly highlight three issues that we believe deserve special attention in GEF-7: oceans and the blue economy; effective climate finance; and mobilisation of non-grant resources.

Last year's UN Ocean Conference, co-chaired by Sweden and Fiji, was the first global ocean conference and the first UN conference singling out one of the globally agreed sustainable development goals – SDG 14. The reasons for this were manifold: 1) the magnitude and the urgency of the problems facing the ocean; 2) the role of the ocean in sustainable development and other SDGs, including poverty, hunger, climate, and sustainable production and consumption; 3) the need for multilateral and stakeholder cooperation to solve these problems; and 4) the fragmentation of the ocean agenda, where fisheries, pollution, climate, shipping, etc. were previously dealt with in different forums.

The huge loss of marine biodiversity and the serious deterioration of marine ecosystems and resources hits the already disadvantaged and vulnerable the hardest. We need policy coherence, capacity-building and additional funding and investments to address the challenges facing the ocean. It is therefore very encouraging that that the GEF is stepping up its marine activities in the coming years.

Sweden is highly committed to the implementation of SDG 14. The Government has accordingly intensified our national and international efforts. For example, the national budget for ocean health has increased significantly; a global strategy for international development cooperation on environment, climate and oceans was adopted earlier this year, including an increase of resources; the Swedish contribution to GEF-7 replenishment increased by 55 per cent; and we have taken a leading role in several international initiatives.

Regarding climate finance, we need to take a broader look at the multilateral climate finance architecture, and how we can encourage the various climate funds to work together to use their respective strengths and scarce climate finance more efficiently and effectively. GEF-7 is showing the way and we expect others to follow.

This will involve creating the necessary conditions to mobilise financing at scale and at a level sufficient to drive sustainable development and a global shift of investments into low-carbon and climate-resilient development. As recognised in the Paris Agreement, we must ensure that financing reaches the countries that are “particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and have significant capacity constraints, such as the least developed countries and small island developing States”.

Thus, given the establishment of the GCF, we have a responsibility in GEF-7 to find ways to strengthen the comparative advantage and the strategic position of the GEF in climate change, so that the GEF and GCF can work in a more complementary manner, without duplicating each other’s efforts. The replenishment of the GCF is soon coming up, and much remains to be done by the Board to fill existing policy gaps and strengthen governance. In its role as co-chair of the GCF Board, Sweden is committed to a successful and ambitious replenishment.

Finally, to ensure the success of GEF-7, the GEF’s ambitions need to be stepped up in terms of the mobilisation of resources from non-public sources. This calls for new thinking, not least when it comes to looking at relations with the private sector. In order to gain better leverage in mobilising private funds and better results, we need to move towards more efficient and strategic partnerships with the private sector and other stakeholders.

The Stockholm Sustainable Finance Centre was inaugurated last December. This centre, a collaboration between the Stockholm Environment Institute and the Stockholm School of Economics, will provide the knowledge and, in partnership with the financial sector, the know-how to direct financial investments towards a sustainable and prosperous future. Bilaterally, the Swedish International Cooperation Development Agency has also developed innovative tools such as guarantees, and is working to leverage additional climate finance in developing countries.

Thank you for the opportunity to address these important issues.