

54th GEF Council Meeting

Da Nang, Viet Nam

Opening of the Meeting

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Remarks by

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Global Environment Facility

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Good morning everyone and welcome to Da Nang.

I would like to sincerely thank the Government of Vietnam for hosting us here!

This is the last council meeting in GEF-6. It is an opportunity to both look back on what we have learned and achieved in the past four years, and to look ahead and kick off GEF-7.

We have a lot to do during the next three days!

The Council agenda is packed, in part because we have a number of policy decisions to make as a result of the GEF-7 replenishment negotiations.

In parallel, there are lots of side-events and meetings and gathering among the many parts of the GEF partnership.

I count on your collaboration to get everything done to be ready to move on to the Assembly where, in just 3 days, we will welcome almost 1200 participants ready to look ahead to GEF-7.

Looking back to GEF-6, I think that implementation of GEF-6 gave us a lot of excitement as well as challenges.

In terms of programing, GEF6 introduced innovations in terms of integrated approaches for cities, commodity supply chains, and food security in Africa. We also embarked on a new way of doing business in the Amazon; we experimented with the

NGI-window; we supported innovative projects in many countries, and we established the Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency.

In GEF-6, we also continued to strengthen our policy framework on issues like gender, results, the GEF project cycle, and many other areas.

We also welcomed the Minamata convention, the Paris Agreement, and supported progress under our various conventions. Sustainable development goals provide us with a useful framework to measure progress.

We also had a rough time due to unexpected shortage of funding - we lost about 10% due to currency fluctuation. This has caused a lot of pain and disappointment to everybody, but I believe we have managed this difficult situation without losing mutual trust.

In summary, I think we have achieved a lot together these past four years. We have also learned a lot, and much of this learning has been translated into GEF7.

The GEF7 replenishment discussion has given us the opportunity to think about what the GEF can do for next four years.

We are at a critical moment of the future of our planet and its people. It is extremely urgent to come together and transform the key economic systems in the world. This is why, GEF-7 offers various innovative programs to support countries as they transform their economic systems like food and land-use, restoration and cities, and programs that will help countries take care of our natural capital, our key biomes and our ocean.

Implementation of those innovative programs will require the GEF to support strong multi-stakeholder coalitions. I think we have learned a lot from GEF-6 about how to do that, and I am convinced that in GEF-7 we offer a set of highly effective programs that will enable us to achieve the highest possible results. We need to build on the GEF's unique strengths as a financial mechanism for many different Conventions by maximizing integration and harnessing synergies.

The innovative strategy and programs in the GEF-7 programming directions is backed by a number of policy measures, that aim to further strengthening our partnership in several ways.

We have a stronger results architecture; we have measures to level the playing field among agencies; and improve efficiency; we are further strengthening our focus on gender; we seek to achieve even larger mobilization of GEF resources; we will strengthen our engagement with the private sector.

In my view, this will all help the GEF become even more effective and efficient in the coming years.

In summary, we made some great experiments in GEF-6, and are taking a further leap by building on them in GEF-7.

Before I close, let me just say a few words about the Assembly. We have tried to design the Assembly to be as interactive as possible, and to make the Assembly useful to kick-start GEF-7 implementation. The GEF Assembly is a unique event because it is the only time we gather the GEF's "extended family".

We have almost all countries here; we have big representations from our agencies and from civil society, and we have many participants representing our broader partnership, including from the private sector, academia and more.

I really encourage all of you to make the most of this opportunity by engaging as much as possible in the various roundtables and other events. I look forward to it!

Now let's get on with the agenda!