

The Netherlands - statement

Fifth GEF Assembly 28-29 May 2014 – statement by the Netherlands Rob Swartbol, Vice-Minister for Development Cooperation

[the bracketed text in italics was not read out]

Ladies and Gentlemen, Madam Ishii,

Let me start by thanking Mexico for hosting and organizing this Fifth GEF Assembly at this wonderful venue.

GEF has done a great job over the past twenty years. It has been the frontrunner in innovative approaches, catalyzing large-scale actions and kick starting multisectoral approaches.

For the future, I would like to share with you five observations on GEF's role in 2014 – 2018, during GEF-6.

[1. GEF's relevance in a changing world: development co-benefits for all]

GEF is very well positioned to create synergies between environmental action and development programming. It should generate social and economic co-benefits, for instance by helping to protect poor people against disaster risks.

The Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States will still need special assistance, because they are particularly vulnerable and least capable of ensuring green growth and resilience. We hope that GEF will continue to increase its focus on those most in need in GEF-6 and GEF-7.

[2. New actors in the GEF partnership]

My second message is that for GEF to remain relevant, all of us will have to reinvigorate the GEF partnership, including civil society organizations and the private sector. *(2.1)* The new economies will have a special role to play. Most of them are GEF donors already; and I am confident that their contributions and responsibilities will grow even further.

(2.2) Other actors – such as the business and finance sector - will have to come in more forcefully, too. GEF and governments have to help them do so, by promoting co-financing, the use of non-grant instruments, and public-private partnerships.

[3. Climate change]

My third point is that for GEF to remain relevant, it will have to adapt to the emerging climate change financing architecture. The Netherlands has stressed the key role GEF still has to play in the field of climate change.

GEF's niche will be catalyzing projects and pilots, preparing the grounds; notably for the new Green Climate Fund. Until that is fully up and running, GEF can continue to sow the seeds for large scale investments.

And of course, GEF should also mainstream climate change adaptation throughout its focal areas.

[4. Sustainable and Resilient Cities]

The world's population will reach 9 billion by mid-century; and by 2025, more than a billion additional people will live in cities. So my fourth message is that cities warrant more attention. Cities and mayors have already been very active and at the forefront of climate action. We are pleased that the pilot program "Harnessing local action for global commons" has been included in GEF-6's Work program.

[5. Gender]

Finally, my fifth point. One area where GEF can make substantial improvements, is paying attention to women's role and gender. Women are agents of change and key players, for instance in climate change adaptation. GEF will have to fully integrate gender considerations into its plans and programs. I am happy that the GEF Secretariat will draft a gender action plan.

Before I conclude, I would like to thank the director of the Independent Evaluation Office, Rob van den Berg, who will leave his office after ten years of great service. And extend a warm welcome his successor, Juha Uito.

[Dutch contribution to GEF-6]

In closing:

The Netherlands has been a staunch supporter of the GEF from the very beginning. For GEF-6, we will again contribute 107 million USD *[82.9 million euros]*. We are committed to continuing our partnership with the GEF and look forward to engaging actively in the GEF Council over the next four years.

Thank you for your attention.