



Australian Government

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

National statement: Australia
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Mr Peter Elder

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Distinguished Chair, Excellencies, CEO of the GEF, Dr Naoko Ishii, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

It is my privilege to address the Sixth Assembly of the Global Environment Facility on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia.

I would like to extend our gratitude to the Government of Vietnam for its generosity and warm hospitality as host of this significant occasion.

I also thank the GEF Secretariat and the Trustee for all their efforts during the GEF-7 replenishment negotiations and for bringing together the members of the GEF network this week.

Colleagues, we are at a critical juncture.

Our interaction with the environment – at a global, regional and local level – is multiplying existing environmental, social and economic challenges.

Environmental degradation will impose additional costs and, left unchecked, will undermine long-term economic growth for us all.

And, as we know, poor and vulnerable people will be disproportionately disadvantaged without concerted action.

Arguably, the GEF has never been more necessary than it is today.

The GEF is a long-standing and trusted partner of Australia and we are proud to have been a contributing donor since its inception.

Australia considers the GEF an effective and high-performing multilateral institution, which has achieved impressive results in developing countries.

Australia is particularly pleased to note the GEF's substantial portfolio in the Indo-Pacific region.

Many of Australia's closest neighbours, several of which are small island developing states, benefit from the contribution of GEF programs to address complex environmental challenges.

Australia will continue to work closely with the GEF throughout the next replenishment period – GEF-7.

We are again proud to make a financial contribution as a developed-country donor partner. And we will continue to engage as an active member of the GEF Council and across the Partnership.

Having helped shape the policy and programme priorities endorsed by this Assembly, we welcome the GEF's focus on further institutional reforms to address gender equality and improve women's empowerment.

We also strongly support the GEF-7 objective to further enhance engagement with the private sector, both as a delivery partner and as a source of additional finance.

We have to accept the reality that the scale of the challenges we face cannot be addressed by public finance alone.

Increased engagement with the private sector is therefore essential.

As we conclude GEF-6, Australia renews its commitment to the Partnership.

The objectives set for the next replenishment period are not only important in their own right, but also stand to play a critical role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

With the pathway now set, Australia looks forward to working with our GEF partners to achieve the ambitions of GEF-7.

Thank you.