

6th GEF Assembly Da Nang, Vietnam, 27-28.6.2018

Statement on behalf of Finland,

delivered by Ms. Johanna Karanko, Council Member

Honorable Chair, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to address the 6th GEF Assembly on behalf of the Government of Finland. First, I would like to sincerely thank our Vietnamese hosts for the excellent arrangements, their warm hospitality and the beautiful setting by the ocean. I am pleased to visit Vietnam for the first time the year Finland and Vietnam celebrate the 45th anniversary of diplomatic relations. For nearly as long our two countries have engaged in cooperation in the field of environment: in the water sector including recently in Da Nang, in sustainable forestry and in climate change adaptation.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Environmental degradation and climate change are key challenges of our time. Recent scientific results show as demonstrated yesterday by Johan Rockström from Stockholm Resilient Centre and Rosina Bierbaum from the STAP that we are spinning out of the planetary boundaries: The Earth is warming more rapidly than expected. At the same time, two out of five persons are already negatively affected by environmental degradation and the loss of biodiversity globally. These combined, increase local vulnerability, and may lead to instability, migration and conflicts. The economic cost of all this is substantial. We have to reach the Paris agreement goals and secure the future of our planet faster. This would also be the economically smart option.

Finland welcomes the GEF7 replenishment outcome. Having one capable and efficient mechanism that focuses on major Multilateral Environmental Agreements enhances policy coherence and decreases fragmentation of the local and global environmental administrations. The achievement of the environmental goals of the 2030 Agenda is

another important role of the GEF. The GEF-7 outcome takes in our view well into account the advantages of the GEF and the role it can play.

I would like to highlight three issues: an integrated approach, the importance of advancing gender equality and of communicating results.

- 1) The GEF's work can bring about many synergies and multiple benefits in cost effective manner through greater integration and a systems approach. We support this holistic view to sustainable development - as articulated in the 2030 Agenda. At the same time, we find it important that GEF retains expertise in the field of the environment as this is its added value.
- 2) The first GEF Gender Mainstreaming Policy was approved by the Council in 2011 and GEF projects' gender performance has consequently improved. However, as the Overall Performance Study for GEF6 notes further advances are needed. We hope the new Policy on Gender Equality adopted in 2017 evolving from a gender-aware to a gender-responsive, will help the GEF to take further positive steps. According to research gender equality is smart economics: it improves a broad range of sustainable development outcomes.
- 3) But what really counts are results. We appreciate the GEF's continued efforts to be more efficient in delivering results. The new results framework approved this week by the Council will help us to follow more closely the achievements during the GEF7. We also need to improve communications of results to the public at large. This is crucial for raising public awareness and for enhancing taxpayer acceptance of support to environmental projects

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As President of Chile Michelle Bachelet and the CEO of Unilever pointed out yesterday, we need to work together: governments, the private sector and the civil society. A multi-stakeholder approach is the only way to reach the ambitious goals of the Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement. In this regard, we welcome the decision by the Council to establish the Private Sector Advisory Group.

Finally, let me ensure you that we will continue as active partners committed for a stronger GEF.

Thank you!