

New Zealand National Statement to the Sixth Global Environment Facility Assembly

Da Nang

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Ms Karen Murray

New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

[Viet Nam Prime Minister, Minister,] Mr / Madame Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Government of New Zealand I am pleased to have the opportunity to address the Sixth Assembly of the Global Environment Facility.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend our appreciation to the Government of Viet Nam for hosting this important occasion.

I also thank the GEF Secretariat and the Trustee for their hard work during the replenishment negotiations and for bringing together the members of the GEF network today.

New Zealand is committed to domestic and global action to enhance environmental protection. We are well aware of the cost of inaction.

Our natural resources are a major source of our economic prosperity and our international competitiveness. The environment is an integral part of our national identity and culture. We work, live and play on the land, in the sea and, even occasionally, in the air.

Our ability to do this is one of the most cherished parts of being a Kiwi and one of the main reasons so many people travel so far to visit our country.

New Zealand, as every country, has areas where development has placed unsustainable pressure on natural resources. Like others, we seek solutions that sustain economic progress within environmental limits.

For example our Environment Minister's number one priority is to improve the quality of our freshwater, and the new Government has set an ambitious target for New Zealand to become a net-zero-emissions economy by 2050.

But we are also part of an interconnected global community; a community which is dependent on the sustainable management of natural capital for poverty eradication and prosperity.

As a supporter of global action to enhance environmental protection we are party to almost all multilateral environmental agreements and to numerous other international environmental partnerships.

We attach considerable importance to the obligations and commitments they generate.

The GEF plays a crucial role in this space. It helps turn obligations and commitments into action. It can help deliver transformational change including in areas and issues where local resources are desperately thin.

New Zealand is a long-term supporter of the GEF as an efficient and effective multilateral institution.

We value the assistance it provides to those disproportionately affected by environmental degradation, due in part to their dependence on natural resources for their livelihoods and economic development.

In particular we acknowledge the unique vulnerabilities of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States.

We welcome the GEF's considerable efforts to increase the support it provides to these countries, which is illustrative of the GEF's responsiveness to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The GEF's support is particularly relevant for communities in the part of the world that New Zealand is situated in.

Promoting biodiversity, sustainable fisheries and water use, management of chemical waste, and the protection of coastal and forestry resources is important for the Asia-Pacific region.

The Sixth Overall Performance Review of the GEF points to impressive results for environmental protection, which in turn impacts the sustainable economic growth which underpins living standards.

New Zealand is committed to investing in its partnership with the GEF during GEF-7 to encourage further progress and more sustainable environmental outcomes. As a member country from the Asia-Pacific we were pleased that we could significantly increase our contribution to the GEF in the seventh replenishment.

We associate ourselves with GEF-7's focus on addressing the drivers of environmental degradation, gender equality, and stronger collaboration with the private sector.

We welcome the programming direction for GEF-7, which doubles the target for the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and increases the targets for biodiversity protection.

These goals must be delivered in a way that leaves no one behind.

New Zealand will continue to support the GEF's engagement in countries with unique vulnerabilities, including Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States.

We will support systemic change through activities that mainstream the environment in national laws, regulations and policies.

We will continue to seek better coordination between the GEF and the GCF, encouraging the two financial mechanisms to play to their respective but complementary strengths. The GEF's Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency plays an important role in helping developing countries report under the Paris Agreement's enhanced transparency framework.

We will support activities that help unlock private finance for the environment: environmental issues require funding well beyond what can be provided through public financing alone; they also depend profoundly on improvements in the sustainability of private production and consumption patterns as sought by SDG12.

New Zealand will also engage constructively with other members of the GEF network during GEF-7 to help make sure the GEF is using resources as efficiently and effectively as possible.

We congratulate all members on a successful GEF replenishment. Thank you.