



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

STATEMENT BY SOUTH AFRICA SIXTH GEF ASSEMBLY DA NANG, VIETNAM, 28 JUNE 2018

Your Excellency's,

Ministers,

Dr Naoki Iishi, the Chief Executive Officer of GEF,

Heads of Delegations, Members of the Private Sector, CSOs, NGOs

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me firstly on behalf of the Government of South Africa extend our sincere appreciation to the Government and people of Vietnam for the hospitality afforded and excellent arrangements during the hosting of the GEF Assembly.

South Africa appreciates the efforts of the GEF Secretariat as well as that of the representatives of both donor and recipient countries towards the finalization of the GEF 7 replenishment process.

South Africa's dual roles as a contributor to the GEF replenishment and that of being a recipient country of the GEF financial flows. The GEF has been a valuable instrument through which we have been addressing national,

regional and global environmental challenges in all the programming focal areas, including chemicals and waste.

Since becoming a member of the GEF, South Africa has developed a portfolio of 105 national and regional projects with GEF funding amounting to U\$ 583 million and providing US\$ 5.26 billion in co-financing. Resources made available by the GEF to South Africa, have enabled us to implement projects that, at the same time, protect the integrity of the environment while stimulating economic and social development.

Ladies and gentlemen, given this critical time whereby the regional community in Africa finds itself facing a number of environmental challenges such as extreme weather conditions including exacerbated floods and droughts as a result of the effects of climate change and other environmental impacts, global leadership, means of implementation and in particular increased financial resources is required to tackle all these challenges. While we all welcome the GEF 7 Replenishment of US\$ 4.05 billion or US\$ 4.1 billion when one rounds it up, it is concerning that it is below the US\$ 4.4 billion attained at GEF 6 some 4 years ago.

While there are welcomed modest increases in funds allocated to land degradation, chemicals and international waters, this is overshadowed by the massive decrease in the allocation to the climate change focal area. This is truly not a reflection of enhanced ambition and enhanced means of implementation to match the current and emerging environmental threats and drivers of environmental degradation.

More alarming though is the policy recommendations proposed and approved by the Council which will be tantamount to differentiating amongst and between developing countries on the basis of “income levels”. This is in direct conflict with the ethos and principles of the various multilateral environmental agreements for which the GEF is the financial mechanism and in particular, a departure from the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, which underpins the existing frameworks in current multilateral agreements.

While we do recognize and fully support the need to support the poor and vulnerable this must be done in a manner that is relevant, applicable, fair and equitable. The World Bank itself highlights that “middle income” countries are a diverse group by size, population and income level, and are home to 5 of the world's 7 billion people and 73% of the world's poor people.

By the GEF adopting these revisions in the co-financing policy will undoubtedly operate in contradiction to the objective of supporting the poor as a majority of the poor in those developing countries, which the World Bank deems to be so called “middle income” countries would be negatively disadvantaged.

South Africa sees itself a responsible global citizen, as such contributes significantly to the advancement of global environmental outcomes, which actions are aimed at the proactive actions to minimize risks associated with

observing earth systems tipping points as outlined in scientific literature. South Africa has made pledges and lived up to its commitments in support to GEF 4, 5 and 6 replenishments. It is within this spirit and in order for the global community to meet its environmental commitments that we have once again made a pledge to the GEF 7 Replenishment amounting to R94 million (South African Rands) which represents a 46,8% increase in relation to our GEF 6 pledge.

I thank you for your attention.