

**WWF Statement  
At the Fifth General Assembly of the Global Environment Facility  
Cancun, Mexico  
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Carter Roberts  
President and CEO

Mr. Chairman, Honorable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of WWF and our global network with programs in more than 100 countries with more than 6,000 staff and numerous partnerships with various organizations, I am honored to address the Fifth General Assembly of the Global Environment Facility.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the entire GEF family for the successful conclusion of the GEF-6 replenishment, with acknowledgement of all who have contributed. This marks an historic milestone in the rich history of the GEF, with GEF-6 policies and program directions offering new opportunities for innovation and impact.

WWF has been an active member of GEF family since the Facility's inception, having executed more than 100 projects around the world in partnership with GEF agencies. While focusing on biodiversity conservation, these projects have spanned all GEF focal areas.

This already active engagement was taken to a new level with the accreditation of the World Wildlife Fund last November as a GEF Project Agency. This positive evolution of our partnership has already led to three GEF-5 projects being brought forward, and we expect our work with the GEF family to collaboratively yield a significant impact over the next four years of GEF-6 programming.

We face tremendous global environmental challenges with discouraging trends. Amid a backdrop of global economic expansion, there is a need to protect and conserve the natural capital base upon which we all depend for our sustained prosperity. We must find ways to provide for food security without contributing to deforestation and land degradation. We must find ways to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases while meeting expanding energy demands. We must manage our water and marine resources sustainably while adjusting to growing coastal populations and the already inevitable impacts of climate change.

Past development patterns do not provide a blueprint for the future. We need to find new ways to simultaneously satisfy demands for expanded economic opportunity and prosperity while following a path that leads to a future in which economic development can occur without losing nature's value in the process.

Mr. Chairman, we look forward to working with you to accomplish this vision and wish you a successful GEF Assembly.

Thank you.