

# **Brazil**

## **Statement at the 7<sup>th</sup> GEF Assembly (Vancouver, Canada, 22-26.08.2023)**

The Brazilian Government is glad to be present at the GEF Assembly with a high-level delegation, headed by Minister Sonia Guajajara, of the newly created – and long overdue – Ministry of Indigenous Peoples. Her presence in Vancouver pays tribute to the many indigenous peoples who contribute so much to the preservation of Brazil's six biomes.

Equally noteworthy is the presence of so many other actors, including indigenous peoples, local communities, civil society, non-governmental organizations, scientists and of course, each and every one of the GEF's 185 members. It is an inspiring and inclusive gathering, and it is a pity that it only occurs every four years – which means there will be only one further Assembly before 2030, the finishing line for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework's 32 targets, as well as the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Indeed, the GEF's everyday business, including the approval of projects and disbursements, is decided by the Council, where a lot of countries cram into a few of the 32 seats, while others have their own seat. We need to change this and continue to expand the participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in the decision-making processes of the GEF.

As environmental issues become increasingly transversal, the governance of the resources needed to implement multilateral environmental agreements – and the governance of the GEF, in particular – should be reformed to follow the path of inclusivity. As President Lula put it at the recent Amazon Summit, "it is inexplicable that international financing mechanisms, such as the Global Environment Facility, which was born in the World Bank, reproduce the exclusionary logic of the Bretton Woods institutions."<sup>1</sup> Thus, we understand that the debate on governance, with greater participation of Indigenous peoples and local communities and better distribution between donor countries and those responsible for delivering global results, must continue to be carried out and not wait four more years. It's fair, democratic, decisive for us to get better projects.

In the meantime, we need to gather efforts to keep moving forward with the fulfillment of our commitments. Brazil is proud to have hosted the GEF Council where was taken one of the most important decisions that this Assembly is called to ratify: the establishment of a new fund for the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. It is even prouder to have been the proponent of the amendment that will promote the use of resources of the new fund for biodiversity protection initiatives by indigenous peoples and local communities. We now call for the prompt commencement of the fund's operations and call for donations as soon as possible, so that the fund can start working and generating global environmental benefits.

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<sup>1</sup> The president's full speech is available (in Portuguese only) at: <[www.gov.br/planalto/pt-br/acompanhe-o-planalto/discursos-e-pronunciamentos/2023/discurso-do-presidente-luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva-na-cupula-da-amazonia-e-paises-convidados-em-belem-pa](http://www.gov.br/planalto/pt-br/acompanhe-o-planalto/discursos-e-pronunciamentos/2023/discurso-do-presidente-luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva-na-cupula-da-amazonia-e-paises-convidados-em-belem-pa)>

Home to the largest share of biodiversity in the world, our country is ready to bear its share of the responsibility of implementing the GBF. The recent decrease in deforestation rates on the Amazon region shows what our government is capable of, and we are ready to go further, but the financial resources must follow this high ambition and deliver where environmental benefits are to be expected — and that is where biodiversity meets solid projects.

In our view, solid projects are those which consider not only the environment, but also the economic and social dimensions of sustainable development. At a recent summit meeting, in Belém, the leaders of the Amazon countries have reaffirmed this principle, committing themselves not only to environmental preservation but also to improving the livelihood of the tens of millions who inhabit the world's largest tropical forest.

But, most importantly, solid projects are those that fully promote country ownership. Recipient countries, in particular, have the expertise and know-how related to the specificities and reality of the location where projects are implemented. We therefore encourage continuous improvement of the GEF's policies and practices in order to strengthen country participation, as well as capacity building.

Brazil is happy to continue to engage in the GEF's debates and contribute to its improvement. This Assembly, as an example of democratic and inclusive body, should be a guide to the way forward.