

Nordic (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden) & Netherlands Statement – 7th GEF Assembly, Vancouver 22 – 25 August 2023

As long-standing partners to the GEF, the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden) and the Netherlands welcome the historic outcome of the GEF-8 replenishment with a record funding of USD 5.33 billion, a more than 30 percent increase from GEF-7. As the largest and most experienced multilateral fund dedicated to responding to the climate, nature and pollution crisis, the GEF's mandate is more relevant than ever. The GEF is playing an important role in achieving several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 13 on climate action, SDG 14 regarding life below water, and SDG 15 regarding life on land. Our increased GEF-8 contributions are a recognition that the ambitious GEF-8 architecture and the expansion of integrated programming require increased financial flows. It is crucial that the GEF continues its focus on results and communicates them widely, as well as scaling up good practices and ensuring there is no duplication of efforts. This can be done through close cooperation with other relevant climate and environmental funds.

We believe that the GEF's role is unique in terms of global environmental finance. With a mandate that spans climate change, biodiversity, desertification, international waters, and pollution, the GEF is the only international financial mechanism capable of building the necessary synergies to tackle the triple planetary crisis in a more integrated way. We should build upon the GEF to create more effective ways of conserving our environment, taking urgent action on climate change, promoting the sustainable use of our natural resources and preventing pollution.

We emphasize the importance of private sector engagement, sustainable investments, and financial support. As GEF member countries, we should endeavor to further support and attract private sector commitments and cooperation.

Success will also depend on the inclusion of Indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth in this work. Indigenous peoples and local communities are important managers of biodiversity on the planet and use natural resources in ways that nourish the land, conserve biodiversity and sustain ecological resilience. Young people are key stakeholders and can create a direct impact on changing behaviors and attitudes. Women play critical roles as primary land managers and resource users, and face disproportionate impacts both from climate impacts, biodiversity loss and gender-blind conservation measures. We expect GEF-8 to further step up its gender-equality efforts and integrate gender transformative approaches in all aspects of its activities, to strengthen effectiveness and sustainability. An increased focus on integration and innovation in GEF-8 is welcome and needed to provide transformational changes for our societies and future generations.

Climate risks and disasters are increasingly posing an existential threat to the world's most vulnerable populations and ecosystems, particularly those in the least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS). We have a shared ambition of scaling up investments in adaptation measures that can help strengthen resilience and sustain livelihoods. We welcome the LDCF/SCCF adaptation strategy for the GEF-8 period and its dedicated focus on LDCs and SIDS who are at the frontlines of climate change.

We welcome the addition of the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) to the GEF family of funds. By drawing support from governments, philanthropic organizations, and the private sector, the GBFF will be able to assist nations in their efforts to achieve the Global Biodiversity Framework targets.

We also welcome the decision to include the GEF as one of the entities comprising the financial mechanism of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ). The BBNJ represents a crucial step towards the political goal of conserving at least 30 per cent of land and sea areas by 2030.

The addition of the GBFF and BBNJ to the GEF is a clear sign of the confidence to the GEF as the principal fund for the global environment, a role it is embracing in a constructive way by increasing its integrated programming.

The Nordic countries and the Netherlands are, and will continue to be, engaged and strong supporters of the GEF.