

Check upon delivery



Speech

**Dr. Naoko Ishii, CEO and Chairperson
Global Environment Facility**

**Commitment to the Amazon: ARPA for Life –
Securing the Future of the World's Largest Tropical Rainforest
1:15 p.m. Thursday, October 17, 2012
HICC Room 1.08 - CBD COP11 -Hyderabad, India**

Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

It is an honor and a pleasure to join you in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Amazon Region Protected Area Program (ARPA). During my first months as CEO and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility, I have been articulating some of the key elements of my vision for the GEF. Most important of all, I believe the GEF needs to be an innovator in the financing of projects for the global environment. Only in this way can we achieve our ultimate goal of bringing the projects and programs we support up to the scale necessary to deliver global benefits.

That is why it is so relevant that we are here today in recognition of ARPA, one of the great biodiversity success stories, a project that exemplifies the elements of innovation, partnership, and scale that I would like to see replicated in other regions of the world.

From the outset, ARPA has benefited from the support and involvement of a range of institutions, most importantly, the Government of Brazil but including the World Bank, the GEF, the German reconstruction bank KfW, the World Wildlife Fund, thousands of local communities, and others. The participants have played complementary roles, with WWF providing intellectual leadership at the outset in developing the concept, the energetic political support of Brazil, and the lining up of donors whose support was key to bringing a protected area strategy to scale.

This extraordinary cooperation has produced the largest scale of any biodiversity project. One of the key innovations of ARPA has been to combine areas under strict protection with areas set aside in sustainable-use reserves. Striking this balance has been a hallmark of ARPA. Support for sustainable use has contributed to the wellbeing and livelihoods of people in more than 100,000 local communities and has helped secure their essential support for continuation of the program.

In recognition of its especially high-impact, ARPA recently received the first US Treasury Development Impact Honors Award. I regard ARPA as a model embodying crucial elements of the GEF 2020 Strategy we are now developing. This is a project that is bringing together global environmental benefits and joint implementation of all the Rio Conventions at the same time. ARPA is delivering significant and measurable environmental benefits while also contributing to the livelihoods of people across a vast expanse.

The question we must address is whether ARPA is unique – achieving a vast scale simply because of the vast scale of the Amazon region – or whether ARPA has features that can be applied in projects in other environmental focal areas. I am convinced that ARPA does, indeed, give us lessons that we can apply elsewhere. And so the purpose of this gathering is not just to sing the praises of ARPA but to grasp the lessons learned from ARPA and to focus our energies on how to apply those lessons across a broad range of programs.

One of the most important lessons learned in the Amazon Basin experience is the importance of focusing from the outset on financial sustainability. For the ARPA project, the participants established FUNBIO as an autonomous entity to receive and manage funds for biodiversity conservation. Total financing to date amounts to \$129 million, led by Brazil's significant financial support.

The participants are addressing the question of the financial stability of ARPA for the long term. The GEF supports the "ARPA for Life Initiative," launched earlier this year in Rio, as an innovative public-private partnership that will increase financial sustainability and support the protection of additional areas of high biodiversity.

The GEF seeks to increase support for projects that deliver multiple environmental benefits addressing a range of concerns. The environmental community has long understood the vital role rainforests play in the fields of biodiversity, climate change and land degradation, among others. So it is with ARPA, which is providing significant and multiple environmental benefits in biodiversity, reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and providing for local livelihoods.

The question of replicating ARPA is no longer a theoretical discussion. Already in Brazil, the ARPA model is being replicated in the Marine and Coastal Protected Areas project, which aims to increase marine areas under protection by 70 percent. ARPA also promoted increased in South-South collaboration. Of note, is the instrumental work of FUNBIO in the creation

of the REDLAC network, allowing countries to replicate the success of the ARPA Fund in and beyond Latin America. The concepts used in the implementation ARPA are starting to inspire similar approaches to key ecosystems around the world such as Africa's Serengeti.

Congratulations Madam Minister: The achievements of the Government of Brazil and its partners over just a decade are considerable. Not only is ARPA a success on an unprecedented scale, it provides essential lessons already being replicated in other environmentally significant regions.

We at the GEF look forward to furthering our strong relationship with ARPA and to supporting the implementation of the next phase with the help of higher levels of investment from the private sector.

Thank you.