

**Equator Prize 2017 Award Ceremony  
The Town Hall, New York City  
September 17, 2017**

**Remarks by  
Naoko Ishii, CEO & Chairperson, Global Environment Facility**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

Dear friends and colleagues,

I am so happy to be here tonight to celebrate all these amazing local communities and indigenous peoples.

In the past few weeks, we have witnessed the devastating impact of more intense hurricanes and floods, all over the world.

We are clearly on the collision course with nature.

Today, we're putting so much pressure on our shared resources, our air, water, forest and land, our global commons.

We must find a new way of thinking, of acting, to manage our global commons.

In the past, communities managed the local commons well.

They developed practices that ensured resources were not depleted.

They knew what they stood to lose if they were gone.

But, we lost our connection to the commons when our economy moved away from local to global.

The sense of stewardship of the commons was lost.

But if we look around the world, local communities and indigenous people have continued to manage the commons very well. We need to learn from them how to manage the commons again.

This time, how to manage the global commons.

You have shown that communities can be an engine of innovation and inspiration. You continue to lead the way.

The G.E.F is deeply committed to supporting indigenous peoples and local communities.

Through the Small Grants Programme that the GEF supports, we have provided technical and financial support to over 20,000 communities in 126 countries. Many of these projects advance sustainable development through nature-based solutions.

In this regard, I am so glad and proud that six of the Equator Prize winners tonight are recipients of the Small Grants Programme.

The awards demonstrate that by investing in communities, we can manage the commons, local and global, together.

We all breathe the same air, we drink the same water, we depend on the same forests, the same oceans and the same biodiversity. Only by working together we can preserve the global commons.

Thank you.