



25 Years of the GEF

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

Acknowledgements

This publication is a compilation of contributions from across the GEF partnership. The GEF would like to thank the many individuals that have helped in the design, writing and production.

Design - Patricia Hord Graphik Design

Print - Professional Graphics Printing Company

October 2016

This publication is printed on environmentally friendly paper.

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Introduction



Naoko Ishii
CEO and Chairperson
Global Environment Facility

A large background image of Mount Fuji at sunset. The mountain is covered in snow and its silhouette is reflected in a calm lake in the foreground. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue.

Big birthdays are occasions for celebration, and reflection — and reaching 25 years is a particularly important milestone. For a person, it marks the onset of full maturity, a moment at which soberly to confirm the course to an effective and satisfying adult life, while still retaining much of youth’s enthusiasm and willingness to innovate. And it can be much the same for organizations.

Now the Global Environment Facility has reached this landmark moment. Set up in 1991 as a pilot programme in the run-up to the Earth Summit the following year, it has developed from being the financial mechanism for implementing international conventions agreed in Rio to the foremost champion of the global commons on which civilization depends. But, as with a person reaching his or her quarter century, its greatest challenges — and opportunities to make a difference — lie ahead.

Over those 25 years its original US\$1 billion programme has led to the investment of US\$14.5 billion, and the leverage of US\$75.4 billion in additional resources, for nearly 4,000 projects in 167 countries. Its original three partners — the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme — have grown to a network of 18 first-class implementing and executing agencies. But the task ahead is greater than ever, and requires that the GEF continues to innovate itself.

For the global commons — on which the world's societies and economies depend — are threatened more than ever before. Biodiversity declined by 30% globally between 1990 and 2007; twice as much in tropical regions. Species are becoming extinct 10 to over 100 times faster than at historic rates, a great dying comparable to the mass extinctions in the geological record. Thirty percent of global forest cover has been cleared, with another 20% degraded. One quarter of the world's land area — on which 1.5 billion people depend — is being degraded, while 85% of global fish stocks are now fully exploited or have been depleted. In just three years, between 2010 and 2012, moreover, 100,000 African elephants were killed for their ivory.

Climate change is no longer a future threat, but a present reality — especially for many of the poorest and most vulnerable people on Earth — the result of higher levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere than at any time in at least the last 800,000 years. The chemistry of the oceans is changing faster than at any time in perhaps the last 300 million years as the carbon dioxide emissions that principally drive global warming also acidify the oceans. There are now more than 500 “dead”, hypoxic, zones in the seas, threatening the health of the majority of the world's marine ecosystems. The Earth's vital nitrogen cycle is suffering its greatest, fastest change in

no less than 2.5 billion years, while chemical pollution of air, waste and land increasingly threatens human health.

So overwhelming are these impacts of human activities that the very biophysical processes that determine the stability and resilience of Earth are being pushed to the limit. Several, planetary boundaries within which human society has become established and thrive, have already been transgressed as the global commons that we have so long taken for granted have come under irresistible pressure.

Indeed, scientists are concluding that the world has moved out of the almost miraculously benign conditions of the past 11,000 years — the only ones known to be able to support civilization, let alone a human population of 7 billion and rising — that we call the Holocene. The Anthropocene that is succeeding it is a new terra incognita, a “no-analogue” state beyond all human experience. And yet the negative drivers that have brought about this momentous transition are growing in intensity. The world's population is expected to reach 9 billion by 2050, while consumption is increasing even faster: by 2030 the global middle-class is likely to have expanded to 5 billion people. And the proportion of humanity living in towns and cities, which topped 50% in 2009, is due to reach 75% by 2050.

On this trajectory, the threat not just to the environment but to global aspirations for economic growth, prosperity, jobs, and security — risks to escalate out of control. Business as usual will guarantee disaster. Incremental change will not suffice to avoid it: the challenge is just too great for that. The only solution is transformational, systems change. There is simply no other option.

Fortunately the world last year took the first steps to begin to turn this growing tragedy of the commons into an opportunity. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals, agreed by nearly 200 countries at the UN General Assembly, clearly recognize that the health of the global commons is fundamental to development and growth, aiming to end poverty and ensure prosperity while respecting planetary boundaries. The Paris climate agreement, concluded by the same governments in December does the same, while pledging to achieve zero net emissions of greenhouse gases in the second half of the century. But, important as this is, it is only

a start. Much more is needed, and it must happen fast: we are at a tipping point, for good or ill, for the world's environment and prosperity.

I believe that the GEF is particularly well placed to help catalyze the required transformation. It can, and must, play an ever stronger role as champion of the global commons, its core mission. The international conventions which it has long supported — on climate change, biodiversity, land degradation, persistent organic pollutants, and mercury— cover most global environmental issues that impact the health of the Earth system. It also has a role in protecting the ozone layer, improving the management of transboundary freshwater resources and large marine ecosystems.

Over its quarter of a century, the GEF has accumulated a vast body of experience and knowledge. I have been fortunate in my predecessors. Mohamed El-Ashry, the first CEO, oversaw its foundation and guided its first nine years with extraordinary wisdom and skill. Leonard Good held the organization together during a difficult time of polarized positions on the Council, which led to the adoption of criteria for financial resource allocation to member countries. And Monique Barbut, during two terms of office, instituted important reforms which further improved operations and efficiency.

The GEF has a strong, diverse, expanding — and unique — network of partners, including 183 governments, together with civil society organisations, academia, and private sector, as well as its implementing and executing agencies. It has a pioneering, but well-established, governance structure with a Council that has an equal number of seats for developed and developing countries. It has a key role in bringing together multiple stakeholders and catalyzing the private sector to form sustainable partnerships. And it has also always been ready to innovate. It is advised by a standing Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of world class scientists and its accountability is ensured by an Independent Evaluation Office, which monitors projects and reports directly to the Council.

Above all, it has a record of achieving good results on the ground. It has supported, for example: the creation of more than 3,300 protected areas, covering 860 hectares (an area larger than Brazil) and conservation-friendly management for over another 350 million hectares; 790 projects for mitigating

climate change — contributing to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2.7 billion tonnes — together with adaption measures to reduce the vulnerability of more than 15 million people in 130 countries; sustainable management of 34 transboundary river basins in 73 countries and improved cooperation and governance for one-third of the world's large marine ecosystems; and the sound management and disposal of 200,000 tonnes of highly toxic persistent organic pollutants.

More than 80% of completed projects during the GEF's fifth (and most recent) replenishment cycle received at least a moderately satisfactory outcome rating or higher, outstripping the 75% international benchmark.

The GEF works through a range of influencing models, each chosen to match the barriers — such as weak or inadequate policy frameworks, lack of awareness, limited access to finance, technological gaps, or failures in coordination — that must be overcome if the intended benefits are to be achieved. Choosing the right models — or a combination of them — increases the catalytic effects of the interventions that the GEF makes.

Transforming policy and regulatory environments, for example, helps governments to put in place the policies, regulations and institutions that enable them to redirect their own investment and spending and incentivizes people and companies to change the choices they make when producing or consuming. Such an influencing model assisted the government of South Africa in taking measures that helped make the country one of the fastest growing markets for clean energy in the G20. Similarly the GEF has done much throughout its history to support the strengthening of institutional capacity and decision-making processes; indeed, one of its earliest projects helped to establish what eventually became the Secretariat of Biodiversity and Forests within Brazil's Ministry of the Environment, which has been instrumental in developing the country's legal framework for biodiversity.

Demonstrating innovative approaches can create a "beacon effect" that can spur wider adoption, as has happened with GEF support, for example, for concentrated solar power and for payment for ecosystem services, such as Costa Rica's Environmental Services Payment Programme, which pays landowners to conserve natural forests and



establish new ones. Similarly deploying innovative financial instruments can help cover risk and investment gaps and leverage resources: one example is the way the China Utility Energy Efficiency project has helped replicate an effective energy-efficiency lending model across the country. And convening multistakeholder alliances helps to overcome failures in coordination and to ensure that key actors take simultaneous action. We will also continue to promote integrating the value of natural capital in decision making.

But the uncomfortable truth is that we, like the rest of the international community, are failing to reverse the sharp downward trend in the global environment. We have won battles, but the war is still being lost. There have been many good initiatives but only about 20% of the projects in the last replenishment cycle showed evidence of achieving benefits on the system-wide scale that is needed. Often fragmented and isolated, they have failed to shift the needle in the right direction, let alone bring transformational change.

So the GEF, too, needs to change and — with the full support of its Council — it is doing so. Two years ago we published GEF 2020, the organization’s first-ever long term strategy, which we are now implementing. We are switching the focus of our operations to address the underlying negative drivers of environmental degradation — rather than merely its effects — and to supporting innovative and scalable activities that cost-effectively deliver the highest impacts.

The drivers of global environmental degradation primarily rise from three global megatrends: a growing population, which will exceed 9 billion by 2050; a rapidly rising global middle class resulting in tectonic shift in consumption and diet patterns; and rapid urbanization which is expected to add 1 billion new residents to the world’s cities. To “de-couple” the impact of these megatrends on the global environment we must fundamentally transform our key economic systems — our energy system, food production system, our cities, and our goods manufacturing system.

Many negative drivers cause many diverse problems simultaneously. Unsustainable agriculture, for example, degrades the land, fells forests, reduces biodiversity, pollutes rivers and the oceans, causes chemical contamination from pesticides, and is responsible for about a quarter of the world’s emissions

of greenhouse gases. Everything is connected; if one facet of the global environment is in crisis, it will affect others and ultimately lead to disruption of the whole planetary system.

So it is simply not possible to address a particular environmental issue in isolation, as if it inhabited its own silo. Instead we need to address many challenges at once. We must focus on systemic approaches rather than ones that are restricted to single sectors or technologies, as we scale up the good results achieved in national and regional projects to deliver sustainable effects that are big and widespread enough to meet the challenges we face.

They have also helped the GEF to engage with a wide range of important issues and energized our extensive family of partners.

The GEF has long been, and will continue to be, an innovator. Its very system of governance was innovatory — as was the increasing access it provided NGOs to its Council from the 1990s onwards. It must continue to promote innovation — not least in deploying financial instruments — while consistently operating from a position of technical excellence and world-class experience. We need innovative mechanisms that are financially sustainable if we are to deliver impacts at scale.

The GEF will continue to be a catalyst both in enabling action and in mobilizing resources. It has the capacity to catalyze and combine efforts that would otherwise be scattered and unrelated in such areas as land restoration, fisheries management, and marine protected areas — and the new ideas so often incubated by NGOs can be implemented and expanded through its catalytic support. It has already been able to catalyze significant funding for addressing climate change from the private sector, national governments, and partner agencies that might otherwise not have materialized. New ways must be found for leveraging resources. The GEF's catalytic role in the evolving architecture of environmental finance is even more vital at a time of fiscal austerity.

All this is particularly important in increasing engagement with the private sector, which must be a crucial partner if transformational change is to be achieved. The GEF can, for example, establish risk-sharing facilities to unlock “green” investments by companies: it can, indeed, buy out the risk

that enterprises face when operating in new and innovative markets like the carbon one. And it can help companies to start to source increasing shares of their raw materials from producers certified for sustainability: one such initiative doubled supplies to industry of certified cocoa to the benefit of the local communities that produced it.

The GEF must also remain the partner of choice for environmental benefits. It was established to work in partnership: its role is to provide financial support — and to help develop and design projects — while its partners implement and execute them on the ground. So productive and trusting partnerships are vital. This means that its transaction costs must be kept down, that the Secretariat must remain exceptionally lean and efficient for an organization disbursing such significant sums, and that projects are prepared and implemented as fast and efficiently as possible, while maintaining quality control. It also means, of course, that the GEF must continue to be known for its deeply entrenched culture of getting results.

Much of that action must now focus on increasing resilience to the harm done by climate change and other environmental insults and on helping those affected to adapt to them. Poor and vulnerable people particularly depend, for example, on nature and the services that ecosystems provide for food, freshwater, fibre, fuel and other necessities. Ecosystem-based adaptation can do much through such measures as maintaining and restoring wetlands and forests, thus helping to improve food and water security, protect coasts, and preserve biodiversity. The GEF will continue to help countries incorporate adaptation measures into their development programmes. And it is already beginning to make direct links to helping countries to meet their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions as part of the Paris climate agreement. Though concerned with global issues, we know that country ownership is the key to success: after all, action takes place at national and local levels.

The aim must be to make the global environment everybody's business. For this is not a matter of safeguarding natural systems alone, important as that may be. It is the best — indeed the only — path to prosperity. It is not just about avoiding disaster, but providing much greater and better-shared growth.

As the only mechanism that insists that projects generate global — and not just local and national — benefits, the GEF is, and will remain, a champion of the global commons. It will continue to insist that there can be no separation between development and environment, that safeguarding these commons is, quite simply, the wisest investment we can make.

Anniversaries should be more about looking forward than back. And, grave though the threats may be, a poverty-free future in harmony with the planet is within our grasp. We need to act swiftly, and at scale, to realize it — and that is just what the GEF intends to do.





How It All Began

BY GEOFFREY LEAN





Environmental destruction is as old as civilization itself. Egyptian mummies have lungs blackened by the polluted air they breathed. Rome began building aqueducts for drinking water after dumping its sewage in the Tiber. Forests were felled to make ancient Greek ships and ink — from tree bark — for the bureaucrats of China’s Tang dynasty. And Gilgamesh, the world’s first known written story, warned against land degradation in Mesopotamia.

Most of the effects, throughout human history have been local. At times — and increasingly — they have spread regionally. Disregarding Gilgamesh’s warning caused desertification which helped cause the collapse of Sumerian civilization, while — in our own time — nutrient pollution washing down rivers has produced dead zones in distant seas, and air pollution has fallen as acid rain hundreds of miles away.

But it was not until the 1980s that environmental damage went global. Man-made chemicals were found to be eroding the protective ozone layer. The first, courageous, scientists began warning that climate change was taking place. And it started to become clear that the rate of loss of species was rivalling the great extinctions in the geological record.

Spurred by public concern, the international community responded surprisingly fast. The successful Montreal Protocol, which has so far reduced some 100 ozone-depleting substances by a total of 98%, was agreed in 1987 within four years of the discovery of the ozone hole over Antarctica. Negotiations on the UN’s Framework Convention on Climate Change, Convention of Biological Diversity, and Convention to Combat Desertification followed, and these were agreed in 1992. But the world also needed an international financial mechanism to tackle global environmental problems and help implement the new conventions.

In September 1989 France proposed, through its Finance Minister, that the World Bank be provided with additional resources to fund environmental projects, offering to support it with a contribution of 900 million French francs over a three year period. Its proposal, to the Bank’s Development Committee, was quickly seconded by Germany. And little more than a year later — in November 1990 — after the Bank had developed the proposal, with extensive consultations and negotiations — 27 countries, including nine developing ones, agreed to set up a pilot Global Environment Facility (GEF), with about \$1 billion for its first three years.

The money was to be spent in developing countries, and concentrated on four focal areas: Climate Change, Biodiversity, Ozone Depletion, and International Waters. And the facility was to be managed by a collective of three well-established organizations: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the World Bank — referred to as “implementing agencies”.

It was a remarkable, as well as a rapid, development. For a start, it took place at a time of financial stringency: the US\$1 billion budget represented a considerable vote of confidence in the pilot GEF. Even more significantly, it was set up as a loosely structured, action-orientated organization which did not involve establishing a new bureaucracy — something very unusual, indeed innovative, for the international community.

It was also exceptional in that — being first proposed by a finance minister, and developed by the World Bank — the new initiative viewed global environmental issues from a primarily financial perspective and was thus designed to prioritize efficient decision-making and cost-effective operations.

The aim was to benefit the whole planet, by enabling developing countries to take actions that they could otherwise not afford, but it was equally important that this should not divert resources from their need to develop. So it was made a requirement that the GEF’s funds should be additional development assistance, not redirected from existing provision. Furthermore, they had also to be additional to activities that developing countries were already taking that made national economic sense. So the concept emerged of financing “incremental cost”, the extra expense incurred when activities also benefited the global environment, which would otherwise have been discouraged by standard economic analysis.

The pilot GEF started work on its three year, exploratory programme — an opportunity to test innovative approaches since funding projects to improve the global environment was something new. The World Bank acted as both trustee and administrator, and as the main interface with participating countries: UNDP developed most of the capacity building proposals; and UNEP concentrated on strategic planning and issues concerning science and technology. It was, in yet another innovation, a remarkable blend of UN and Bretton Woods institutions. The first tranche of projects was presented to the first meeting of the participants in May 1991, which also established the GEF’s Small Grants Programme.

This was not much more than a year before the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development — the Earth Summit — met in Rio. Preparations for the summit — and negotiations on treaties — were well under way, and the fledgling pilot facility was soon involved. Developing countries were increasingly, coming center stage and NGOs — who were given a more prominent role at the summit than ever before — were getting more and more engaged. Both were suspicious of the World Bank’s dominance of the pilot facility.

In June 1991, developing countries proposed — in the Beijing Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development — that a special Green Fund should be set up “to address problems which are not covered by specific international agreements, such as water pollution, coastal pollution affecting mangrove forest, shortages and degradation of fresh water resources, deforestation, soil loss, land degradation and desertification”. It should, they added, “be managed on the basis of equitable representation from developing and developed countries, and should ensure easy access for developing countries”.

They were concerned that the GEF might evolve into a substitute for such a fund and there was increasing concern among both participating countries and the implementing agencies that the pilot facility — though negotiated and agreed less than a year before — did not accord with the emerging political realities. At this point the facility got a new Chairman, who was to prove the key figure in its early history. Mohamed El-Ashry — who had been Vice President of the World Resources Institute when it had published a pioneering report calling for an International Environment Facility — was appointed Director of the World Bank’s Environment Department in late May 1991 and was confirmed as GEF Chairman that November.

At his first Participants Meeting in December 1991 — which was also preceded by another innovation, a consultation with NGOs — Mr El-Ashry, as he recalls, warned that “this animal is not going to fly”. Developing countries, in particular, stressed the need for universal membership of the GEF and democratic decision making, and the donors agreed that a paper giving options of future development should be drawn up.

The paper, duly presented to the next meeting in the following February, gave three alternatives: continuing with the status quo; creating an independent institution; and having a modified, and incrementally evolving, GEF. It was little surprise that the last of these was chosen. Importantly, the meeting also reconfirmed that the GEF’s basic mission was “to provide concessionary and additional funding of the incremental costs for achieving global environmental benefits” and, for the present, would be limited to its four focal areas.

How the GEF would be modified, however, had yet to be decided and the Earth Summit was coming closer. In the final weeks before it opened, the negotiators of the climate and biodiversity conventions — due to be adopted in Rio in June — agreed that it should be designated as the interim operator of their agreements’ financial mechanisms, on the basis that it would be restructured and its membership made universal. Meanwhile a Participants Meeting in April had begun considering a blue print for restructuring, called *The Pilot Phase and Beyond*, and had agreed that “land degradation issues, primarily desertification and deforestation” would also be eligible for funding.

Developing countries — wanting funding for addressing their national environmental problems — had still, however, not formally abandoned their wish for a Green Fund, but developed countries would not consider it. Some solution had to be found if financing the implementation of the conventions — and of Agenda 21, the main programme to be adopted at Rio — was to take place. Mr El-Ashry therefore persuaded the President of the World Bank to propose an “Earth Increment” of additional money to address national environmental problems for the International Development Association (IDA), the part of the bank that assists the poorest countries. Leaders of industrialized countries promised in speeches to support the Increment at Rio, and the impasse was resolved, enabling agreement.

But once the Earth Summit was over, the donors failed to provide any more money for IDA, thus fuelling a sense of betrayal among developing nations. Implementation of Agenda 21 suffered. The GEF was left as the only potential source of new funding, and thus its restructuring — negotiations on which began immediately — became a crucial test of political will.

Eighteen months of intensive talks followed in Abidjan, Rome, Beijing, Washington DC, and Paris. They ranged over a wide variety of issues, but developing countries emphasized such principles as universal membership and democratic decision-making, while developed ones stressed that these needed to be balanced with efficient process for decision-making and cost-effective operations. But gradually the differences narrowed, and in December 1993, the participants assembled again in Cartagena to reach final agreement on four outstanding issues — how often an Assembly of all participating nations should meet, how many countries should sit on the governing council, how it should make decisions, and who should chair it.

The meeting turned out to be a disaster. The atmosphere was edgy from the beginning, but progress was still made until some key delegations were reined back by their governments saying that they had negotiated beyond their instructions, causing collapse. Mr El-Ashry took the view that a collapse would be better than a fudged compromise that left both sides unhappy and unwilling to implement it. So he closed the meeting, changed his flight, and left — despite entreaties — without a setting a date for a future one.

Not just the future of the GEF — which could have become stillborn — but the implementation of the Rio Conventions was now at risk, but Mr El-Ashry was determined not to hold another, and make-or-break, meeting until he was sure there was a chance of a final agreement. Indications of that came in February 1994, at a separate meeting of environment ministers at Agra, India. After being briefed on what had happened in Cartagena, they called for a “speedy and successful conclusion” to the negotiations.

Taking his opportunity, Mr El-Ashry brought together a group of participants who were attending a UN meeting in New York over dinner a few days later, and got their agreement to a full meeting in Geneva less than two weeks beyond that. Seventy-three participating countries turned up, realizing that thus was their last chance for an accord. Innovating again, it was decided, that the bargaining would take place between only three people — one representative each for the developing and OECD countries, with the Mr El-Ashry as moderator.

Even so, and despite a much more constructive atmosphere, little progress was made for a day and a half. As time began to run out, the two representatives finally asked Mr El-Ashry to draw up his own proposals for agreement on the outstanding issues. He presented a two page paper to the whole meeting. It proposed that the Assembly should meet once every three years and that the Council should be made up of 32 seats, 16 for developing countries, 14 for OECD ones and two for economies in transition.

Decisions, where consensus was not reached, were to be made by a double majority vote — the first with an equal vote for each country, the second weighted according to financial contributions needing a 60% majority, a highly innovative combination of the UN and Bretton Woods institutions voting systems. And the Chair was to be split. The GEF would be managed by a CEO who is also the Chairman. However, participants would elect one of their number to preside over administrative matters for the duration of each meeting.

When this compromise was presented, the meeting exploded in applause. Agreement was reached, and the delegates proceeded to replenish the GEF's funds to the tune of some US\$2 billion for the next four years, an amount — which as the organization has evolved — has progressively increased to reach US\$4.43 billion in the present four-year cycle.

The GEF has had its ups and downs over the remainder of its 25 year history, but to my mind, is at present on an upward track. More than most international organisations it is seizing the opportunity offered by last year's Paris climate agreement and international adoption of the Sustainable Development goals to try to increase the momentum for change, focussing on how to safeguard the global commons on which all life depends, while also casting an appraising eye on how it has spent money in the past and seeking to improve its effectiveness. If it can indeed achieve these aims, it will more than fulfil the vision of its founders back in 1991.

Geoffrey Lean serves on the advisory committee of the GEF's “Global Environmental Commons — Solutions for a Crowded Planet” Project





GEF AGENCIES

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- Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA)
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- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- Foreign Economic Cooperation Office –
Ministry of Environmental Protection of China (FECO)
- Brazilian Biodiversity Fund (FUNBIO)
- Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
- World Wildlife Fund U.S. (WWF-US)



Celebrating 25 Years of the GEF

BY JIM YONG KIM, PRESIDENT
THE WORLD BANK GROUP (WBG)

Over the past quarter century, the Global Environment Facility has advanced global efforts to protect the environment. Through its work with institutions like the World Bank Group, it has demonstrated that the pursuit of global environmental benefits is worth more than the sum of its parts, and can have a major positive impact on sustainable development and the lives of people.



WORLD BANK GROUP

The Bank's partnership with the GEF is based on a long and rich history. We've been part of the GEF from the outset, incubating the nascent facility in our Environment Department and acting as a GEF implementing agency and trustee. Together with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme, we've provided an institutional framework and space to operate the GEF Secretariat. We've spearheaded integrated programming to promote conservation, low carbon development, climate-smart agriculture and resilience, and also to tackle chemicals and pollution management, to name a few examples. Through this process, we've worked together to leverage development finance for the benefit of the global environment, in line with our goals to end extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity.

The GEF plays an important role as the financial mechanism for numerous multilateral environmental agreements — and there is a continuing need for GEF grants to unlock greater investment in renewable energy. GEF grants have helped the Bank's client countries pioneer new frontiers, overcome barriers to greater investment, and meet renewable energy goals. They can ultimately help countries get on a path toward low-carbon growth by driving the expansion of renewable energy and the effort to de-carbonize the global power mix.

One example is Morocco, host of COP 22, the November 2016 Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Morocco's concentrated solar power complex and the centerpiece of its Solar Power Plan, is poised to supply power to 1.1 million Moroccans by 2018 and reduce carbon emissions by 17.5 million tons over the next 25 years. This started with a US \$43 million GEF grant, implemented by the Bank, which helped pilot Integrated Solar Combined Cycle power in the country's northeast. The pilot project, also supported by an African Development Bank loan, built capacity and generated interest among investors. Further investment followed from the Climate Investment Fund's Clean Technology Fund; the World Bank; and the private sector, through the World Bank Group's private sector arm, the IFC; and enhanced by another GEF grant.

GEF funding has also helped developing countries improve conservation and sustainable use of global environmental public goods. The GEF has supported resilient landscapes

and sustainable livelihoods since the early 1990s, by helping countries safeguard their natural ecosystems and promote natural resource management. An example is Brazil's Amazon Region Protected Areas Program, supported by the Bank's GEF Program and other partners. As a result of the protected areas, 10% of Brazil's Amazon basin is under strict protection and supervision. Beginning in the 1990s, GEF funding also helped establish conservation trust funds supporting the management of national parks and protected areas around the world. Many of these trust funds have grown into permanent and well capitalized institutions focused on a number of activities, including: capacity building; awareness-raising and environmental education; conservation and sustainable use of natural resources; engaging local and indigenous communities in co-managing activities and sustainable livelihood opportunities; and strengthening local institutions. Today, some trust funds have even graduated to become accredited agencies of the GEF itself, as well as the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund.

GEF funding has helped drive the Bank's re-engagement with fisheries through initiatives such as the West Africa Regional Fisheries Program and the South West Indian Ocean Fisheries Governance Project. Such conservation efforts are generating rural jobs and incomes, attracting considerable local and foreign investment, and contributing significantly to food security. And in 12 Sahel countries in Africa, GEF funding is supporting coordinated sustainable land and water management practices to claw back the desert and boost resilience.

In transport, GEF grants have helped spur innovative projects to reduce traffic congestion and improve traffic management. They have supported cost-effective public transport modes like bus-rapid transit (BRT) systems. An example is Mexico's BRT system, initiated along Mexico City's busy Avenida de los Insurgentes, reduced commute times, improved air quality, lowered CO₂ emissions and generated market opportunities in the public transportation sector.

These projects give a sense of the tremendous impact of the GEF grants. Over our 25-year partnership, the Bank has channeled nearly \$5 billion in GEF grants to client countries around the world. They have leveraged more than \$32.8 billion in Bank and partner funds — amplifying the GEF's impact more than six times over. The programme has been able to

leverage diversified investment finance, drive innovation, buy down risk, catalyze change and promote innovation, crowd in other programmes and partners to work collaboratively, lay the foundations for scale-up of follow-on investments, and advance global action on pressing environmental issues.

The GEF continues to play a distinctive role as a financing mechanism dedicated to reversing environmental loss. As a steward of global public goods, it strengthens the world's ability to respond to the increasingly immense and complex challenges and pressures we face.

In the years ahead, the GEF will play a key role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Now 25 years old, the GEF has grown into a broad partnership with 18 agencies, each with their own comparative advantages. Together with the multilateral development banks, we will be investing in the order of \$400¹ billion in the SDGs over the next four years. As our work on climate change shows, the investment needs for addressing the causes of environmental degradation and the global environmental goods agenda runs into the trillions of dollars. The GEF Partnership is strongly positioned to work with the Bank and other multilateral development banks to devise a financing framework to leverage a portion of our balance sheets for this critical agenda. We look forward to working on this challenge with the GEF Partnership during the upcoming GEF-7 replenishment and on our continued engagement moving forward.

¹ <http://www.worldbank.org/mdgs/documents/FfD-MDB-Contributions-July-13-2015.pdf>





The Global Environment Facility: A Record of High-Impact Environmental Results and New Opportunities for Advancing Sustainable Development

BY HELEN CLARK, ADMINISTRATOR
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). This milestone offers an opportunity to celebrate the GEF's many achievements, while also highlighting the serious environmental challenges that the world continues to face and new opportunities to address them in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



TWO AND A HALF DECADES OF INNOVATION AND IMPACT

Since its foundation in 1991, the GEF has repeatedly demonstrated the critical importance of sustained and catalytic financing for the environment. As a financing mechanism for the Rio Conventions¹ and the largest public funder of environmental projects, the GEF has contributed to concrete results across a wide range of environmental issues. Overall, it has provided over US\$14.5 billion in grant financing for nearly 4,000 projects in 165 developing countries. Roughly 40% of these grants have been mobilized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) working with partner countries.

Around the world, these GEF investments have transformed markets, strengthened the resilience of vulnerable communities, and helped to address root causes of environmental degradation. They have also built the capacities of countries to safeguard their natural capital, thereby underpinning their overall sustainable development.

As one of the founding partners of the GEF, UNDP has contributed to these achievements. Over the past 25 years, our partnership has delivered widespread environmental benefits. For example:

- Through the GEF Small Grants Programme, implemented by UNDP, more than 20,000 grants have been made to civil society and community-based organizations in over 125 countries, with over US\$535 million in GEF funding. As a result, in the past four years alone (2012-2015), over 400,000 community members have adopted sustainable land and forest management practices covering nearly 900,000 hectares.
- GEF-financed and UNDP-managed ecosystems and biodiversity projects have supported the conservation of close to 670 million hectares of protected areas worldwide

1 "The Rio Conventions are the three UN conventions opened for signature during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (also known as "The Earth Summit") on 3-14 June, 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: UN Convention on Biological Diversity, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and UN Convention to Combat Desertification". Source: <http://www.rioconventions.org/en/The-Rio-Conventions.html>

— including Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas — with the overall goal of safeguarding the vital natural capital which sustains life and livelihoods on Earth. If this cumulative area were a country, it would be the seventh largest country in the world.

Over the past two and a half decades, the GEF-UNDP partnership has been highly innovative in its work with a range of public and private actors. This includes the introduction of new technologies and supporting the creation of environmentally sustainable markets. For example:

- The GEF-UNDP-International Maritime Organization GloBallast Partnership Programme has catalyzed the creation of a new ballast water treatment technology market. This is helping to halt the spread of invasive alien species from ballast water releases. These disrupt ecosystems, threaten local economies and livelihoods, and cause disease and loss of human life. The total value of this new market is estimated to be US\$45 billion over the next 10 to 15 years as the sector complies with an expected new convention on ballast water.
- We have helped governments and the private sector to "de-risk" renewable energy investments, both within countries and across regions. By targeting barriers and risks relevant to introducing renewable energy, countries have been able to scale up financing in solar, wind, and other renewable energy markets, bringing affordable, reliable, and clean electricity to their citizens.

OLD, NEW, AND EVOLVING ENVIRONMENTAL AND LINKED SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES

Our world, however, continues to face both new and persistent environmental challenges.

The Stockholm Resilience Centre report on *Planetary Boundaries: Guiding Human Development on a Changing Planet* suggests that four of Earth's nine planetary boundaries have already been crossed. They are those for climate change, biosphere integrity, land-system change, and biogeochemical cycles. Population growth, urbanization, unsustainable

production and consumption, and growing competition for limited resources, combined with the effects of climate change, continue to push people and our planet to the limit. Some 60% of ecosystem services have been degraded globally over the past 50 years.

Pollution, species loss, water scarcity, and manmade and natural disasters, combined with rising global temperatures, ocean acidification, rising sea levels, and weather extremes are threatening the lives and livelihoods of the poor. The ecosystem services which are essential for food, water, energy, medicine, and shelter, and for building vulnerability to shocks, remain at risk. This is in part due to weak governance, ineffective natural resource management, and corruption. Many countries, including the least developed, the mountainous, and the Small Island Developing States, suffer disproportionately. The drivers of these environmental challenges are closely linked to issues of poverty, inequality, food insecurity, economic shocks, increased social tensions, and conflict. By 2050, the global demand for food is expected to increase by 60%, and, by 2035, global energy consumption is expected to increase by up to 50².

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTEGRATED APPROACHES TO ADVANCE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The 2030 Agenda offers an unprecedented opportunity to address interconnected environmental, social, economic, and governance challenges. In this context, the close UNDP-GEF partnership will continue to evolve, building on its successful track record. In line with the GEF 2020 Strategy, UNDP, and the GEF are adopting new and integrated approaches that will advance a wider range of sustainable development benefits. The goal is to prioritize policies, programming, and partnerships that can accelerate transformational change through catalytic and cost-effective investments and scalable activities. For example:

- Through the Taking Deforestation out of Commodity Supply Chains programme, UNDP is working with the GEF and other GEF agencies to ensure more sustainable agricultural commodity production. While the growing global demand for commodities such as palm oil, beef, and soy has increased economic growth and incomes, and provided jobs for millions of women and men in rural areas, it can come with high environmental and social costs, causing loss of forests and biodiversity, and driving climate change. By promoting greener agricultural techniques, including through inclusive policy dialogues with public and private stakeholders, the UNDP-GEF partnership aims to transform commodity production in ways which benefit both many millions of farmers and the environment.
- Under the GEF-6 Global Partnership on Wildlife Conservation and Crime Prevention for Sustainable Development, UNDP, with the World Bank and four other GEF agencies, has developed a US\$130 million programme with approximately US\$700 million co-financing to tackle the wildlife poaching and trafficking crisis. The illegal trade in wildlife is a huge threat to biodiversity, and is a major development issue which creates insecurity, fuels conflict and corruption, and undermines broader sustainable development efforts.

I am confident that the UNDP-GEF partnership will continue to evolve and respond to the pressing environmental challenges of the 21st century. Over the past two and half decades, the results-focused and strategic nature of this partnership has contributed to innovative and high-impact global environmental benefits.

In marking the 25th anniversary of the GEF, we celebrate these many achievements, and welcome the opportunity to further our collaboration in ways which will ensure even greater sustainable development benefits for all.

2 "The Water-Energy-Food Nexus: A new approach in support of food security and sustainable agriculture". FAO, Rome, June 2014. Source: http://www.fao.org/nr/water/docs/FAO_nexus_concept.pdf

Going Forward with the Global Environment Facility!

BY ERIK SOLHEIM, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP)

From the azure lakes of Band-e Amir to the snow-capped peaks of the Shah Foladi, Bamyán Province in the central highlands of Afghanistan is one of the most stunning landscapes on Earth. Unfortunately, something so breathtaking for one person can be heartbreaking for another.





Khair Begum lives in the village of Jawkar, which nestles in the side of the mountains. Her softly spoken words and grey hair conceal the strength of character needed to survive for so long in such a harsh environment. Like most of the community, Khair gets by on what the village is producing locally. Or, to be precise, what they are producing between the avalanches and floods that crash through their lives with the spring snow melt. Now in her twilight years, Khair sees the annual loss of houses, roads, livestock, and even people as the normal rhythm of life: take a hit, rebuild, hope and repeat. With global temperatures increasing, so is the frequency and ferocity of that cycle. It's hardly a promising future for Khair, the people of Jawkar or the other villages clinging to existence on the slopes of Bamyan Province.

Thirteen thousand kilometers away, a similar cycle is gathering pace in Lesotho; the tiny kingdom in the sky above Southern Africa where more than half the population is below the age of 24. In the town of Maseru, close to the Western border with South Africa, Matsepo Taaso is the Principal at Hooхло Primary School. The school's 300 students are part of a whole generation enjoying free, compulsory education until their teens. Then, many will join the two-thirds of the country who survive on small-scale farming. Others will move away in search of work to send money home. Some of the boys will turn to the diamond mines of Lesotho or South Africa. Girls will try their luck in the country's garment industry, which exports more iconic US brands like Gap and Levis than any other in the region.

However, the economic crisis in America and Europe hit the demand for clothing and diamonds. Extreme droughts, tornadoes and hail storms repeatedly hit the vulnerable communities in the mountains. And 85% of Lesotho livelihoods are at risk from climate change, despite it contributing little to global warming and generating practically 100% renewable energy.

Half a world apart and unlikely ever to meet, Khair, Matsepo and their communities share the dangers of climate change. But they also share something else.

It's something they share with fishermen from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean; with artisan gold miners from Guyana to Mongolia; with cocoa farmers from Costa Rica to Ghana; with transport planners from Portugal to China; and even with anti-poaching patrols in South Africa. It is something

incredibly unique and, although they share it with millions of people around the world, many of them will never know.

Quite simply, they share hope for a better future, thanks to the Global Environment Facility, or GEF to its friends.

In my first few weeks at UN Environment, people talked to me about the GEF with so much affection, on so many occasions, that I was wondering if I'd made a rookie mistake. Perhaps it was actually some incredible philanthropist I was passing in the corridor without realizing? But it's not surprising that people talk about the Global Environment Facility like that when you look at how much they have helped the three founding agencies during the last 25 years.

Since we created it with the World Bank and UN Development Programme, the results have been outstripping our expectations. The Global Environment Facility support to teams in UN Environment is as energizing as it is unstinting. It would be easy to dismiss that statement as referring to the US\$1.6 billion they have entrusted to us over the years. Yet that would grossly underestimate the true value of our relationship. It is giving our teams so much more than funding. It is giving them the freedom to work with social and environmental experts who can improve life for millions of people and to protect this planet for future generations. You cannot measure that in currency.

Thanks to the Global Environment Facility we work with some amazing partners around the world. We help over 140 nations tackle climate change, mercury poisoning and chemical pollution. We help hundreds more to manage green technology, international waters, desertification and the loss of biodiversity. Our work embraces everything from shaping global treaties to measuring, reporting, and implementing them on the ground.

Weaving this global web of life is not always very glamorous. It's more like quietly paying taxes: a steady stream of reliable investment, building the foundations that underpin the entire infrastructure of environmental governance.

But, when government, academics, civil society, and the private sector work together like this, the benefits for people like Khair and Matsepo are huge.

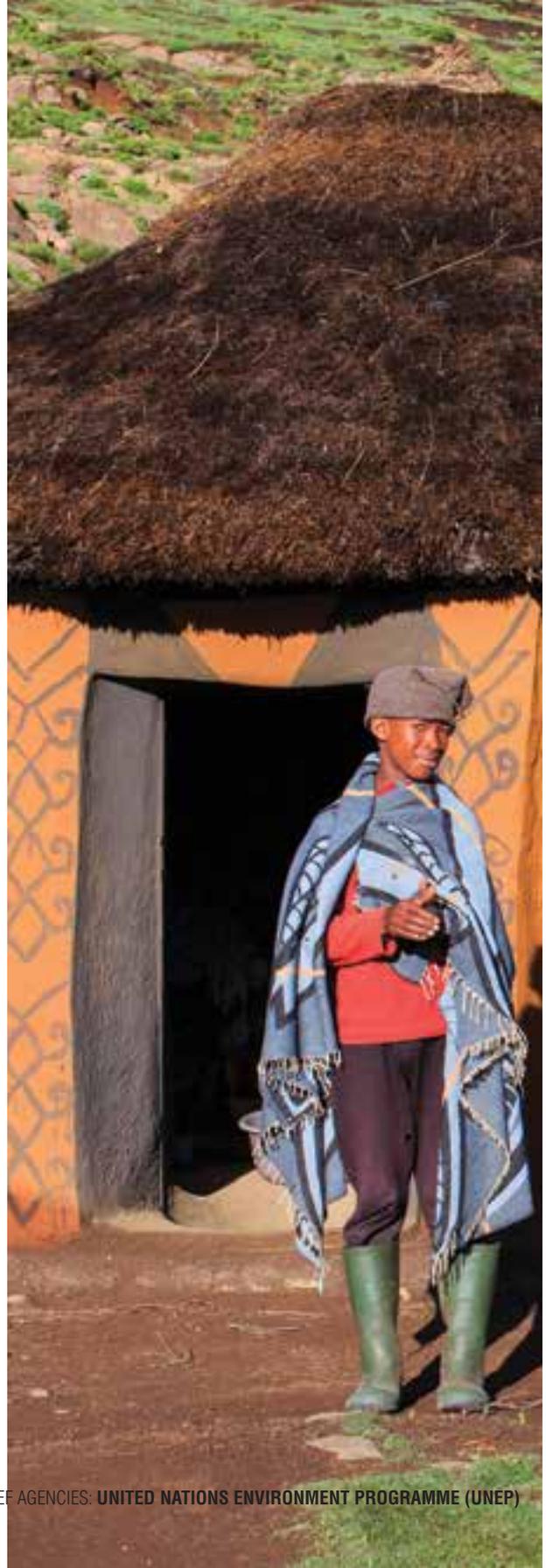
Khair and half a dozen villages in Bamyan Province are protecting themselves from that cycle of avalanches and flooding. And they are doing it thanks to support from the Global Environment Facility, the European Commission and the National Environmental Protection Agency. By sharing expertise and efforts on biodiversity, climate, and chemicals, the partners are transforming ecosystems, natural resources and life in the mountains. If you are fluent in UN-speak, this is “*Developing Core Capacity for Decentralized Multilateral Environmental Agreements Implementation and Natural Resources Management*”. If you are Khair, this is planting 140,000 tree cuttings, creating half a dozen community fruit nurseries and moving homes, farms, and roads away from risk areas.

Over in Lesotho, Matsepo and the kids at Hoohlo Primary School are back in class after their winter break. Like schools across the country, they are using a toolkit that makes climate change part of more traditional subjects like agriculture, geography, and science. But Lesotho’s kids are not the only ones starting to include climate change in their everyday activities. There is training for journalists to provide better climate change reporting in the newspapers, radio, and TV. There is training for technicians to share data from new weather stations that will provide early warnings on climate change. And, as we see so often with the Global Environment Facility’s projects, the role of additional partners like Lesotho Meteorological Services is essential for success.

Partnerships, diversity, and local knowledge are a winning combination. It’s one that the Global Environment Facility and its partners excel in using to support communities who know that protecting natural resources also protects livelihoods.

I may be new in UN Environment, but I am incredibly proud to be part of the team sharing this adventure. Because these are not big sexy stories that grab headlines; these are stories that change lives.

So Global Environment Facility! Happy 25th birthday from everybody at UN Environment and, as the motto of Hoohlo Primary School puts it: “*Forward We Go.*”





ADB: Working Together Increases Impact and Innovation

BY NESSIM J. AHMAD, DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE DEPARTMENT
ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB)

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been eager to work with the GEF since its pilot phase. Initially, its engagement was largely *ad hoc* through the three GEF implementing agencies. Based on this experience, it worked with other regional development banks so that they all obtained direct access as GEF executing agencies in 2002. We recognized that working together directly can achieve innovation and greater impact by blending the GEF's catalytic grant resources for the global environment with ADB financing for sustainable development. More than two decades later — as the GEF celebrates its 25th anniversary and ADB its 50th — the premise of this partnership still holds true: about US\$17 million dollars is leveraged by ADB for every one million provided by the GEF in grants.

ADB Asian Development Bank

Covering a broad range of environmental, climate change, and socio-economic development issues, the ADB/GEF partnership has catalyzed significant investments and the adoption of new and innovative approaches. One priority area has been managing large-scale ecosystems. An early example of this was the People's Republic of China (PRC) and GEF Partnership on Land Degradation in Dryland Ecosystems, established in 2002, which was among the first to pioneer the programmatic approach later mainstreamed by the GEF. It demonstrated effective methods to address land degradation that affects more than 2.6 million square kilometers in the PRC and helped mainstream integrated ecosystem management practices into relevant policies and development frameworks in the country. The total funding mobilized for sustainable land management through mainstreaming into the PRC's 11th and 12th 5-year plans has subsequently amounted to US\$26.8 billion, compared with US\$840 million invested through the programme.

The Coral Triangle Initiative for Coral Reefs, Fisheries, and Food Security is another path-breaking programme. Considered to be the "Amazon of the seas", the Coral Triangle is home to the greatest diversity of coral reefs and marine species anywhere on the planet and supports the livelihoods of 120 million coastal people. ADB and the GEF helped initiate a six-country regional cooperation programme that has since been formalized through a new multi-country regional secretariat, with the continued support of a broad coalition of governments, international NGOs and civil society. It has become a long-term programme of regional, national and local action to help strengthen marine protected area management and introduce an ecosystem-based approaches to fisheries.

Low-carbon and climate-resilient development has also featured prominently: The ADB/GEF Asian Sustainable Transport and Urban Development Program, which is investing in sustainable mass rapid transit systems in several Asian cities, is one good example. It is expected to avoid about 17 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions and improve local urban air quality, while developing models that can be replicated and scaled up across Asia. At the regional level, ADB, GEF, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have established a Pilot Climate Technology Network and Financing Center which has since been replicated in other regions.

The initiative promotes enabling policies and investments in climate technologies, including partnerships with venture capital funds, public-private partnerships, and a marketplace for low-carbon technologies. In the PRC, for example, the project helped the Hunan Innovative Low Carbon Center to launch a new \$50 million cleantech venture capital fund to stimulate local climate technology investments. Similar initiatives are now in preparation in other countries.

The scale and complexity of environmental and climate challenges facing countries in Asia and the Pacific continue to grow. The region is an increasing contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, while also being very vulnerable to climate change impacts, which are exacerbating local environmental challenges. Biodiversity is declining faster than in any other part of the world. Air and water pollution continue to increase, with Asian cities having some of the worst air quality levels anywhere. Food, water, and energy security are also major concerns. Addressing the interface between global and local environment issues is therefore vital for continuing the progress the region has been making in economic growth and poverty reduction. The Sustainable Development Goals, along with the existing multilateral environmental agreements, provide a powerful framework for country-driven programmes that adopt an integrated approach.

Looking ahead, the GEF has many opportunities to work with the ADB and help us go the "extra mile" to generate global environmental benefits. Building on its work with the GEF and others, ADB has already ramped up its lending for environmentally sustainable growth to US\$7.06 billion in 2015, exceeding the target of 50% of annual loan and grant projects set by the ADB corporate results framework for 2014-2016. Last year we also announced that we would invest US \$6 billion annually for climate change mitigation and adaptation by 2020. Exciting new areas for the partnership are likely to present themselves in the context of the next GEF replenishment, especially if the GEF positions itself on the cutting edge of innovation and change. Building on recent experience, further development of integrated approaches and large-scale transformational programmes is certainly needed and these can be further developed as platforms for significant investments by ADB, the GEF and other partners.

“Considered to be the ‘Amazon of the seas’, the Coral Triangle is home to the greatest diversity of coral reefs and marine species anywhere on the planet and supports the livelihoods of 120 million coastal people.”

AfDB-GEF Partnership — Financing Global Environment Benefits and Climate Change Adaptation in Africa

BY ALEX RUGAMBA, DIRECTOR
ENERGY ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE DEPARTMENT
AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (AfDB)

As a GEF implementing agency since 2007, the African Development Bank (AfDB) has played a key role in helping African nations build climate adaptation solutions into their development. The AfDB's GEF portfolio has grown tenfold over the past five years, now including 36 projects in 33 countries for a total of US\$285 million of GEF financing and US\$2.9 billion of AfDB co-financing.



AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP



This funding has been used to build resilience into the AfDB's infrastructure investments, ensure the sustainability of development achievements, and reduce the vulnerability of people and communities to the negative impacts of climate change. The AfDB has implemented a wide array of projects under several funding windows, including Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, which account for 48% and 42% of the total portfolio respectively, as well as projects under the International Waters and Biodiversity focal areas, which constitute the remaining 10% of the portfolio.

Investments have been made in all GEF focal areas, in particular developing innovative approaches under the new GEF-6 Sustainable Cities Initiative. With a large part of its GEF portfolio funded by the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), the AfDB ranked first among GEF MDB agencies for implementing climate change adaptation projects, demonstrating its capacity to mobilize resources for African countries.

GEF resources have been applied in Africa to projects in areas facing severe climate-change related challenges. Successful projects include the Climate Adaptation for Rural Livelihoods and Agriculture Project, which improved food stability in Malawi by enhancing irrigation where frequent droughts and floods caused poor crop yields. The Water and

Sanitation Project in Cameroon enhanced the resilience of poor communities to urban flooding in Yaoundé. Moreover, GEF funding has served as a driver for sustainable development by contributing to both local livelihoods and global environmental benefits. For instance, the Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach Pilot Project in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality through sustainable urban planning and management. In addition, a sustainable development project is being developed to improve natural resource management in Zambia's Lake Tanganyika Basin.

In 2016, two projects were approved for a total US\$18 million, including an urban development project for Cameroon and a regional project preparation non-grant facility for Sustainable Energy for Africa (SEFA).

The GEF focal areas are perfectly aligned with the new AfDB's *High 5* development priorities, including *Light up and Power Africa* and *Feed Africa*. The AfDB-GEF partnership is, and will continue to be, an important alliance for tackling the most pressing environmental problems and reducing the vulnerability of people and communities to the negative impacts of climate change in Africa. The collaboration will further expand and deliver more resources to ensure a climate-smart future for the African continent.

“The AfDB's GEF portfolio has grown tenfold over the past five years, now including 36 projects in 33 countries.”

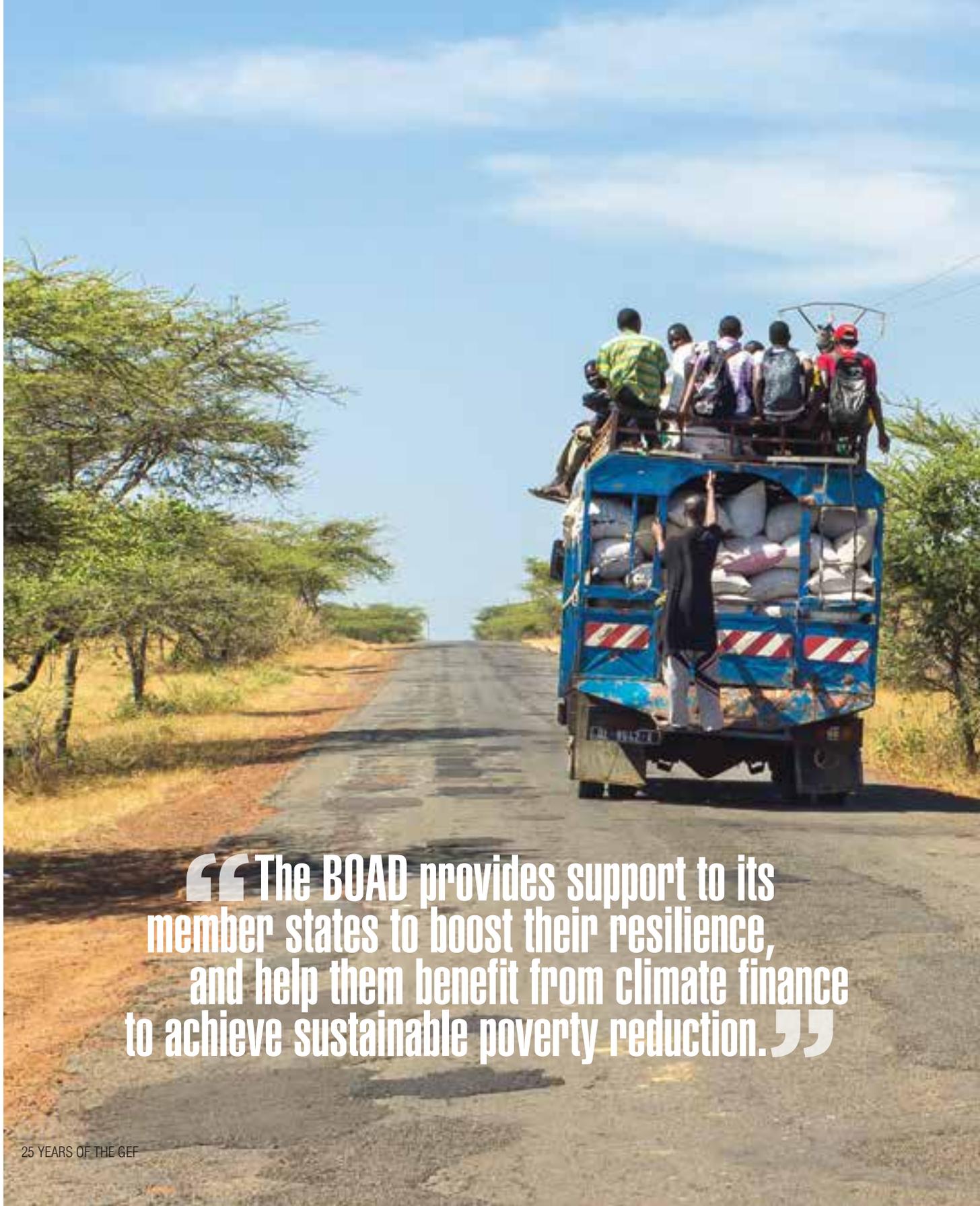


The West African Development Bank: Mobilizing Resources to Combat Climate Change

The West African Development Bank (BOAD) — the common development finance institution for the eight Member States of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol — has taken on board concerns over climate change, the effects of which have slowed development in these countries.







“The BOAD provides support to its member states to boost their resilience, and help them benefit from climate finance to achieve sustainable poverty reduction.”



Thus the BOAD has undertaken — in accordance with its statutory functions and its Vision 2020 — to provide support to its Member States to help strengthen their capacity to reduce their vulnerability to such adverse effects, boost their resilience, and help them to benefit from climate finance to achieve sustainable poverty reduction. It has therefore positioned itself as the regional entity capable of mobilizing additional environmental resources on behalf of the eight countries in the Union through its accreditation by the financial mechanisms dedicated to the environment and to climate issues.

In 2011, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) launched an accreditation process for 10 new project implementing agencies. The BOAD seized this opportunity to submit its application for accreditation and the GEF approved accreditation for the BOAD as a new implementing agency at its 48th Council Meeting, on June 2 and 3, 2015.

This accreditation offers opportunities for mobilizing resources through co-financing of environmental projects. The BOAD's objective is to provide WAEMU countries with most of the resources available to finance the environmental projects they identify as priorities and which belong to one of the GEF's focal areas — Climate Change, Biodiversity, and Land Degradation.

A BOAD mission was carried out in the WAEMU countries in August 2015 to meet GEF operational focal points to identify projects eligible for GEF financing. In November 2015, it organized a workshop led by GEF experts to familiarize its senior executives with GEF operational procedures.

Two projects have already been prepared, for which Project Identification Forms have been submitted to the GEF for approval. In June 2016, the first GEF project was approved for the BOAD.

GEF and CAF, the Development Bank of Latin America

CAF, the Development Bank of Latin America, has the promotion of sustainable development and the integration of its member countries as strategic pillars. CAF and the GEF share a key role in the environmental protection of the region. This is done through co-financing sustainable development projects that generate regional and global environmental benefits as well as national initiatives to strengthen compliance with international environmental commitments in the framework of the UN.

CAF BANCO DE DESARROLLO
DE AMÉRICA LATINA



CAF, like the GEF, recognizes that sustainable development is not attainable solely through economic growth, but that an equation must also promote the conservation of natural capital, facilitating migration to economies that are low-carbon and resilient to climate change, while achieving the inclusive participation of stakeholders.

During its 25 years, the GEF has made a substantial contribution to environmental as well as financial management. It is an example of how to achieve environmental objectives with high technical and administrative standards in a way that the limited available resources are effectively aimed at producing qualitative transformation that benefits the environment. The GEF has been instrumental in increasing global awareness and generating international agendas to improve understanding of the consequences of today's environmental impacts on ecosystems and their biodiversity.

CAF, in its relationship with the GEF, understands that one of the main environmental contributions for sustainable productive transformation points to the recognition of models for the sustainable use of natural capital and green businesses. In this regard, the GEF is a key partner for promoting such models as Biotrade, obtaining significant results that benefit the conservation of resources and the integration of communities at the base of the pyramid from economically viable models. The implementation of the Andean Biotrade Project (2011–2015)¹ demonstrated the feasibility of integrating value chains of native biodiversity resources from actors considered vulnerable who are generally not included in business models, while at the same time showing that financing can really have a catalytic role in supporting productive transformation and conservation through knowledge and innovation.

GEF has challenges posed by a world with dynamic scenarios in which agencies like CAF are willing to support. Symmetrical dialogue between sustainable development actors and the valuation of traditional knowledge for the conservation of natural resources are driving forces that enhance resilience to the impact of climate change and also promote integration in action. At the same time, there is the challenge of

generating access to co-financing where public and private sectors seek to achieve global and local environmental objectives in mutual cooperation schemes while building strategic alliances for a healthy and sustainable common space.

1 <http://biocomercioandino.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Memoria-Virtual-Biocomercio-Andino-CAF-Ingles.pdf>
<http://biocomercioandino.org/videos/>



Development Bank of Latin America

The GEF and Conservation International

BY PETER SELIGMANN, CHAIRMAN AND CEO
CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL (CI)

In 2013, Conservation International (CI) became one of the first nonprofit organizations to be accredited as a project agency of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The GEF unites 183 countries, in partnership with the private sector, international institutions, and nongovernmental organizations, to fund international conservation. Over more than two decades, the GEF has established an impressive track record of efficiency and effectiveness in delivering positive results for environmental quality and sustainable economic development around the world.

CONSERVATION
INTERNATIONAL

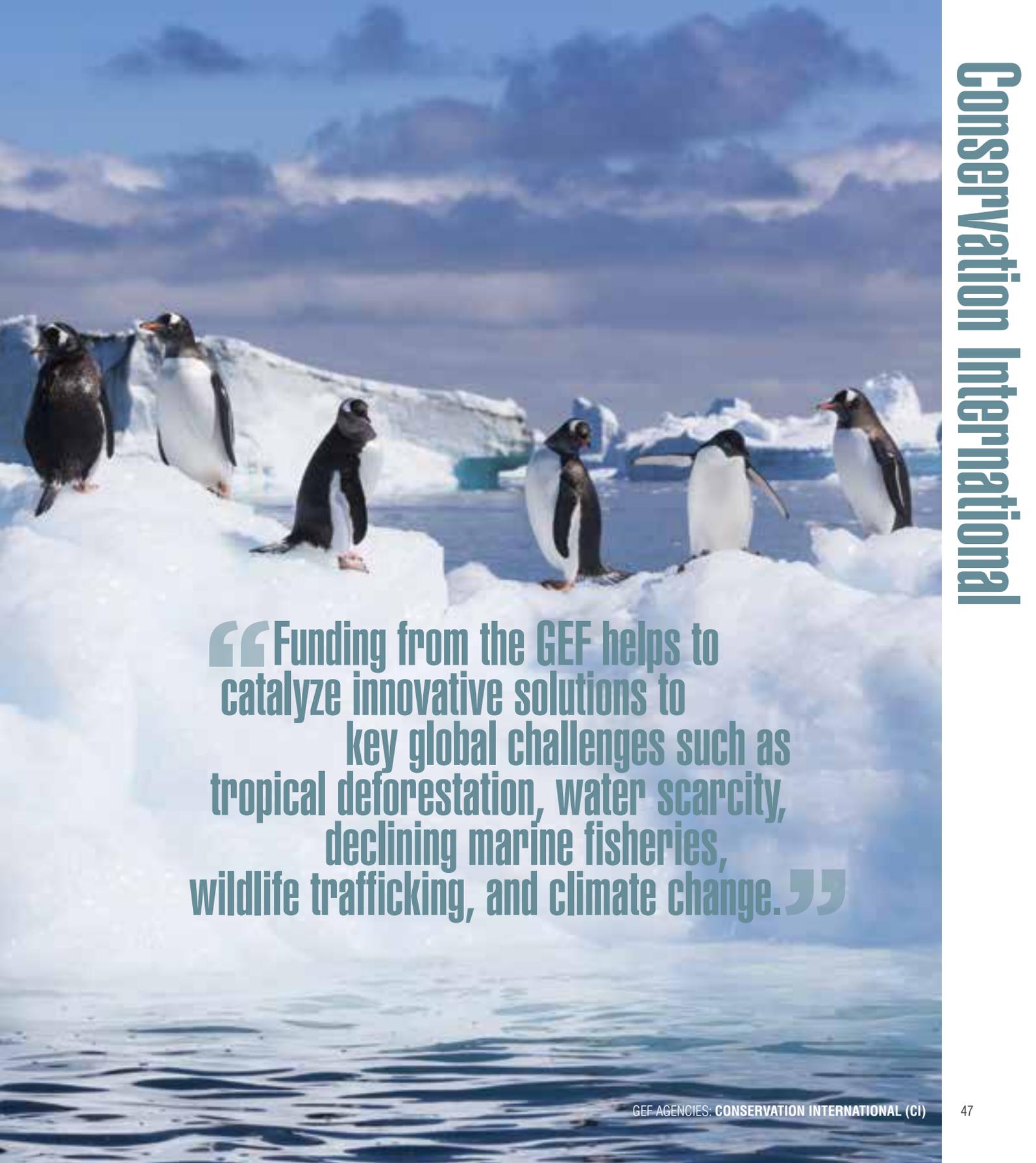




As a GEF project agency, CI brings nearly 30 years of experience in innovative finance and community-based conservation to this partnership. We are well-positioned as an organization that can help ensure that GEF-based funding maximizes benefits for nature and human well-being.

There is a direct connection between international conservation, resource scarcity, and economic, national, and global security. Funding from the GEF helps to catalyze innovative solutions to key global challenges such as tropical deforestation, water scarcity, declining marine fisheries, wildlife trafficking, and climate change. Being part of the delivery system for this funding enables CI to expand our role in conserving nature and the essential services it provides to humanity, such as fresh water, food, fertile soil, and life-saving medicines. By addressing the underlying drivers degrading this essential “natural capital,” we can promote the security interests of people everywhere. We are honored to work with visionary governments who understand that nature is the bedrock for humanity.





“Funding from the GEF helps to catalyze innovative solutions to key global challenges such as tropical deforestation, water scarcity, declining marine fisheries, wildlife trafficking, and climate change.”



DBSA: The Partnership Couldn't Have Come at a Better Moment

BY DBSA GEF COORDINATION UNIT, MIDRAND, SOUTH AFRICA
DEVELOPMENT BANK OF SOUTH AFRICA (DBSA)

The Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA) made a deliberate declaration, through its mission statement, to advance the impact of development in the Africa region by expanding access to development finance and effectively integrating and implementing sustainable development solutions, improving people's quality of life through investment in infrastructure and thus supporting social and economic growth and regional integration. Accreditation to the GEF is a milestone in the DBSA's efforts to strengthen partnerships that advance its mandate to finance low carbon, climate resilient, and environmentally inclined development infrastructure. The initiatives that have already materialized between the GEF and DBSA, within two years of their partnership, testify to the valuable nature of this relationship.



Development Bank of South Africa





Focusing on the energy, water, transport, and information and communications technology sectors, the DBSA has positioned itself as one of the ideal development finance institutions in Southern Africa. It has, in partnership with other institutions, provided funding for the globally commended Independent Power Producer (IPP) Programme for renewable energy. The GEF partnership couldn't have come at a better moment. At the time when small and medium players in the IPP programme face a myriad of challenges, including difficulties in accessing financial resources, the blending of the DBSA's Small IPP debt facility and the GEF-funded equity scheme is seen both as innovative and the most needed financial mechanism to address barriers to the participation of SMEs in the renewable energy sector, that catalyzes this market, resulting in social and economic benefits. The proposed investments under this programme will result in the installation of close to 100MW of renewable energy, reducing emissions by the equivalent of about 260,000 tons of CO₂ a year — the equivalent of an estimated 5 million tons of CO₂ over an assumed average project lifetime of 20 years. This programme, alone, will leverage about US\$200 million in co-financing.

Municipal funding and non-lending services are an intrinsic part of the DBSA's core mandate. Its participation in the GEF Sustainable Cities Integrated Approach initiative, through implementing the City of Johannesburg project, again demonstrates the complementarity of the GEF-DBSA partnership, ensuring an increased impact of the DBSA investments, which upon replication, will result in resilient and resource-efficient South African cities. The DBSA looks forward to the continuation of its partnership with the GEF, a relationship that is destined for a low carbon, climate-resilient and sustainable development trajectory in South Africa. Congratulations to the GEF on its 25th Anniversary!



The GEF and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

BY JOSUÉ TANAKA, MANAGING DIRECTOR
ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CLIMATE CHANGE
EUROPEAN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT (EBRD)

Over the past 12 years, the Global Environmental Facility has provided the EBRD with large-scale grant co-financing to support the Bank's efforts in responding to the negative impacts of climate change and in supporting climate resilience actions, thus enabling significant investments and technical assistance in energy efficiency and renewables in the context of a strategic partnership. EBRD is proud to be the foremost GEF partner in the area of finance for energy efficiency.



The EBRD values this long-standing partnership with the GEF, which has helped to develop a deeper understanding of the environmental and climate change challenges and solutions in its region of operations. During these years, the EBRD also further strengthened the link between its economic transition mandate and sustainable development, demonstrating how a modern market economy can evolve to be sustainable.

Nowadays we often talk about moving toward new frontiers in climate finance. For years, the GEF supported institutions such as ours in doing so, strengthening the mainstreaming of environmental and climate considerations into operations, and developing new financing solutions. The GEF has demonstrated throughout a high level of understanding and responsiveness to the needs of the global climate community, in particular in recipient countries.

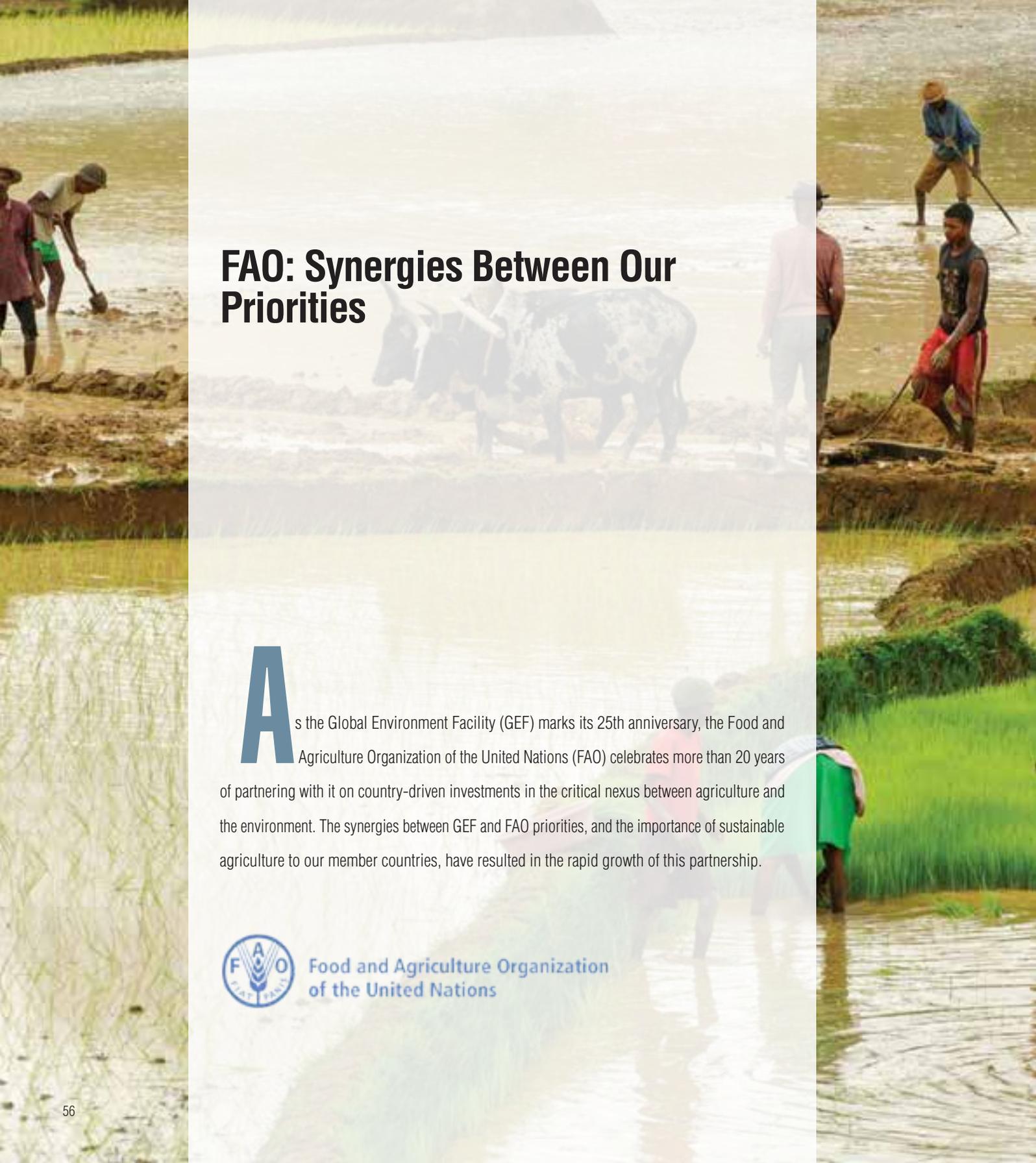
For example, in response to COP guidelines, the GEF co-financed the regional development banks' centers for technology transfers. In the EBRD this translated into a very successful programme called FINTECC that provides grant support for the introduction of advanced climate technologies for mitigation and adaptation in the private sector. Examples include high-performance cogeneration in food processing in Kazakhstan, and energy efficient equipment in a drinks producer in Kyrgyzstan. This GEF programme has also led to significant cooperation among donors, recipient countries, IFIs and UN agencies, generating joint support for technology deployment that is benefiting many countries. For example, the co-operation between the UNCTCN and the EBRD in Bosnia and Herzegovina has led to EBRD now considering finance of the modernization of the district heating system in Banja Luka, which would lead to considerable environmental improvements.

So what does the future hold for us? We welcome the GEF's growing interest in larger regional or thematic programming and look forward to developing instruments to utilise the new non-grant instruments in the private sector. Increased cooperation and deeper linkages with other donors and development agencies and banks will further enhance the impact of GEF funding in the EBRD region of operations.





“The GEF has demonstrated throughout a high level of understanding and responsiveness to the needs of the global climate community, in particular in recipient countries.”

The background of the page is a composite image of a rice paddy field. In the upper portion, several farmers are seen working in the water, some using tools to till the soil. A large water buffalo is harnessed and wading through the water, likely pulling a plow. The lower portion of the image shows rows of young rice seedlings in a nursery bed. The overall scene is one of traditional agricultural labor in a rural setting.

FAO: Synergies Between Our Priorities

As the Global Environment Facility (GEF) marks its 25th anniversary, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) celebrates more than 20 years of partnering with it on country-driven investments in the critical nexus between agriculture and the environment. The synergies between GEF and FAO priorities, and the importance of sustainable agriculture to our member countries, have resulted in the rapid growth of this partnership.



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations



The GEF-6 programme gives more prominence than ever to agriculture, forestry, fisheries and land-use, including food security, and to livelihood resilience, as these relate to critical environmental issues, such as climate change, biodiversity, and land degradation. FAO looks forward to enhancing this collaboration through the GEF-7.

The GEF's unique model of working through partner agencies leverages and adds value to FAO's agriculture focus for the benefit of developing countries and countries in transition.

During the GEF's first 25 years, the environment has evolved from a fringe issue to a fully mainstreamed part of the development agenda. This trend is also reflected in FAO's work to end hunger and malnutrition, as this can only be done in an environmentally sustainable manner. As the world's population approaches the 9 billion mark, it is even more urgent and imperative.

Looking forward, FAO sees sustainable food and agriculture as an over-arching approach centered around five principles:

- Improving efficiency in the use of resources, including natural resources. For example, improving agricultural practices can have direct environmental benefits related to climate change, land and water condition, and biodiversity.
- Directing action to conserve, protect, and enhance natural resources. Food and agricultural production depends on natural resources, and therefore the sustainability of production depends on the sustainability of the resources themselves.
- Protecting rural livelihoods and improving equity and social well-being, ensuring that producers have adequate access to, and control of, productive resources and addressing the gender gap.
- Enhancing the resilience of people, communities, and ecosystems in the face of climate change and other pressures.
- Ensuring good governance for the sustainability of both the natural and human systems.

This approach recognizes that biodiversity and ecosystems (including agricultural landscapes and seascapes), and the ecosystem services these provide, should be protected and managed, in order to optimize their contribution to agricultural production. This contributes to achieving the dual benefits of environmental protection and food security — the benefits that FAO strives to provide to its member countries, through policy and actions.

FAO recognizes that biodiversity is essential for food security. Thousands of interconnected species make up a vital web of biodiversity in ecosystems upon which global food production depends. With the erosion of biodiversity, we lose the potential to adapt agricultural production systems to new challenges like population growth and climate change. Sustainable food and agricultural practices increase the resilience of agricultural communities and ecosystems, while mitigating climate change.

Worldwide, FAO's country-driven partnership with the GEF puts these issues front and center. Consider the following examples: In East Africa, the partnership enabled the four countries that share the Kagera River basin to apply integrated ecosystem approaches to manage land resources and improve agricultural production, food security, and rural livelihoods. In Myanmar, we are helping small farmers to apply more sustainable agricultural practices, with the goal of improving yields and land condition, reducing both greenhouse gas emissions, and pressure on nearby forests and mangroves. Around the world — from Peru, to Mexico to the Philippines — the partnership is helping small farmers sustain the dynamic process of in-situ conservation of plant genetic resources. And in the Bay of Bengal, the FAO-GEF partnership is helping littoral countries to better manage their shared resources and promote sustainable fisheries. The partnership is also working in the global commons, to promote efficient and sustainable management of fisheries, resources and biodiversity conservation in "areas beyond national jurisdiction".

FAO is ready to improve and increase our work with the GEF and partners to offer innovative and integrated solutions for these vital issues and to maximize synergies among the critical environment and sustainable development goals going forward.





The GEF and China: Our Partnership Steps Into a New Era

BY XIAO XUEZHI, DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL
FOREIGN ECONOMIC COOPERATION OFFICE (FECO)
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OF CHINA

In more than 20 years of partnership with the GEF, China's Foreign Economic Cooperation Office (FECO) has executed many projects to conserve biodiversity, protect international waters, tackle climate change, and reduce persistent organic pollutants and mercury contamination. By 2015, FECO — an institution affiliated to the Ministry of Environmental Protection of China (MEP) established in 1989 to manage project funds in cooperation with international organizations and implement multilateral environmental agreements — had executed 38 national projects, a quarter of the country's total, receiving US\$270 million in grants from the GEF and leveraging over US\$1 billion in co-financing.



“Tackling global environmental issues and realizing sustainable development continues to be a pressing but arduous task, which demands stronger cooperation in the international community.”



These projects have significantly helped enhance China's capacity for decision-making and enforcing regulations, lead innovation in concepts and technologies in environmental protection, promote the reduction of pollutants of global concern and deliver significant global environmental benefits while improving people's livelihoods. They have also continuously achieved highly satisfactory performance from the perspectives of the GEF and other international institutions. Many have become exemplary models for executing projects that could be followed, and learned from, by other developing countries.

In 2015, the partnership opened a new chapter when FECO was officially accredited as a new GEF national implementing entity, enabling it to leverage a stronger impact on improving China's environment. This considerably cemented the trust and partnership between the two bodies, as the GEF's principle of country ownership and driving is further promoted and practised.

As the GEF celebrates its 25th anniversary, tackling global environmental issues and realizing sustainable development continues to be a pressing but arduous task, which demands stronger cooperation in the international community. FECO is willing to deepen cooperation with the GEF to contribute to its global objectives and visions and develop high-quality projects to deliver more environmental benefits, not just for China but for the whole world. It would also like to see the GEF playing a more important role and having a greater impact in future, as it serves as the financial mechanism for multilateral environmental agreements.

The GEF is Innovative and Reliable — And Has a Big Impact

BY FABIO LEITE, GEF AGENCY COORDINATOR
BRAZILIAN BIODIVERSITY FUND (FUNBIO)

The GEF's importance to the Brazilian natural environment cannot be overstated. Through the dozens of projects it has supported, the GEF has explored themes that have helped the nation carry forward its conservation agenda, often by fostering innovation in project design and management.







Brazilian Biodiversity Fund

The Brazilian Biodiversity Fund (Funbio) was founded with a grant by the GEF in 1995 with a view to intensifying the drive for biodiversity conservation in the country. Twenty years later, it became an accredited GEF project agency, but though it has been an implementer for less than a year, the relationship dates back to the GEF's original pilot phase. From project executor to project agency, Funbio has had a perhaps unique privilege of working with the GEF on different levels. Our testimonial therefore comes from an organization with direct experience of the impact the GEF has had in Brazil, one of the Fund's biggest benefactors.

Back in the 1990s, the GEF helped Brazil develop such important tools as official maps of priority conservation areas: these have been updated over the years and incorporated definitively into the project-planning and management toolkit. Younger conservationists — whether in government, academia, or civil society — now deal with these tools with the same effortless familiarity as kids on tablets and smartphones.

This kind of instrument has enabled the GEF to support such bold projects as the Amazon Region Protected Areas Programme (ARPA), the world's largest tropical forest protection initiative. ARPA is now considered a success story and a benchmark, but it was a highly innovative device ahead of its

time — when it first hit the drawing-board and negotiating table — and it found in the GEF perhaps one of its biggest supporters. Begun in 2002 and scheduled to continue for decades to come, its mission is to protect 60 million hectares of Amazon Rainforest (15% of its total cover). These are just two examples among many GEF-supported projects and programmes.

For Brazil, the GEF is a place where brash, creative ideas find resonance and where we can explore novel ways to tackle old problems and make headway on themes that are crucial to cleaner, more inclusive, and more equitable development that can ensure a better quality of life for future generations. The GEF is a safe and reliable source of funding, and that allows conservation initiatives to ride out the peaks and troughs of a developing economy, conferring a level of continuity that is key to the full fruition of projects.

We hope that the GEF continues to hold its projects to exacting quality standards — including improvements on such issues as monitoring, gender, and safeguards — and that the GEF Partnership can go on serving as a gentle nudge down the path toward sustainable development. The GEF really works.



“For Brazil, the GEF is a place where brash, creative ideas find resonance.”

The GEF and the Inter-American Development Bank

The Latin America and the Caribbean region hosts many of the world's most unique and significant ecosystems, which accounts for 40% of global biodiversity. In recent decades, due to unsustainable practices, the region has faced a severe loss and degradation of its natural capital that has also resulted in GHG emissions, adding to emissions from other sources.





For over a decade, GEF-funded projects have been assisting IDB member countries reduce their natural capital loss and decrease GHG emissions. Since its accreditation, the IDB has approved over US\$300 million dollars with GEF financing for a wide diversity of projects ranging from natural habitat protection and management, solar power generation, efficiency in transport logistics, promotion of payments for environmental services, energy efficiency in social housing and public lighting, as well as wastewater treatment financing mechanisms.

Some of IDB's recent projects demonstrate an ample diversity of expected environmental benefits in key economic sectors, including urban development, transport, agriculture, forestry, energy, and biotechnology. These projects are being developed in alignment with the IDB's country strategies and intend to combine environmental benefits with quality of life improvements.

A recent example includes the Sustainable Energy Facility (SEF), where GEF financing is blended with an IDB loan, targeting the Eastern Caribbean countries. This project aims to diversify the energy matrix and reduce the cost of power generation throughout the region by promoting the implementation of energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies to reduce the region's dependency on liquid fossil fuels.

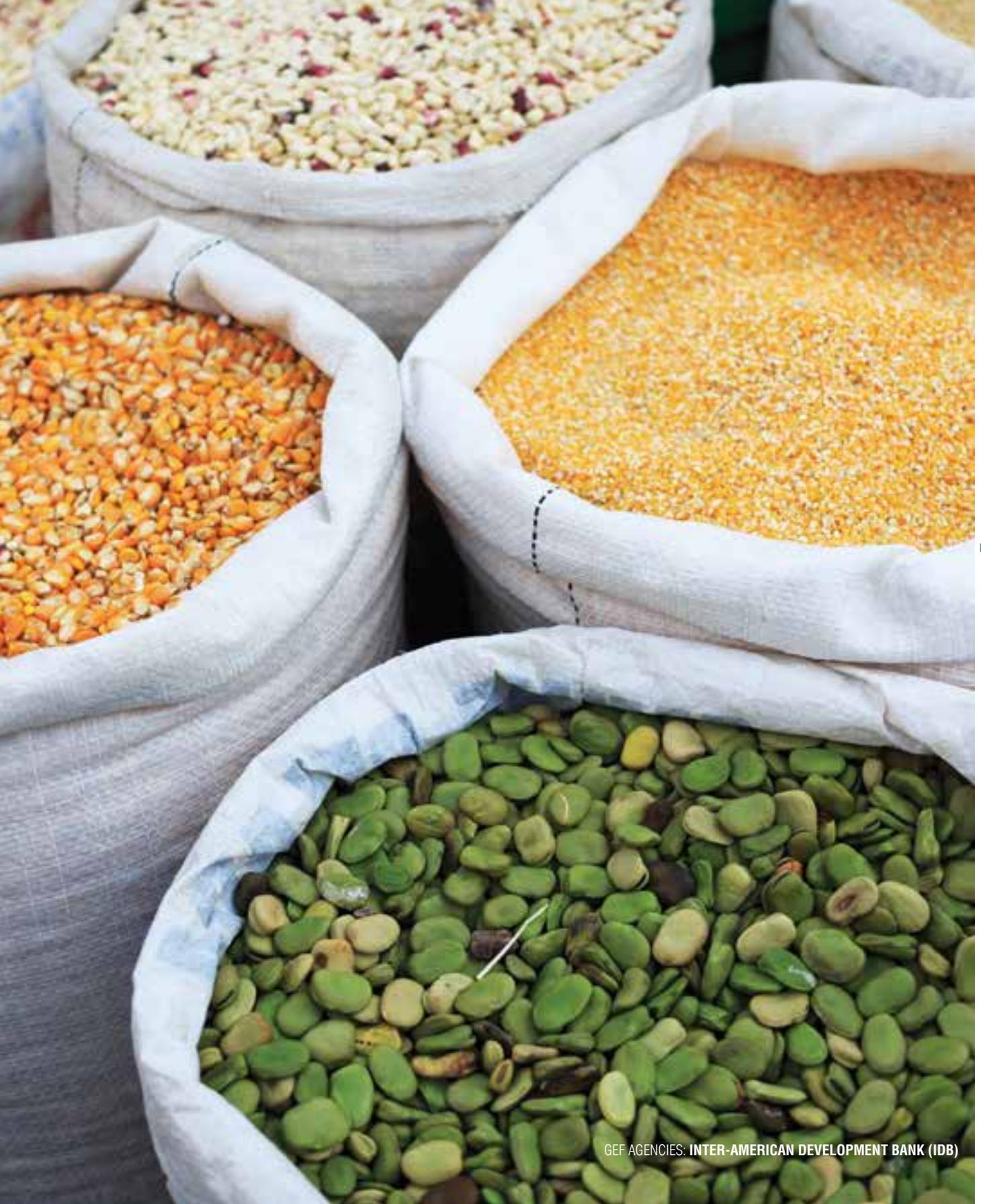
In Brazil, a project for the recovery and preservation of the threatened Atlantic Forest ecosystem in Paraiba do Sul basin aims to promote the generation of carbon sequestration and biodiversity benefits by reconnecting forest fragments,

improving ecosystem resilience, and building conservation capacity. The project, co-financed by an IDB loan of over US\$140 million, is generating capacity building for carbon stocks and biodiversity assessment and increasing effectiveness and financial sustainability of conservation units along the basin's Serra do Mar Corridor, as well as promoting sustainable economic activities in their buffer zones.

The IDB has been one of the GEF's most important partners for implementing non-grant projects. Our GEF-financed private sector initiatives include risk reducing financing to promote climate-smart agriculture practices among private sector firms and a risk mitigation instrument for investing in the restoration of degraded lands, which aims to catalyze US\$120 million in private sector investments resulting in the restoration of 45,000 hectares and the sequestration of US\$4.5 million tons of CO₂ equivalent. The goals of these investments are to have a positive impact on reduced deforestation and land degradation, by reducing pressure on natural resources, while providing reflows of funds to the GEF.

The IDB recognizes the importance of GEF contributions towards the sustainable development of our region and congratulates the GEF family on its 25th anniversary for all the magnificent efforts applied during the past quarter of a century. We expect to continue to strengthen the strategic partnership with the GEF, and implement a common agenda to generate long-term global environmental benefits as well as improve the quality of life in Latin America and the Caribbean.

“For over a decade, GEF-funded projects have been assisting IDB member countries reduce their natural capital loss and decrease GHG emissions.”





IFAD and the GEF: A Partnership For Sustainable Agriculture

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) became an accredited agency of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in 2004. This partnership marked IFAD's pledge to more systematically address the links between rural poverty and global environmental degradation. Since then, IFAD has led the way in transforming rural livelihoods by scaling up innovative solutions that redefine the relationship between agriculture and the environment.



International Fund for Agricultural Development

International Fund for Agricultural Development



The partnership between IFAD and GEF has benefited millions of people. They have not only improved their livelihoods, but have preserved valuable natural resources. As the climate becomes increasingly changeable, it is more important than ever for us to work together to reach millions more," said IFAD President Kanayo Nwanze.

GEF finance has enabled IFAD to achieve some remarkable impacts. For instance, in the dryland country of Burkina Faso where rainfall variability and desertification are severe constraints on human development, IFAD has supported soil and water conservation techniques that have contributed to the re-greening of the Sahel.

Smallholders dig earth embankments in the shape of half-moons that are used to capture run-off water and concentrate organic matter. These half-moons have transformed the landscape, and in the Central Plateau of Burkina Faso, they have led to the rehabilitation of 200,000 to 300,000 hectares of land and the production of an additional 80,000 tons of food per year.

In Mexico, IFAD is helping small coffee producers in Campeche, Chiapas, and Oaxaca states to conserve forests, which not only mitigate climate change by sequestering carbon, but are necessary for the production of high-value Arabica coffee beans. The project also supports indigenous women's groups to market local forest products, such as wood handicrafts and silk garments. The DECOFOS project is another example of IFAD and GEF promoting win-win solutions to protect globally important ecosystems, as well as provide economic gains for traditionally marginalized groups.

"The most important part is training — supporting these women so they are empowered and more economically secure," said Aldonza Garcia, DECOFOS project coordinator.

María Ofelia Cauich, one of the indigenous women's group members from Campeche said, "We have been taught to love the environment. To love the place we live in. And to be proud of what we are."

The Integrated Approach Pilot (IAP) on food security represents the future of IFAD and GEF engagement. The programme is a joint effort to address food security, natural resource management, and climate change in a holistic way. Twelve African countries will participate in the US\$120 million programme that aims to conserve 10 million hectares of land, and sequester 10 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions.

"We recognize that there will be more pressure on African agriculture in the future, but with the IAP we have an effective financing instrument so that smallholders are not disenfranchised and the environment is not degraded. It is a sustainable vision for agriculture that can help alleviate the threat of climate change, and we are seeing a lot of support among our partner countries and agencies," said Margarita Astralaga, Director of IFAD's Environment and Climate Division.

In all of its investment programmes, IFAD strives to expand the asset base of land-users, while ensuring they have access to innovative technologies to increase the resilience of smallholders to global change.

“The partnership between IFAD and GEF has benefited millions of people.”

IUCN and the Global Environment Facility — Celebrating a 25-year Partnership

BY INGER ANDERSEN, DIRECTOR GENERAL
INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE (IUCN)

As part of the institutional architecture created to fulfil the vision of the 1992 Earth Summit, outlined in Agenda 21, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has made an enormous contribution to environmental protection and nature conservation.





One of the GEF's main challenges relates to the notion of "global environmental benefits" which it aims to catalyze. Where exactly is the boundary between national and global benefits for issues such as biodiversity conservation and climate change that transcend national borders? And how do we tackle global environmental challenges that lie beyond national jurisdiction? These are questions that the GEF has been a pioneer in addressing, and in so doing, has energized the global debate on conservation, sustainable development, and the global commons.

IUCN has had a long and productive involvement with the GEF, primarily through our support for governments as executing partners for GEF-funded projects. We have worked with our State Members in more than 60 countries in their efforts to develop National Conservation Strategies and Biodiversity Action Plans.

For 25 years, IUCN has helped leverage GEF resources to conserve biodiversity using its technical depth and conservation knowledge, gathered through, for example, the World Database on Protected Areas and the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. This has resulted in the effective management of protected areas — terrestrial, inland water, and marine. These efforts were celebrated at the IUCN World Parks Congress in 2014 in Australia, where the GEF played a pivotal role in seeking solutions for financing protected areas. The GEF-supported Promise of Sydney shows how protected area solutions are being used to address a range of challenges, from climate change to economic recession.

The GEF was one of the first few funding mechanisms to support transboundary ecosystem management, working, for example, with countries sharing the Mekong River basin or promoting sustainability of the W-Arly-Pendjari (WAP)

protected area system shared by Burkina Faso, Benin, and Niger. The results encouraged OECD donors to also support transboundary conservation.

To date, the SOS — Save Our Species grant-making initiative, established by IUCN, GEF and the World Bank, has supported 109 projects and 78 NGOs in 68 countries working to protect 250 threatened plant and animal species for which threats and conservation measures have been identified by the Red List. Our joint vision to forge a conservation tool that connects donors directly with actors on the conservation frontline is also a legacy well worth celebrating on this anniversary.

Looking ahead, major threats to the global commons that the GEF is ideally placed to tackle include the illegal trade of wild species, the proliferation of invasive species, the emergence of new animal and plant diseases, and the ongoing devastation of natural habitats. Remedial measures must respect traditional culture and local knowledge about the sustainable use of biodiversity.

Given the triple challenge of population increase, food security and climate change, the GEF and partners will need to promote new forms of sustainable agriculture, especially small-scale agriculture that is supported by an incredible variety of ecosystems and a wealth of local knowledge.

Our vision for the Global Environment Facility gives the utmost importance to the conservation and restoration of ecosystems — our forests, river basins, drylands and coasts, as well as the oceans, which have no single jurisdiction. Quite simply, a healthy biosphere is critical to the continued existence of life on Earth.

**“Our vision for the GEF
gives the utmost importance
to the conservation and restoration
of ecosystems — our forests,
river basins, drylands, coasts,
as well as oceans.”**

UNIDO and the GEF: Promoting Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development

Two recent milestones — the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement — have underscored the global community's commitment to climate change mitigation. In order to fully take advantage of this political momentum, 2016 needs to be the year of action.



UNITED NATIONS
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION





The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as its strategic partner, stands ready to support Member States in achieving tangible results for the fulfillment of their commitments under the various multilateral environmental agreements. UNIDO believes that partnerships are key in helping countries achieve inclusive and sustainable industrial development, at the same time observing environmental sustainability. The role of the GEF as a strategic partner within the industry-environment nexus is central. Since UNIDO first began executing GEF projects in the 1990s, and became a GEF implementing agency in 2006, the GEF-UNIDO partnership has grown and strengthened.

UNIDO Director General, LI Yong, noted in this respect: “The Global Environment Facility has, for many years, been a valuable partner of UNIDO. It supported us in implementing essential and impactful projects in the fields of climate change mitigation and adaptation, chemicals and waste, land degradation and international waters. On behalf of UNIDO, I would like to congratulate the GEF on its 25th anniversary.”

As UNIDO continues to broaden its technical expertise and comparative advantage, the partnership with the GEF has expanded to the provision of integrated solutions that not only target industry and environment, but also a variety of inter-connected issues, such as energy, gender, water, land use, etc.

Under GEF-6, the Integrated Approach Pilots (IAPs) have formed an important part of these efforts, with UNIDO implementing projects under the Food Security and Sustainable Cities IAPs in four countries. Senegal is just one example country, where UNIDO is working with the GEF and World Bank to promote renewable energy and integrated waste management in sustainable industrial parks under the Sustainable Cities IAP and with IFAD on Food Security. This initiative will become an integral part of UNIDO’s Programme for Country Partnership in Senegal, which encourages strong country ownership for the delivery of cross-cutting interventions fully aligned with the country’s industrial priorities.

Integrated approaches such as these allow UNIDO’s interventions to reach a diverse group of beneficiaries, ranging from entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises to large-scale industrial facilities, as well as policy-makers, industrial associations, government and civil society.

In the course of 2016, the GEF is celebrating its 25th anniversary, and UNIDO marks 50 years since its creation. Our anniversaries provide an opportunity to reflect on the past and to chart a new path for a sustainable future.

UNIDO is looking forward to further strengthen its partnership with the GEF, expand it into new areas of cooperation, and work together to provide beneficiary countries with innovative solutions that will help balance economic goals with environmental sustainability.

“Our anniversaries provide an opportunity to reflect on the past and to chart a new path for a sustainable future.”

WWF: The GEF's Unique Role

BY CARTER ROBERTS, PRESIDENT AND CEO
WORLD WILDLIFE FUND (WWF-US)

For 25 years, the GEF has played a unique role in international efforts to protect the future of the planet. Beginning with WWF's backing for the GEF's establishment at the first United Nations Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, our organizations have shared a rich history of partnership and mutual support.





World Wildlife Fund



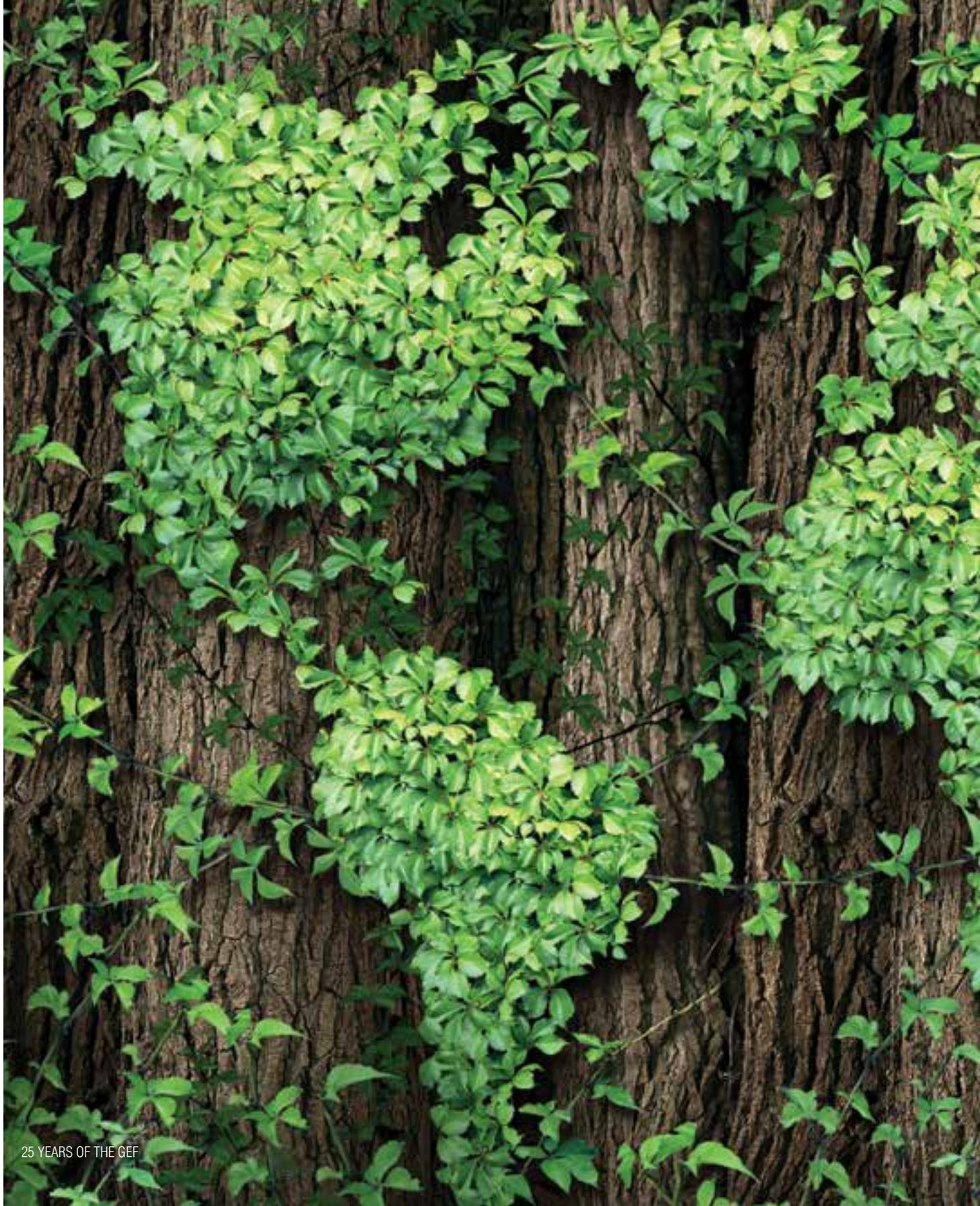


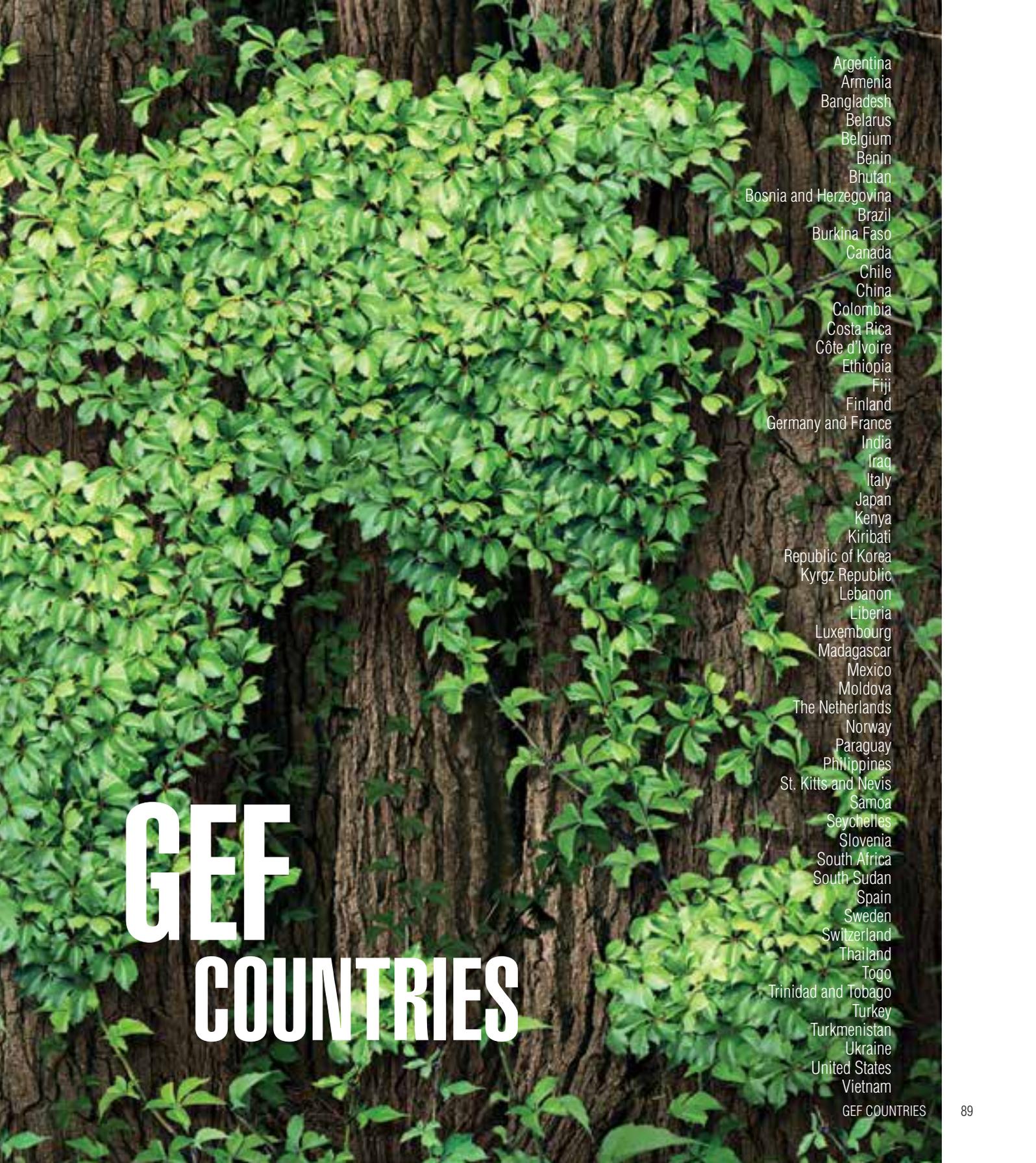
As one of the GEF's first project agencies, WWF has developed a strong portfolio across nearly all GEF focal areas including Climate Change, Biodiversity, International Waters, Land Degradation and Sustainable Forest Management. We are a proud partner of many key GEF initiatives, including the Global Marine Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction programme; the Amazon Region Protected Areas program, which helped Brazil establish and finance a system of Amazonian protected areas three times the size of all US national parks combined; and the Taking Deforestation out of Commodities Supply Chains Integrated Approach Pilot.

As the GEF celebrates a quarter century of conservation, global commitments from governments and the private sector are setting the stage for a new way of working that will rely heavily on leadership from institutions like it to succeed. The GEF is uniquely positioned both to implement action on the ground and to play a key role in shaping the discussion over how to curb the biggest drivers of environmental degradation.

Looking forward, WWF strongly embraces GEF's 2020 Strategy and its plans for collective action, including a focus on areas beyond national jurisdiction, better management of the global commons and habitats, and protecting biodiversity. The international community can best deploy the GEF's strengths to achieve such landmark commitments as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement by leveraging private investments and aligning conservation and business goals.

WWF looks forward to playing a critical role in the hunt for innovative solutions and to many more years of success as part of the GEF community.





GEF COUNTRIES

Argentina
Armenia
Bangladesh
Belarus
Belgium
Benin
Bhutan
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Brazil
Burkina Faso
Canada
Chile
China
Colombia
Costa Rica
Côte d'Ivoire
Ethiopia
Fiji
Finland
Germany and France
India
Iraq
Italy
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Kenya
Kiribati
Republic of Korea
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South Africa
South Sudan
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Thailand
Togo
Trinidad and Tobago
Turkey
Turkmenistan
Ukraine
United States
Vietnam



The GEF and Argentina

BY MINISTER GERMÁN EDMUNDO PROFFEN, GEF POLITICAL FOCAL POINT
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND WORSHIP



Since becoming a member of the GEF, Argentina has developed a portfolio of 61 national and regional projects worth US\$365,673,653 in GEF funding, with co-financing amounting to US\$1.07 billion. The GEF has also made a significant contribution to Argentina's institutional framework, helping the country honor a number of commitments to environmental agreements to which Argentina is party, including the Third Communication on Climate Change and the National Biodiversity Strategy.

Owing to its multilateral nature and its ability to support activities that contribute to the fulfillment of commitments to major environmental agreements, the GEF continues to offer comparative advantages relative to other financing mechanisms.

We wish to underscore the important task carried out by the GEF in its mission to reverse some of the most worrying trends in the global environment. Against this backdrop, it is important to highlight the existing synergies between the environment and development, given that from this perspective, the GEF is providing an appropriate guide for long-term protection of the environment.

Mechanisms such as the GEF help bridge the implementation gap that exists in developing countries, owing to a dearth of financial resources and state-of-the-art technologies needed for a successful sustainable development strategy.

It is critical that the country allocation system (STAR) remain in place and that more resources be allocated in the future. The STAR is viewed as the appropriate system that allows each country to address the causes of environmental degradation in a manner that is consistent with its sustainable development priorities. These allocations must be determined on the basis of transparent indicators that demonstrate the performance and potential of countries with respect to achievement of environmental benefits that ensure the planet's sustainable future.

Lastly, Argentina commends the GEF for its ongoing work on social inclusion, particularly with respect to gender and Indigenous Peoples, given that these are issues that contribute to the success of the projects and to sustainable development. In this connection, mention must be made of the importance of the Small Grants Programme, which has helped improve the quality of life of many Argentine citizens.



Armenia: Cooperating for Solutions

BY MR RUBIK SHAHAZIZYAN, HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROJECT DEPARTMENT
MINISTRY OF NATURE PROTECTION



Cooperation between the Republic of Armenia and the GEF began as early as 1993 and continues in effective operation in searching and finding solutions to the main environmental challenges. Over this time, implemented projects have significantly improved the system of specially protected natural areas, with new ones being established. And activities targeted on energy saving, climate change, agriculture, capacity building, and the management of hazardous substances have all made progress.

This cooperation has resulted in a significant increase in the level of civil society's involvement in identifying environmental problems and ways of solving them, including measures for development and implementation. Within the GEF's Small Grants Programme, in particular, Armenia's communities in various places have taken part in demonstrating practices for raising energy efficiency, using renewable energy sources, conserving biodiversity and harmoniously solving socio-economic problems and in raising awareness of the negative impacts of persistent organic pollutants and toxic chemicals.

The importance of the cooperation was made clear by the decree of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia establishing a GEF Steering Committee to ensure more transparent procedures for identifying national priorities and

selecting GEF-funded projects. The committee is composed of representatives from interested ministries, academic institutions, NGOs and national coordinators of environmental conventions, and its activities are chaired by the Minister of Nature Protection who also serves as the GEF national and operational coordinator in the country.

Cooperation with Armenia is also highlighted by the GEF, which has held meetings with the ministers of nature protection both in Armenia and in other countries.

In total, the GEF has supported 32 national and 11 regional projects in Armenia, worth US\$166.65 million through its implementing partners (WB, UNDP, UNEP, FAO, UNIDO, ADB, IFAD, etc.). Projects have been aimed at mitigating the impacts of climate change impacts, conserving flora and fauna and improving their conditions for reproduction, preventing land degradation and integrating sustainable land use, managing persistent organic pollutants, comprehensively managing river basins, safeguarding international waters, and reducing ozone depletion.

We are confident that the cooperation between Armenia and the GEF will develop vigorously and contribute to the effective solution of the environmental challenges facing the country.

Bangladesh: The GEF's Contribution to Environmental Conservation



BY KAMAL UDDIN AHMED, SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS, AND GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT

The GEF has played a significant role with its gracious support for conserving the environment and promoting the well-being of the people of Bangladesh. Anyone looking at its impact can see the results in the areas of biodiversity conservation in Ecologically Critical Areas (ECAs), adaptation through afforestation, and implementation of the national biosafety framework. Bangladesh has taken part in GEF enabling activities, like developing or updating: a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan; a National Adaptation Plan of Action; a National Capacity Self Assessment; a National Biosafety Framework; a National Action Plan to combat desertification; a National Implementation Plan on phasing-out of POPs; and National Communications and National Reports to various UN conventions and protocols. The support received from the GEF helped the country comply with the obligations of the conventions on environment. The projects taken through GEF funding upheld Bangladesh's commitment to the world community to conserve the environment and ensure global benefits.

The GEF extended cooperation to the Coastal and Wetlands Biodiversity Management project implemented by the Department of Environment in the four ECAs that yielded encouraging results in terms of demonstrating a viable community-based management approach for the country's precious biological resources. The project contributed through forming community-based organizations and building their capacity, establishing fish and bird sanctuaries, conserving

marine turtles ex-situ and in-situ, establishing a turtle hatchery, preserving mangrove plantations, promoting eco-friendly agriculture, training poor people to develop skills to undertake alternate income generation activities, and enhancing local awareness and participatory biodiversity monitoring.

Support from the GEF's Least Developed Countries Fund received for the community-based Coastal Afforestation Project won the Award for 2013 in the Global Contest on "Solution Search: Adapting to a Changing Climate" sponsored by Rare and The Nature Conservancy. The Ministry of Environment and Forests of Bangladesh won the Earth Care Award 2012 for the same project by demonstrating a success story of community-based adaptation, which benefited 18,269 households by involving them in afforestation, agriculture, livestock, and fishery-based livelihoods. One of the project's significant adaptation response measures is the development of the FFF (Forest-Fish-Fruit) model that comprises short and long, term income generation, as well as livelihood diversification.

Since the GEF's inception in 1991, Bangladesh has undertaken 41 projects with grants totaling US\$143.59 million and utilized a project preparation grant of US\$3.76 million. It is trying its best to contribute to the well-being of the global environment. The country is expecting much more involvement from the GEF through increased allocation and is looking forward to a very dynamic and revitalized GEF in its future endeavors.



Belarus' Degraded Peatlands: A Chance to Become Mires Again



Before a massive draining of peatlands was launched in the second half of the 20th century, Belarus owned 2.4 million hectares of natural mires. Between 1960 and 1980, 1 million hectares of mires were drained for agriculture, 300,000 hectares were drained for forestry and another 286,000 hectares for peat mining. After peat was extracted, damaged peatlands were converted to agricultural land for further use. However, in actual practice the efforts to cultivate degraded peatlands turned out ineffective, and such lands were generally abandoned. In the meanwhile, drainage channels continued to work properly, effectively draining mires and turning them into real powder kegs. The major part of mires drained for forestry shared the same fate. Lack of moisture caused partial change in vegetation: sphagnum communities succumbed to heather and ledum. The accumulation of decayed plants and drying of peat top layers made degraded peatlands vulnerable to fires.

The situation changed when in 1999 and 2002 large-scale peat fires swept across drained peatlands, causing drastic consequences for the environment and the national economy. Then ecologists approached the government with a proposition to analyze the causes of peatland fires. The results of a pilot project implemented by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) revealed that the main cause of peatland fires is a disturbance of hydrological regime.

Possible solutions to the problem were suggested as part of the UNDP-GEF project "Renaturalization and sustainable management of peatlands in Belarus to combat land

degradation, ensure conservation of globally valuable biodiversity, and mitigate climate change" (Peatlands-1). The project aimed at developing a regulatory framework, which would specify the procedure and rules for renaturalisation of degraded peatlands. The project successfully researched and tested various practical approaches towards restoring hydrological regime at 12 disturbed peatlands on the overall area of 28,000 hectares. The project's experience was applied for developing Belarus' first practical recommendations on the environmental rehabilitation of degraded peatlands.

So far, about 50,000 hectares of drained peatlands have been restored in Belarus due to various international and national projects and initiatives implemented by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus and supported by UNDP in Belarus, GEF, European Union, GEF Small Grants Programme, Michael Succow Foundation, Coca-Cola Foundation, and others. Domestic peat mining enterprises are involved in this work too: it is now a common practice to re-wet abandoned peat deposits after completion of peat extraction business.

The Government of Belarus recognized that restoration of hydrological regime at degraded peatlands is the most effective means of preventing peat fires. According to the draft Strategy for the Sustainable Use of Peatlands, it is planned by 2030 to restore 15% of the area of all Belarus' damaged peatlands, which is about 500,000 hectares.

The developing strategy of restoring and sustainable use of the country's peatlands was taken further as part of the UNDP-GEF project "Landscape approach to management

.....

of peatlands aiming at multiple ecological benefits” (Peatlands-2). The national implementing agency is the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection. As regards to re-wetting, the project focused on developing and testing the method of restoring peatlands, damaged by forest amelioration. Works are underway to restore a hydrological regime at three large raised bogs with the overall area of 3,570 hectares.

Belarus’s experience in the environmental rehabilitation of degraded peatlands is widely used while conducting similar activities in Russia.

Due to the restoration of hydrological regime, after re-wetting, the peatlands, which burned almost every year before, did not catch fire even during the dry 2010 and 2015 years. Abandoned peat deposits — that caused most peat fires — after rising water levels became a popular place among the locals for fishing, picking berries, and hunting. The potential of these territories for organizing ecological tourism considerably improved.

Positive dynamics can be also seen in terms of climate change mitigating. Due to higher groundwater levels, carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere reduced by almost 500,000 tons. During a short time after re-wetting, dry areas with scarce flora and fauna turned into oases of biodiversity with abundance of species inhabiting highly productive reservoirs and mires in their first formation stages. Re-wetted peatlands also provide resting grounds for aquatic birds where they stop for food and rest during spring and autumn migrations.





**“Time and time again,
independent evaluations have shown
that the GEF fulfills its mandate
by being responsive to the Conventions.”**

The GEF and Belgium

BY ALEXANDER DE CROO, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION, DIGITAL AGENDA, TELECOM AND POST



On this happy occasion of the Global Environment Facility's 25th anniversary, Belgium is more than pleased to extend its heartfelt congratulations to the organization and express its high appreciation for the significant contribution that the GEF has made and continues to make to safeguarding and restoring our planet Earth.

With its unique focal area structure, the GEF is unparalleled in the way it understands how global environmental challenges need to be tackled, i.e. in an integrated manner that delivers multiple global environmental benefits. No wonder the GEF is at the same time the biggest and most efficient funding source for actions that address climate change, biodiversity, desertification, chemicals and waste, as well as international waters. And it does so following the guidance that the international community develops during the Conferences of the Parties of several Conventions and with a clear country-driven approach. Logically, time and again, independent evaluations have shown that the GEF fulfils its mandate by being responsive to the Conventions and producing tangible results on the ground, in accordance with recipient countries' priorities, that have real impact on improving the global environment. In doing so, the GEF contributes significantly to the sustainable development of recipient countries. Therefore, today is also the moment to express sincere gratitude for the years of hard work by the GEF Secretariat under the successive Chief Executive Officers and Chairpersons.

Looking ahead and being fully aware that huge environmental challenges remain, Belgium is convinced

that the GEF will continue to be a key player in delivering support to implement the objectives of multilateral environmental agreements, as well as to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

There are many excellent lessons to be learned from the past 25 years on which the GEF can build to continue protecting the global commons while, at the same time, promoting the green development of its clients: fostering a strong partnership with all of its stakeholders, in particular its agencies, civil society and the private sector; adapting its strategies and operations in a rapidly changing world and in harmony with the developments under the different conventions; and continuing to enhance its modalities for providing support.

All of this, in combination with cutting-edge scientific and technological advice and diligently overseen by a well-working Independent Evaluation Office, should guarantee that the GEF remains the leader and pioneer in tackling global environmental problems for many years to come.

Belgium is proud to have been actively involved with the GEF for a long time, both in the Council and in the Conferences of the Parties of various conventions, and seizes the opportunity to state its resolve to continue to work with all GEF stakeholders in order to perpetuate the GEF's important role in working towards a better world.

Happy anniversary!

Contributions of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to the Sustainable Development of Benin and Outlook for the Future



RESULTS OF THE COOPERATION BETWEEN BENIN AND THE GEF

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) has made significant contributions to Benin's development since 1992, particularly through the promotion of a sound and sustainable environment, improvement of the quality of life of the population, strengthening of resilience to climate change and of productive capacities in the agriculture, energy, and water sectors, slowing of the loss of biological diversity, protection of natural and forest resources, and the fight against land degradation and coastal erosion.

Cooperation with the GEF has enabled Benin to respect its international commitments under the Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

The fund has financed **26 national projects** in the amount of **US\$65,224,519** with US\$472,946,072 in co-financing. Two other projects are in the pipeline for financing in the amount of **US\$7,861,000**. In total, **32 regional and global projects** have received financing in the amount of **US\$144,433,248** with co-financing totaling US\$997,658,858.

OUTLOOK

In terms of the relevant results of the cooperation, Benin has undertaken to consolidate and strengthen its cooperation with the GEF to promote integrated approaches to a healthy and sustainable living environment, reconstitute ecosystems, and implement the contribution decided at the national level and its other commitments under the Paris Agreement in the context of the fight against climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To this end, **Benin will cooperate further to achieve irreversible development outcomes as part of the translation of international policies into the domestic context in the areas of:**

- **Climate change**, by means of increased efforts to reduce the impact of climate change risks, mitigation, capacity building, and increased resilience.
- **Biological diversity**, through the promotion of relevant endogenous values and know-how and the development of genetic resources.
- **Land degradation, desertification, and deforestation**, through the rehabilitation of areas affected by desertification and the protection of their agricultural potential, rational management of resources to guarantee the sustainability of the forest stock, conservation of the forest stock, protection of animal resources, and management of resources in an integrated rural development framework to achieve the objective of zero degradation.



“ Bhutan wishes to continue its efforts in environment conservation and towards carbon neutrality.”

Bhutan: The GEF is Making A Difference

BY MR WANGCHUK NAMGAY
GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT OFFICE



The Royal Government of Bhutan wishes the GEF well on its 25th anniversary and congratulates it on its unwavering dedication in addressing the global challenges of environment and climate change.

Since Bhutan became a member in 1995, the GEF has been a close and important partner in addressing these issues. During these 20 years of cooperation through its projects, it has had significant impacts on Bhutan's nature conservation and pursuit of low carbon and climate-resilient development.

Such exemplary projects include GEF support of US\$10 million to establish the Bhutan Trust Fund for Environment Conservation which now leads in nature conservation and in effective management of the country's protected area system and biological corridors, which together account for around 50% of the nation's total area.

The GEF's Least Developed Countries Fund (GEF/LDCF) assistance in reducing risk and vulnerabilities from Glacier Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF) is another exemplary intervention. Out of a total of 2,674 glacier lakes in Bhutan, 25 are potentially dangerous for GLOF. In the past, Bhutan has experienced a series of such floods of varying intensity, causing devastating destruction to lives and properties downstream. The US\$3.5 million of GEF/LDCF assistance reduced this risk by lowering the water level of the most potentially dangerous Glacier Lakes manually and mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development. The

project saved lives, properties, and millions, worth of vital infrastructure, (including hydropower projects) downstream.

The GEF Small Grants Programme (GEF/SGP) has also played its part in Bhutan in producing local and global environmental benefits. Project assistance of just US\$47,000, though small, has been appreciated for making a difference in the lives of young Bhutanese through waste management. Drugs and alcohol abuse are a typical challenge for youth in Bhutan, as elsewhere; the government is doing its part to address the problem through rehabilitation, but has realised that it is not easy to integrate the rehabilitated young people into mainstream society and engage them in gainful employment — and, as a result, they commonly revert to drugs and alcohol. Meanwhile waste management is increasingly becoming a cause for concern — particularly in Thimphu, the capital city: more than 16 tons of paper waste are produced every day. Innovatively, the GEF/SGP has engaged rehabilitated young people to manage this paper waste through recycling it and converting it into egg trays. They produce 4,000 egg trays daily, earning around US\$200. Part of the proceeds are retained for the employees, and part ploughed back into a Youth Development Fund to carry out education and advocacy programmes on substance abuse.

Bhutan wishes to continue its efforts in environment conservation and towards carbon neutrality and, in doing so, we look forward to working closely with the GEF in years to come.

Bosnia and Herzegovina



The GEF and UNDP in Bosnia and Herzegovina — Impacts and Challenges Ahead



The GEF in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not just a donor, but an important partner, a facilitator of environmental dialogue and a true friend of the environment. The impacts of its activities have been recognized across the country, by people ranging from environmental stakeholders to local communities and beneficiaries.

Implementing GEF projects in an array of thematic areas has brought diversified benefits to Bosnia and Herzegovina's environmental status, including preserving biodiversity, removing barriers to the use of renewable energy sources, fulfilling climate change obligations, ensuring adequate setting and capacities for implementing important conventions, building up climate-resilient flood management, and looking ahead towards scaling up the catalyzing of environmental finance.

GEF initiatives and support have brought concrete results for Bosnia and Herzegovina as it moves towards EU accession. During an important period when other funds for environmental protection were not available for the country, the GEF has been a catalyst in overcoming important gaps in environmental issues within the country. Successes measured through GEF projects include the following, to name just a few:

- Pioneering mainstreaming of biodiversity issues into the country's spatial planning: protecting biodiversity was included for the first time in spatial planning at Cantonal level — leading to its inclusion in higher levels of planning and to a potential increase of protected areas.
- Removing barriers to demand for using wood biomass: a switch of fuel in 26 public facilities (schools, hospitals, kindergartens) was directly financed or indirectly

influenced, thus ensuring annual reductions in emissions equivalent to 2.173 tonnes of CO₂.

- Transferring technologies for climate-resilient flood management so as to increase the resilience of highly-exposed rural poor people, and ensuring climate change reporting and the systematization of data: a centralized network of hydro-meteorological stations has been established in the Vrbas River basin, forming an essential basis for flood forecasting and early warning systems for the river.
- Fulfilling obligatory reporting on climate change under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (through national communications and biennial updating reports), and achieving credible data collection and reporting up to the year 2015.
- Undertaking a Mercury Initial Assessment to enable Bosnia and Herzegovina to determine requirements and needs for implementing future provisions of the Minamata Convention.

Using innovative tools and evidence-based policy solutions, improving livelihoods, empowering local and vulnerable populations, and providing opportunities for economic growth through environmental impacts have been some of the major challenges conveyed by GEF projects, implemented by UNDP, in the country.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is looking ahead at new challenges and opportunities brought on by GEF initiatives and support, furthering the strong partnership and producing beneficial impacts for all.

The GEF and Brazil

BY JOSÉ SARNEY FILHO
MINISTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT



For a long time, researchers have been warning about the alarming nature of environmental degradation at the global scale. Since Stockholm in 1972, many initiatives have been put forward to address global conservation. One of the highlights in this widespread effort was the establishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) that has become today the largest source of public funds for environmental projects and programmes around the world, as well as one of the most effective in providing financing for the global environment.

In Brazil, in particular, the GEF has been supporting the development and implementation of environmental policies for more than two decades through projects that provide the knowledge and capacity building required to tackle institutional gaps and environmental challenges in a rapidly developing economy. The GEF has also been instrumental in the implementation of the Rio Conventions, becoming a key financial mechanism to support Brazil's many commitments with these international agreements.

Among the many Brazilian achievements supported by the GEF in environmental management and conservation was the establishment of the National System of Protected Areas, responsible for the creation of more than 59 million hectares of new protected areas in the Amazon region alone. This successful experience has now crossed borders and is catalyzing biodiversity conservation coupled with avoided GHG emissions from deforestation through South-South cooperation with neighboring Amazonian countries. This is a clear example of how policies can be shaped to harness synergies between many interrelated environmental and sustainable development issues, jointly achieving goals in

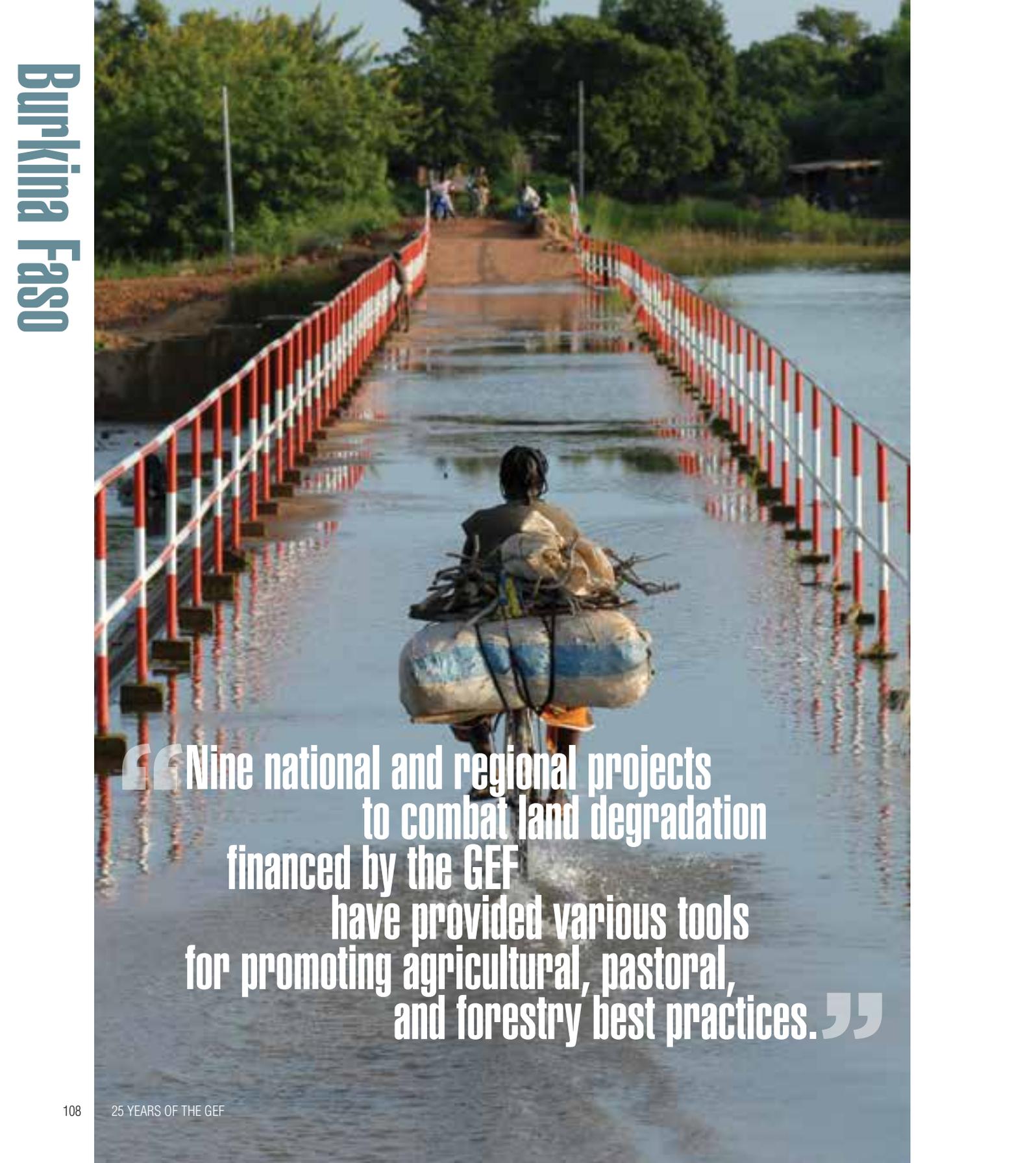
biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation, and sustainable land management.

Through this continuous partnership, the GEF is supporting the implementation of the Brazilian Forest Code, adopted in 2012. The new Code aims, among other objectives, at promoting sustainable use, restoring natural vegetation, and enhancing the livelihood and well-being of those who closely depend on healthy and productive agroforestry systems. These objectives would not be fully achieved without the support provided by the GEF.

We have no doubt that the GEF will continue to be a strategic instrument for taking Brazilian environmental policies to new grounds. The Brazilian commitment to the Paris Agreement detailed in its NDC include restoring 12 million hectares of degraded habitat and reducing its economy-wide emissions by 37% below the 2005 levels by 2030. These are ambitious targets and we are counting on the GEF as our first-hour partner to help support the sustainable development and implementation of forest restoration policies across all Brazilian biomes. Through these measures, we hope to move swiftly to realize the Sustainable Development Goals, the CBD Aichi Targets and the commitments set in the Paris Agreement, recently ratified by the Brazilian government.

The Brazilian government would like to extend its gratitude to the GEF and to the role it has played in our country and around the world during its first 25 years of existence, giving us hope to bequeath a better world for future generations. Brazil will spare no efforts to continue making this partnership as fruitful as it has been for a quarter century.





“Nine national and regional projects to combat land degradation financed by the GEF have provided various tools for promoting agricultural, pastoral, and forestry best practices.”

National GEF Achievements in Burkina Faso



Since its admission into the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Burkina Faso has received allocations amounting to about US\$390 million for the implementation of environmental projects. These activities have covered the main focal areas of the GEF.

In the area of climate change, the 17 national and regional projects implemented have covered energy efficiency, modal transportation, enabling activities, strengthening of the resilience of ecosystems and populations, improvement of climate information, and early warning systems.

The GEF has financed 23 national and regional projects in the area of biodiversity to improve the sustainable management of 7 protected areas (PAs) and 3 areas of importance for the conservation of birds and to increase the involvement of the private sector and local communities in the management of the PAs. This support has covered the prevention of biotechnological risks, the identification and promotion of best practices in conservation and the sustainable use of agro-systems, pastoral ecosystems, and the interface between mixed production systems and the PAs.

In the area of land degradation, nine national and regional projects to combat land degradation financed by the GEF have provided various tools for the sustainable development

of land and contributed to the widespread promotion of agricultural, pastoral, and forestry best practices, and good governance for food security.

Four projects were financed in the area of management of persistent organic pollutants (POPs), i.e., the inventory of pollutants, strengthening of the sustainable management of pesticides, reduction of mercury releases, and promotion of rational management of chemical products.

In the area of international waters, the Niger and Volta basins have received financing from the GEF for enhancements, promotion of good governance, and best practices for the integrated management of water and wetlands.

Finally, numerous projects in Burkina Faso involving grassroots community organizations have benefited from the GEF Small Grants Programme.

These projects have had widespread diversified benefits for the entire territory and many sectors, but the main beneficiaries are the people.

Burkina Faso continues to have high expectations for the GEF, looking in particular for increased resources and streamlining of the project approval cycle.



The GEF and Canada: Partnering for the Environment

BY CAROLINE LECLERC
GEF COUNCIL MEMBER



This year marks the 25th anniversary of the GEF, an important milestone in sustainable development, which follows on the significant achievements of 2015, specifically the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Agreement. The GEF's anniversary is an opportunity to reflect on the GEF's critical role in tackling the planet's most pressing environmental issues, and progress to date advancing sustainable development. Our collective success is due, in part, to the GEF's success.

On its anniversary, it is important we celebrate the GEF's solid track record in achieving results, bringing together a diverse range of partners, and mobilizing resources. To date, the GEF has created or effectively managed over 3,300 protected areas covering 860 million hectares; protected 46 river and lake basins, 8 ground water basins, and 23 of the planet's 64 large marine ecosystems; reduced 2.7 billion tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions; and brought 103 million hectares under sustainable land management, benefiting more than 50 million smallholders. The GEF is indeed an invaluable asset to addressing key global environmental issues.

Still, much more needs to be done to protect the environment, and we must take action now. Together we must increase our efforts to: improve the health and economic well-being of global citizens, including women and youth; reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase climate resilience;

and enhance biodiversity and ecosystem preservation. These are priorities for Canada, and they are critical to eradicating poverty and ensuring prosperity for all, especially women and girls.

Canada is committed to the global effort to combat climate change, and is providing an historic C\$2.65 billion in climate finance to support investments in developing countries. This includes a doubling of our support to the GEF's *Least Developed Countries Fund*, to help address the urgent and immediate adaptation needs of the poorest and most vulnerable.

Canada and the GEF share a close, long-term partnership. Canada is among its largest donors, with a commitment of US\$875 million to date. A number of Canadians have also served the GEF in various capacities, including Mr. Leonard Good, the former President of the Canadian International Development Agency, who served as CEO and Chairperson from 2003 to 2006.

Going forward, Canada will continue to do its part, in partnership with the GEF and others, to tackle global environmental challenges, including through the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Chile and the GEF: Sustainable Development With Equity and Environmental Justice



BY MR. PABLO BADENIER
MINISTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Over the past 25 years, the GEF has made a most considerable contribution to protecting the global environment through significant activities which have benefited various ecosystems. Chile has been an active participant in GEF activities and has had the privilege of implementing several GEF projects which have strengthened our country's environment and sustainable development.

From 1992 to the present, the GEF has funded around 60 projects related to all focal areas, including global, regional, and national projects and enabling activities. We have undertaken full and medium-sized projects and successfully completed our participation in the very Small Grants Programme, which has had a considerable impact in urban and rural communities with the participation of municipalities, NGOs, and civil society organizations in general. Lately, Chile has endeavored to mainstream projects to the private sector and academia.

Chile has developed a working relationship with several implementing agencies, and particularly with UNDP and FAO, which have representation in the country. We have also developed projects with the World Bank, UNEP, UNIDO, the Inter-American Development Bank, and CAF, the Development Bank of Latin America.

The country's first Multiple Use Marine Protected Areas were created as a result of a GEF project. It was also possible, thanks to a GEF project, to provide electricity for rural areas from renewable energy. Other GEF projects have addressed

energy efficiency, solar energy production, waste disposal, exotic invasive species, persistent organic pollutants, a system for monitoring forests, important inherited agricultural systems, transport and clean air, ecosystem services, and conserving endangered species and wetlands, as well as marine conservation.

Chile is in the process of instituting a new public service for public, private, marine and terrestrial protected areas and biodiversity, and this, too, has been significantly nurtured by a GEF project.

Chile's Environment Ministry wishes to express our country's gratitude and recognition to the GEF for its work as the world's most important source of funding for environmental projects. We also thank donors for their generosity, commitment and care, and acknowledge and thank the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel for its important work. And our country wishes to especially recognize and thank the GEF Secretariat's teams for their support to recipient countries, for their contribution to capacity building, their technical assistance and their timely information and kindness.

We look forward to continuing our fruitful collaboration and joint work towards sustainable development, meeting global environmental goals that face growing demands and needs. Chile aims at achieving inclusive and sustainable development — ensuring equity and environmental justice — as stated by our President, Ms Michelle Bachelet.



China and the GEF: Hand in Hand for Sustainable Development

BY SHI YAOBIN
VICE MINISTER OF FINANCE



In 1991, the world came together, with hopes and expectations, to establish the Global Environment Facility to address global environment issues. In 2016, the GEF's 25th anniversary gives the world an opportune moment to both celebrate past achievements as well as identify opportunities and challenges ahead.

Over the past 25 years, the GEF has stood the test of time by leading progress that has been made in the sustainable development arena. Since its beginnings in 1991, the GEF has protected a large share of the earth's total surface and international water areas, and helped countries avoid CO₂ emissions. The GEF finance has supported climate-friendly technologies and disposed or cleaned up waste and pollutants. Today, the GEF is the world's largest public funder of environmental projects, and the financial mechanism for the Rio Conventions and other multilateral agreements. It is widely acknowledged that, in many ways, the GEF is needed more than ever for a more sustainable world.

Over the past 25 years, as a founding member, contributing country, and recipient country of the Facility, China has carried out productive cooperation with the GEF. The GEF has to date supported 148 projects and provided over US\$1.14 billion as new and additional grants in China. These projects have covered a wide range of activities and scopes including new concepts and ideas, capacity building, new institutional and legal system development, business model innovation, advanced technology transfer, new financial mechanism initiative, and technology demonstration and scaling up. In addition to funding, the GEF has been introducing

advanced concepts to China, increasing the country's capacity to implement international environmental conventions and raising public awareness on sustainable development. China's success in implementing GEF projects or programmes has contributed to the GEF's mission of maximum global environmental benefits. And we take pride in the fact that the GEF-financed activities in China have been demonstrated as jewels in the GEF portfolio. The success in China also provides useful experience for other developing countries. For example, the *PRC-GEF Partnership on Land Degradation in Dry Land Ecosystem Program* has successfully introduced and developed the concepts and methodologies of integrated ecosystem management, which stands as a good showcase for areas in central Asia and Africa to combat land degradation.

Standing at a new starting point, the international community is working on a forward-looking and ambitious agenda on sustainable development. The GEF can play a substantial part in the implementation of this agenda by contributing to the protection of the health of the planet, from the climate to oceans, water, land, biodiversity and forests. "All things live in harmony and grow with nourishment". Chinese culture values harmony between human and nature, and respects nature. Ecological endeavors will feature prominently in China's 13th Five-Year Plan. China will work hard to implement the vision of innovative, coordinated, green, open and inclusive development, which is consistent with the ardent aspiration for sustainable development of people all over the world. We are ready to continue to work with the GEF in a joint effort to pursue global sustainable development at a higher level.



25 Years of the GEF in Colombia: A Fertile Ground for Building Peace



Why is it that in a country like Colombia, the first project developed and implemented with GEF funding at the beginning of the 1990s had to do with the Conservation of Biodiversity in the Biogeographical Region of Choco, yet today, 25 years later we are preparing a project entitled Biodiversity and Sustainable Development in the Pacific Region in the context of Peacebuilding?

The answer to this question will include information on a number of changes and undeniable complexities. Since the mid-1990s, Colombia has received support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for some fifty projects, that have helped to give expression to the principles defined in the decade of the 1970s and subsequently set forth in the new Political Constitution of 1991, which devotes 25 percent of its provisions to environment-related issues. Building on this foundation, 1993 saw the creation of the legal framework for the management and conservation of renewable natural resources and the environment, while the Sistema Nacional Ambiental-SINA (National Environment System) was formed as a platform for State, mixed and private institutions, academia, civil society and community bodies to monitor the protection of the environment and ensure sustainable development.

In this regard, SINA stakeholders have been involved at the national level in the various projects of the Focal Areas on Biodiversity, Climate Change, Degraded Lands, Chemicals and Waste, Persistent Organic Pollutants, among others. They have strengthened their capacity for developing policies and legislation in line with the global targets enshrined in international instruments, proposing innovative solutions for environmental problems and establishing links between

very diverse cultural and ethnic communities. In this way, they have contributed to the well-being and the preservation of the livelihoods of the custodians of the country's natural and cultural wealth. It has also enabled other sectors to participate in the development and implementation of innovative forms of sustainable development and has involved the private sector in this important undertaking.

With the first projects, we learned how to integrate themes such as land-use management, strategic eco-systems (páramos (barren plains), wetlands, forests, marine areas), sustainable conservation systems, protected areas, and information systems for adequate planning, among others.

In this regard, the last three GEF replenishments have made it possible for us to compile and harness successful experiences to be used in projects that contribute to the goal of recent Governments of Colombia — that of building peace. This experience, together with the outcome of the talks in Havana with the FARC (the guerrilla operating in Colombia for the past 52 years), have led us to revisit the lessons learned from these projects. Specifically, some fundamental aspects of rural development pertain to the democratization of access to land and land use, which in turn include elements that have been traditionally addressed in the various projects. These include: the generation of information on the state, use and distribution of land in Colombia and its importance as a tool for determining environmental land-use management and consequently, the delimitation of the agricultural frontier. The importance of land in the protection of areas of environmental interest that host the cultural and biological diversity of the country is another aspect that has been addressed. These

projects have made another invaluable contribution by facilitating the involvement of diverse communities, indigenous peoples, small farmers, Afro-Colombians and other ethnic groups as stakeholders that have been active in defining, developing, implementing and monitoring the activities to be carried out in their respective regions.

This is critical, particularly in a country that over the last 52 years has had to contend with the issue of territories that are environmentally strategic because of the diversity that they contain and the eco-systemic services they provide, yet have been spaces to which the State and its institutions have had only limited access. For this reason, the opportunity to work with community organizations and civil society, as well as with implementing agencies, has made it possible to gain access to these territories and to render concrete support to environmental conservation and sustainable development.

While Colombia is among the countries that have recently rolled out the Small Grants Program, implementation by the most vulnerable grassroots communities is already up and running (their vulnerability stems from the political, social and environmental conflict). As the process of peace building gets underway, these communities will require unstinting support at the national and international levels to consolidate their

rights and come to terms with their surroundings. In so doing, the way in which they relate to biodiversity can become a factor that reaffirms their identity and boosts their chances of realizing licit and sustainable development and growth.

In this context, in order to re-conceptualize the different regions of the country, such as the Pacific region, it will be necessary to bear in mind not only the immense biological and cultural diversity but also the current situation of public and private communities and institutions in the reconfigured framework, particularly those located in rural areas that face the challenges inherent to the search for peace.

Once agreement is reached on a formula for negotiations, it is estimated that this transition could last for more than a decade, and could take a further 25 years to become consolidated. For this reason, an approach centered on environmental protection and peace will be Colombia's priority for the seventh GEF replenishment. This will facilitate the development and strengthening of successful experiences and allow Colombia to share its successes and failures with other countries, and, in so doing, contribute to the consolidation of the Sustainable Development Goals, global commitments and world peace.



Costa Rica: Everything Connects

BY DR EDGAR GUTIÉRREZ ESPELETA
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY



The 25th anniversary of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), is a timely opportunity to celebrate the achievements it has accumulated over these years, and to recognize the impact that its funding contributions have had on our country's sustainable development. It is also an excellent moment for a critical overview that aims to identify the challenges and opportunities that need to be addressed and incorporated in future projects born of the relationship between the GEF and Costa Rica: without self-criticism, the learning and improvement processes, which guarantee the success and effectiveness of environmental programmes, will be lost.

The relationship between the GEF and the Republic of Costa Rica is extensive. Our country has greatly benefited from the GEF's investment in reducing poverty, strengthening governance processes, and fighting for equality among our people. With nearly 75 projects implemented in Costa Rica, and an investment of almost US\$379 million, our country has been able to take proactive action against climate change and land degradation, and execute programs related to the conservation and regeneration of biodiversity.

Over time, we have all developed more experience in these processes, and perceived more clearly the need to integrate more variables in analysis and to develop projects through more comprehensive and dynamic paradigms.

Just as once the world decided to overcome the radical approaches of protectionism and mercantilism, it can now move towards an integrated approach that is able to understand and handle complexity and move beyond sectorial silos for a

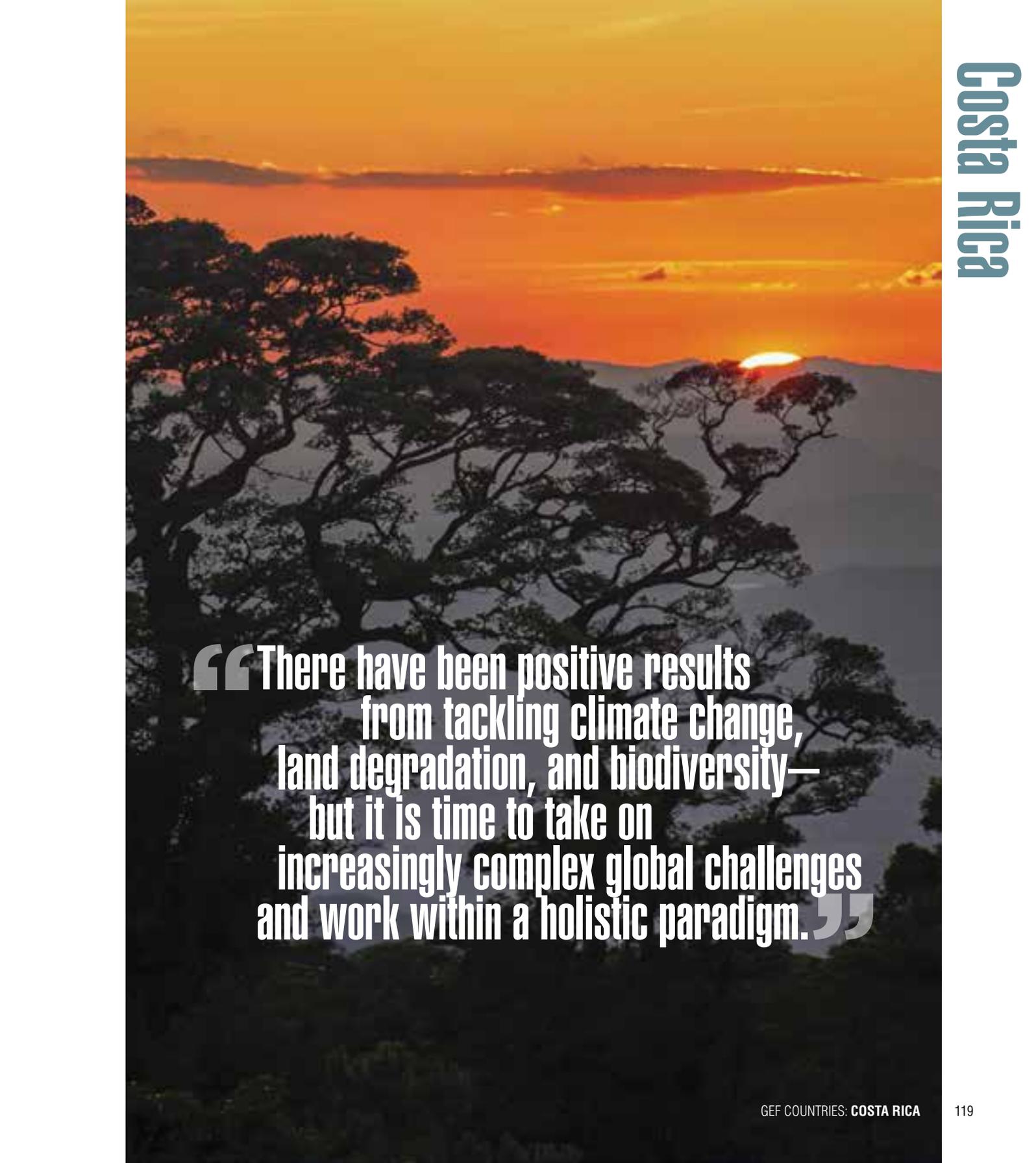
holistic view of sustainable development. Today's challenge is to talk about the environment in a comprehensive way, understanding that each problem, each cause, and each solution is absolutely interconnected.

If we want lasting and successful solutions, we must start by looking for broader and more ambitious routes, understanding that there are no fragmented parts of the whole. There have been positive results from tackling climate change, land degradation, and biodiversity – but it is time to take on increasingly complex global challenges and work within a holistic paradigm, overcoming sectorial siloed approaches.

The concept of resilience expresses the capacity to be aware, deal with vulnerabilities and be able to improve capabilities. We can use this concept, and add elasticity, to sketch out the new financing mechanisms we need for sustainable development.

We are dealing with a huge challenge: managing the assemblage of humans and their natural settings so as to simultaneously conserve the environment and satisfy people's needs. In order to meet this ambitious challenge, middle-income countries like ours need financing mechanisms that are capable of understanding complex realities so as to facilitate solutions; this involves complex thinking but, hopefully, easy solving.

This idea is not as complicated as it seems. The challenge is to respect responsible and sustainable lifestyles and find opportunities in following them rather than to impose old and worn recipes.



“There have been positive results from tackling climate change, land degradation, and biodiversity—but it is time to take on increasingly complex global challenges and work within a holistic paradigm.”

Côte D'Ivoire



GEF Contribution to Sustainable Development and Expectations of Côte d'Ivoire



With ongoing energy development, the trend toward greener growth that would take into account the urgency of climate events through optimal management of natural and energy resources (gas, electricity) by mitigating their environmental impact is becoming essential.

It is against this background that the Global Environment Facility (GEF) was created in 1991. It is the main mechanism for financing environmental projects and was chosen as the primary financing mechanism for the main Rio Conventions in 1992.

GEF resources supplement existing funds to help finance an increasingly greener economy through environmental projects that help developing countries reach the global environment conservation goals recommended by conventions.

Côte d'Ivoire joined the GEF when it was created and has attended all participants' meetings held during the restructuring process, including the last one in Geneva in 1994.

Côte d'Ivoire is a GEF beneficiary and has made voluntary donor contributions to the institution's replenishments spanning the pilot phase through the third phase, for a total of SDR 14 million. The country recently committed to paying its outstanding contributions and has taken the necessary steps to honor these commitments.

The country has been the beneficiary of projects in the various GEF focal areas: 55 medium and large projects and 299 microprojects totaling **US\$299,179,625** in GEF subsidies; the addition of co-financing brings this amount to over **US\$1,145,046,268** in total gains.

In addition to projects, we have created an Institutional Framework, namely the GEF National Commission (CNFEM), which was established by Decree No. 2012-162 of February 9, 2012. This Commission provides a framework for discussing and coordinating GEF activities in Côte d'Ivoire, and is chaired by the Ministry of Economy and Finance. The functioning of this Commission is the responsibility of a Technical Committee that is chaired by the Ministry of Environment — the main beneficiary of GEF funding — and a Permanent Secretariat, our GEF operational focal point responsible for the administrative management and coordination of GEF activities in the country. The CNFEM receives funding from the State for its activities.

To conclude, Côte d'Ivoire would like the financing of the projects and programmes outlined in its road map to be taken into account. The road map was drafted after the country committed to adhering to the decisions reached by the international community during COP21 and takes into account the priorities set forth in Côte d'Ivoire's National Development Plan (NDP 2016-2020).

Ethiopia: Partnership Conserves Resources for the Next Generation



The Global Environment Facility (GEF) has been active in Ethiopia for 25 years. It has invested many millions of dollars, leveraging further millions in co-financing resources from Government, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other partners to implement over 30 national projects benefiting more than two million farmers, including women and youth.

Over the years, UNDP has increasingly enjoyed opportunities to help Ethiopia enhance its partnership with the GEF on the environment and biodiversity conservation as well as in tackling climate change.

The country is home to important gene pools of wild relatives for over 197 species of crops, some containing wild genetic materials critical for the sustenance of future production both in Ethiopia and globally. On the other hand, over 80% of the country's large population (the second biggest in Africa) predominantly relies on mostly subsistence rain-fed agriculture to make a living. Ethiopia is also highly vulnerable to climate shocks: drought, floods, land degradation and endangered species are key areas of concern. The government has taken a number of policy measures to tackle such challenges including launching the Climate Resilient Green Economy.

The high-level policy support of the Government of Ethiopia has been complemented with climate-smart, participatory, sustainable, gender-sensitive and replicable community programmes. The results have been strongly encouraging, including the gazetting of seven protected areas and the torching of 6.1 tons of illegal stockpiled ivory.

Introducing crop insurance to 3000 farmers across four regions helped them handle the 2015 crop failure and sets an example of a replicable intervention for the rest of the country. A set of interventions - now scaled up to nine regions through financial support from GEF, Norway, Japan and UNDP - has also helped beneficiaries cope with drought, grow crops, and stay out of the country's food aid beneficiary list following the recent shock caused by El Nino.

As for biodiversity conservation, GEF-supported intervention helped Ethiopia to restore farmers' varieties of teff (Bunge Enat seed) which had been lost from fields for over 28 years. The reintroduction has already benefited over 15,000 households. Farmers have also benefited from extension packages and climate change adaptation interventions, giving them access to better crop yields than from improved varieties. This is also strengthening Ethiopia's capacity to research into using gene pools to adapt to climate change though meeting the ever-growing demand for food.



Fiji and the GEF



Fiji's ecosystem services are provided by the country's diverse natural resources, ranging from terrestrial to coastal and marine ecosystems. Like many Pacific island countries, Fiji represents a microcosm of some of the most significant development and environmental challenges facing the world. It comprises more than 332 islands, about one-third of which are inhabited, with a total land area of 18,333 km² in a vast 1.6 M km² marine Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

Much of Fiji's economy depends on exploiting its natural resource base, especially pelagic fisheries in its EEZ. Its limited land area experiences intense competing pressures on resources from agriculture, tourism, transport, water, and other needs. With some of the highest rainfall on the planet it has abundant natural water resources: indeed bottled mineral water has become a top export earner.

Fiji's environment has been in a bad state — particularly so for domestic water due to wastewater releases, poorly sited toilets and/or overuse of fertilizer in upstream communities and farms that pollute our coastal waters, create outbreaks of disease, and contaminate sensitive groundwater supplies. The Global Environment Facility has compounded its financial support to the government through the Ridge to Reef Project in the GEF 5 STAR allocation to address some of these concerns. The project's objective is to preserve biodiversity and ecosystem services, sequester carbon, improve climate resilience, and sustain livelihoods through ridge-to-reef management of priority water catchments on the country's two main islands.

The four year (2016-2019) project has a GEF budget of US\$7.39 million and substantial co-financing from the Fiji government, the private sector, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and conservation NGOs (US\$30.24 million). The allocation includes US\$4.94 million for biodiversity, US\$2 million for climate change and US\$0.65 million for land degradation, all brought under one umbrella project to be implemented by UNDP. The project is part of the Program on "Pacific Islands Ridge-to-Reef National Priorities — Integrated Water, Land, Forest and Coastal Management to Preserve Biodiversity, Ecosystem Services, Store Carbon, Improve Climate Resilience and Sustain Livelihoods". Its approach in priority catchments will be to address key environmental issues in an integrated manner and bolster Fiji's national system of marine protected areas through an enhanced, representative and sustainable system of Locally Managed Marine Areas, including greater protection of threatened marine species.

Since it was established in 1991, the GEF has provided a total of US\$14,604,507 to Fiji for projects relating to biodiversity conservation, land degradation, climate change and persistent organic pollutants, mostly implemented by UNDP with the Department of Environment as the executing agency.

Currently the GEF Operational Focal Point Portfolio for Fiji has six national projects being implemented by UNDP in close conjunction with the Ministry of Local Government, Housing and Environment.

It is envisaged that, by end of 2016, an additional US\$3.39 million will be given as a grant to the ministry to address the

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growing issue of invasive species in the country through the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji.

Communities in Fiji have also benefited from the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP). In May 2016, for example, the Navuso Agriculture Training Institute (NATI) held its first Farmer Soils School for a total of 150 participants, including 25 female trainees. Young and old trainee farmers participated in two weeks of hands-on training in biological methods of soil health, fertility management, and field practicals. The trainees implemented their newly found skills both at demonstration farms at NATI and back in their villages, and returned for an Advanced Farmers Soil School in September, 2016. Mike Smith of the Organic Matters Foundation (OMF), who facilitated the training, said he was “overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of Fijian young farmers keen for more than NPK (fertiliser) and the so-called green revolution”. School Principal, Reverend Malakai Tuikadavu said, “The school is blessed by the funding provided by the GEF SGP, and the future of the school’s curricula looked very promising after the experience gained through the Soil Schools and the expertise shared by partner OMF and the SGP Fiji.”

SGP Fiji also contributed to the GEF strategy for chemicals, which sets out to promote their sound management throughout their life-cycle in ways that lead to minimizing significant adverse effects on human health and the global environment.





Finland: Long Live the GEF!

BY MS LENITA TOIVAKKA
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT



For Finland, the Global Environment Facility has been and remains the main financial instrument in the fight against environmental degradation and for the realization of global environmental benefits.

From the very beginning, the GEF's special strength has been its vast mandate and its inherent ability to generate synergy gains across various multilateral environmental agreements and other thematic fields. In its own way, the GEF has been a precursor to the integrated spirit of the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and with the Integrated Approaches Pilots it is already providing its new contribution to this common endeavor.

For us, it is crucial that the GEF remains faithful to its mandate as a key financial mechanism for a number of multilateral environmental agreements. Fight against environmental degradation and efforts for global environmental benefits continue to need their steadfast supporter. At the same time, it is important to recognize the integrated and interlinked context within which the world community is striving towards economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable development. The GEF2020 — the Facility's strategic vision — provides a good basis in this respect.

On the above solid foundation, I would like to highlight three aspects that I think remain important when directing the GEF into the future in the service of our beautiful planet. Firstly, women and girls all over the world need to get empowered to be involved in the sustainable management of natural resources on equal footing with men. Both women and men are needed to make our economies and societies sustainable. Secondly, we need to strengthen our efforts to turn all global financial flows sustainable and, in accordance with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, consistent with a pathway towards low emission and climate resilient development. Public money remains important, but if we are serious about safeguarding our global commons — if we really aim for going from billions to trillions — we have to be able to increasingly leverage private sector finances. And thirdly, we need to take care of those most in need which implies that all those more capable should shoulder increasing responsibilities.

The year 2015 was a big year for the global community coming together for the common good. The GEF, as a solid and trusted partner, has been and will be instrumental making the needed transformation happen. In Finland, the GEF can count on a good old friend in this endeavor.

Germany and France





The GEF and Germany and France

BY GERD MÜLLER
FEDERAL MINISTER OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT, GERMANY;
AND
MICHEL SAPIN,
MINISTER OF ECONOMY, FINANCE AND INDUSTRY, FRANCE

The Global Environment Facility is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year and can look back at some great achievements. Germany and France jointly contributed to the initial establishment of the one-billion-dollar pilot program in 1991 and the GEF has since gone on to become an entity entrusted with the operation of the financial mechanisms of the five major international environmental conventions on which countries rely to tackle our planet's pressing environmental problems. France and Germany have thus been actively involved from the beginning. Today, they are two of the GEF's largest donors, having contributed 3.5 billion dollars since its inception, including 760 million dollars for the 6th replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund.

Among the greatest achievements of the GEF's unique partnership are the holistic approach it has taken to cross-cutting issues of the global environment and sustainable development, such as the preservation of ecosystems and the promotion of clean energy and food security. The GEF has played a key role in promoting sustainable forest management, fostering climate-resilient and low-emission development, protecting the ozone layer, and leveraging additional financing, both public and private.

The GEF must now continue adapting to a complex and rapidly evolving world, drawing on the wealth of experience it has amassed to date. This is particularly critical when it comes

to implementing the Paris Agreement, where the GEF will play a key role in helping developing countries to achieve their nationally determined contributions. The dynamic way in which the GEF has evolved on all environmental issues over the years demonstrates its determination to fully meet the challenges ahead. One specific recent example has been the swift establishment, supported by Germany and France, of the GEF trust fund for the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency.

France and Germany also encourage the GEF to continue challenging its own model and the way it seeks both transformational solutions to environmental issues and also the right partnerships to lend added impact to its actions. In this regard, it will be vital for the GEF to continue working in coordination with other institutions and initiatives serving the five conventions. This will allow it not only to build on existing experience but also to reinforce synergies and efficiency. In particular, the GEF and its Council Members should also define the role to be played by the GEF in coordination with other climate funds, especially the Green Climate Fund, so as to enhance synergies and avoid duplication of efforts.

Germany and France are confident that the GEF will continue to be a true champion in global efforts to preserve the environment. We wish a very happy 25th birthday to the GEF and all the individuals working at this unique institution.

The GEF India: Enabling Transformation

BY MR R. R. RASHMI, SPECIAL SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE, AND GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT



India's partnership with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) started in 1991 and has grown stronger over the years. The incremental finance and support that the GEF has provided has played a catalytic role in promoting environmentally friendly techniques and practices which are also economically beneficial and sustainable. India's portfolio is full of stories which showcase the GEF's role and relevance in a developing country, and it brings global environmental benefits which fit well with the Government of India's priorities.

In 1993, with GEF intervention, India started building institutional and technical capacity for harnessing renewable sources of energy, including wind, solar, and hydropower. This project commissioned an aggregate capacity of 87 MW of wind, 2 MW of solar, and 118 MW of small hydro plants while enhancing private sector participation. The capacity of the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA) was enhanced. The project indirectly played an important role in promoting policy and regulatory changes especially for wind and hydropower.

Another GEF intervention quadrupled the annual area of installations of solar collectors between 2008 and 2012-13 (from 0.4 to 1.6 million square meters) while successfully demonstrating the Energy Service Company concept in the solar water heater sector, and developing a new low-cost, box-type portable solar water heater suited for hilly areas. The project came out with a number of knowledge products for users, designers, and installers of solar water heating systems which facilitated their further replication. It also developed model regulations for amendments to by-laws to make the installation of solar water heaters mandatory in certain categories

of residential buildings: based on this, 26 states and some 100 urban local bodies are in the process of amending such by-laws. Completed renewable energy projects from the GEF's India portfolio have shown that strengthening institutional capacities, promoting enabling environments, developing policy frameworks, and improving the demand for renewable energy technologies can all reduce barriers, mitigate steep transaction costs, and promote underdeveloped markets.

GEF projects introduced the concept of energy efficiency in small South Indian tea processing units, steel re-rolling units, and others, ensuring that these small businesses remain competitive and alive, while becoming both responsive and profitable ventures. The steel re-rolling project innovated and successfully piloted "Direct Rolling" which eliminates the need for reheating furnaces, with substantial fossil fuel savings. Encouraged by its results, the Ministry of Steel — the national partner — is actively promoting energy efficiency in the secondary steel re-rolling sector. Another GEF project demonstrated the commercial viability of recovering and using methane, during and after the extraction of coal, as a clean fuel for transport and electricity generation. According to Central Mines Planning and Design Institute Limited, one of the project partners, the country's coal bed methane (CBM) production potential is approximately 3.4 trillion cubic meters (TCM). As of now, 33 CBM blocks have been allotted with a potential to produce about 1.78 TCM and these pilots have been scaled up.

GEF support to India for natural resources has also been remarkable. It has demonstrated that managing natural ecosystems as carbon sinks, and resources for adaptation,

is a necessary, efficient, and relatively cost-effective strategy. India's Sustainable Land and Ecosystem Management (SLEM) programme underlines that land management is the starting point for addressing all other environmental and related socio-economic issues. SLEM projects show how communities transform the development paradigm, when we empower them. The Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh state governments came out with Government Orders to promote community participation in conserving and managing forest resources while integrating the SLEM approach. This has improved the income livelihood options and well-being of the local population while ensuring conservation, regeneration, and the efficient use of the region's natural resources. Participatory climate monitoring and farmer climate schools have built the capacity and capability of local farmers in selected villages of Andhra Pradesh to understand the daily climate and seasonal variability governing their cropping pattern and practices, etc. GEF interventions have not only actively promoted the effective use of technology to manage natural resources, but have made it simple enough for the local communities to use it by linking it with their mobile handsets, as with mKrishi Agriculture, mKrishi Fisheries, daily climate forecasts — again improving communities' lives and livelihoods.

Knowledge empowers, and this has also been showcased by GEF projects and recognized and mainstreamed into

government programmes. The GEF has created an enabling environment by promoting multi-stakeholder consultations, institutional and technical capacity building, and knowledge products, and by facilitating policy and regulatory frameworks etc., thus leading to longer term benefits. It is also supporting national reporting obligations to MEAs.

So far, India has accessed more than US\$516 million of GEF grants and leveraged about US\$ billion as co-funding. The share of multi-focal area projects in our portfolio is growing, indicating the country's integrated approach towards addressing environmental challenges. India has been focusing on developing projects with high visibility, high impact, and high replication.

The most satisfying outcome of GEF projects is the impact that they have made on the lives and livelihoods of the people concerned. After years of project completion, the work not only survives, but is fondly remembered by the implementing partners as valuable investments.

The role of the GEF remains critical for developing countries like India. Faced with innumerable development imperatives, the GEF Partnership is uniquely placed to help buttress Earth's life support systems and to achieve the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.



Iraq: Implementing Multilateral International Agreements



BY DR JASMIN ABDULAZIZ HUMADI
DEPUTY MINISTER OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT, AND GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT

The Iraqi Ministry of Health and Environment presents its compliments to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Secretariat and, on behalf of the Iraqi government would like to congratulate it on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of its foundation.

The GEF is one of the main sources of supporting and financing developing countries in implementing projects involved with multilateral international agreements, especially the Stockholm Convention on persistent organic pollutants and the three Rio Conventions (on climate change, desertification and biodiversity). Iraq's implementation of regional and national projects to improve environmental realities include:

- National Capacity Self-Assessment, which contributed to developing and upgrading the skills of people working in our ministry in implementing Iraq's obligations under the multilateral conventions.
- The National Protected Area Network through which natural reserves will be established (in the Al-Taib and Damlj marshes) in southern Iraq.

- Catalyzing the use of solar photovoltaic energy to assist Iraq in reducing greenhouse gas emissions through demonstrating the application of solar power to meet the energy needs of offices, small businesses, residents, and town services.
- Preparing the first national report on the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- Preparing a second national communication which will help Iraq implement its commitments under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- Helping it to prepare Iraq's nationally determined contribution on implementing its obligations under the international framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Iraq hopes the GEF Secretariat will continue to facilitate and support projects it submits for implementation, especially as it is one of the world's more vulnerable countries to climate change.



Italy: A Turning Point



There is a challenge that concerns all of us: the future of the planet. Climate change is expected significantly to impact the global economy in the coming decades, while climate-related natural disasters are likely to increase in frequency and severity and exacerbate poverty in developing countries with limited ability to adapt.

Last year represented a turning point for the environment, with the universal recognition of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction. Thus the 25th anniversary of the GEF is taking place at a critical juncture.

We are all responsible for delivering the commitments made in those historic agreements. This will require major environmental global challenges to be addressed effectively and in partnership with all members of the global community. Besides, a significant impact on the global environment cannot be achieved without private sector involvement.

The GEF has a crucial role to play to promote a more integrated approach, combining environmental benefits, sustainable development, and poverty eradication. The new Integrated Approach Pilot “Sustainability and resilience for food security in sub-Saharan Africa” is a good example of an important effort to combine these three objectives.

Over the years, Italy has confirmed its support of the GEF in a strong signal of confidence in its capacity to generate global environmental benefits. We are convinced that it is in a position to increase its activity and scope, and to respond to a growing demand for global environmental management.

Our sincere appreciation goes to the CEO and women and men of the Secretariat, for their passionate work in contributing to our common goal: ensuring an environmental-friendly world.



“Finding solutions to the issue of sustainability of the global commons, our planet’s finite environmental resources, will enable us to provide a sustainable future for our children.”

Japan: The Crucial Issue of the Global Commons

BY TARO ASO, MINISTER OF FINANCE



Since 1991, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has been a definite front-runner in tackling global environmental issues, which need to be urgently addressed for the good of our planet. I would like to express my utmost appreciation of its great achievements throughout its 25 year-long endeavor.

Last December, the Paris Agreement was adopted at COP21 as the first-ever framework to bring all nations, developed and developing, together in a common cause. As it is about to come into effect, the knowledge and experience that the GEF has acquired through its support for developing countries will make a solid contribution to tackling climate change in the international community.

In 2010, the “Aichi Biodiversity Targets” were approved at the 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity held in Japan. The GEF has enhanced its presence in supporting numerous biodiversity projects through providing grants and joint funding with other countries and international organizations. Its activities will greatly enhance efforts toward achieving the Aichi targets.

The GEF has addressed a wide range of areas besides climate change and biodiversity, including international waters, land degradation, chemicals and waste. The GEF 2020 — the new strategy developed under the strong leadership of Dr Naoko Ishii, CEO and Chairperson of the GEF — demonstrates proactive investments in global environmental conservation, as well as innovative and scalable projects and programmes focusing on the underlying drivers of global environmental degradation and supporting coalitions that bring together

partnerships of committed stakeholders, including governments and the private sector.

In particular, three Integrated Approach pilots, launched in line with the GEF 2020, aim to address some of these underlying drivers through a special focus on food security, urbanization, and deforestation. This innovative approach has attracted considerable attention as an effort to address global issues that requires cooperation among diversified stakeholders. Japan’s strong wish is that this pioneering initiative will make it possible to meet the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the targets of the Paris Agreement.

Obviously, one of the GEF’s advantages is its experience and expertise in tackling a wide variety of global environment issues. However, its staff members’ dedication and passion are even more important, though it is small compared to other international organizations, and this needs to be emphasized. These qualities allow the GEF to identify the underlying drivers of environmental degradation and to propose innovative and proactive approaches which go beyond short-sighted solutions — and increase its capability — and will enable it to realize even greater achievements in the future.

Last but certainly not least, the GEF’s unique role is to tackle the issue of sustainability of the “global commons”, our planet’s finite environmental resources. Finding solutions for this crucial issue will enable us to provide a sustainable future for our children. Again, Japan congratulates the GEF on its 25th anniversary and expresses support for its noble mission for our globe.

Kenya: Transformative Support



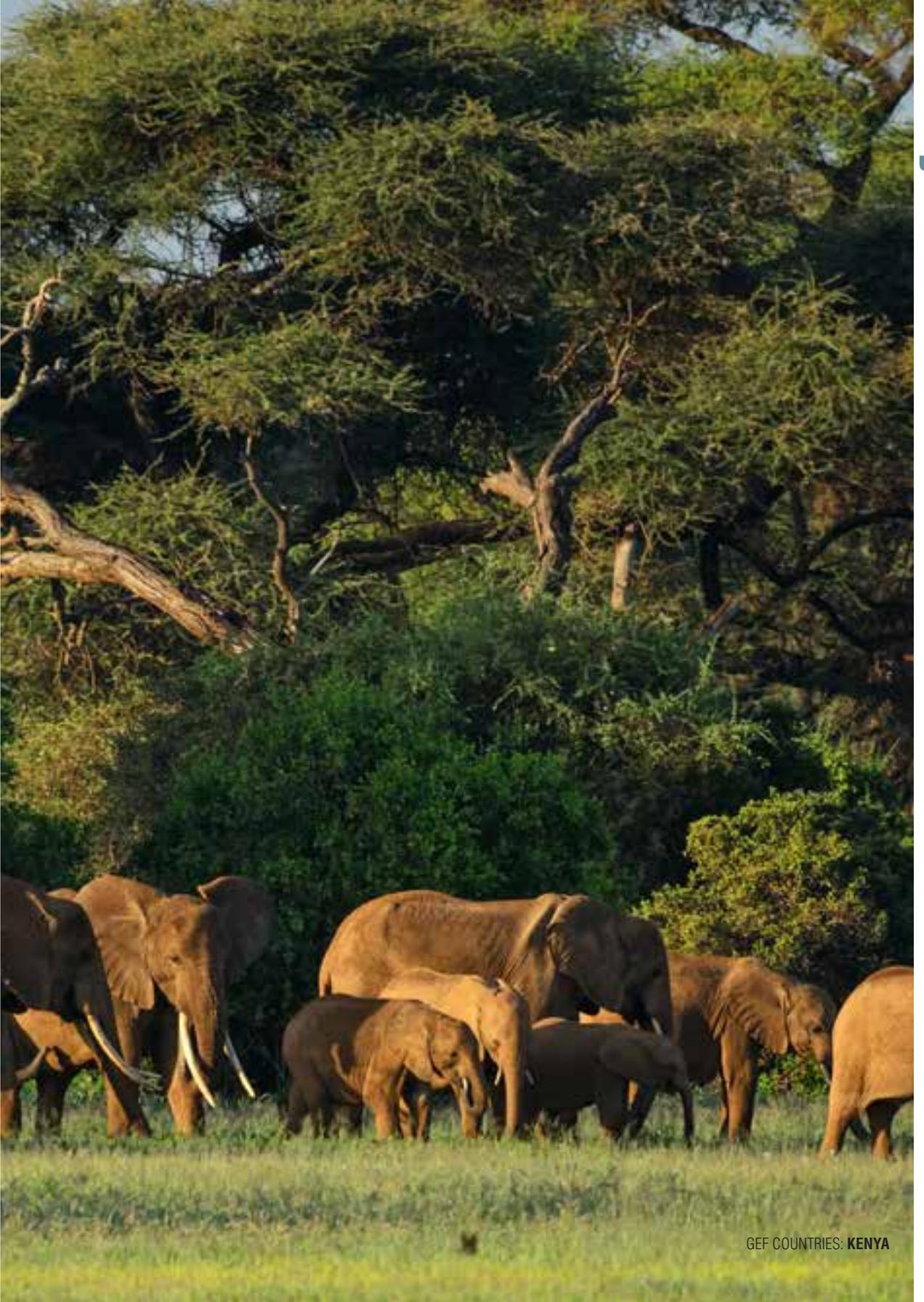
The Global Environment Facility is a key supporter of the Kenyan Government on financing sustainable development in all its focal areas. Currently there are over 35 national projects, over 65 projects with a regional and global context, and several small grants programs to communities through Community Based Organizations and NGOs.

This portfolio has demonstrated, that if well streamlined, the GEF can support even more projects. Over the years, important lessons have been drawn that well-thought out concepts on sustainable development, environment, government partnerships in project execution, transparency and accountability, co-financing, joint monitoring and evaluation and increased GEF visibility, all contribute significantly to the enhancing the impact of GEF projects and programs. There is now a National Treasury requirement that such projects and programs are captured as an important revenue stream into the country.

Kenya's energy sector provides one example of the transformative nature of GEF support. With only a US\$ 979,000 GEF investment - to cover feasibility studies, training and the procurement of equipment, - the Kenya Electricity Generating Company Limited (Kengen) sourced funding for geothermal development, the green energy option. The GEF funding was crucial as it covered the most risky part of geothermal development – prospecting, surface exploration and discovery drilling.

With the commissioning of the 280MW project in Olkaria on the edge of the Eastern Rift Valley, geothermal now accounts for more than half the electricity consumed by Kenyans, up from 11% in 2012. Kengen is now a leader in the technology in the region, and is providing consultancy services on geothermal to Eastern, Southern and Western African countries.

The Small Grants Scheme, through UNDP has made significant changes to people, with a very important integration of conserving the environment and enhancing livelihoods. Osotua campsite, at the foot of the Aberdare range, is located at a border where two communities, the Maasai and Kikuyu live side by side: the area has witnessed resource use conflict in the past. The campsite is managed by young people from both communities to foster unity through community projects, dialogue and youth events and has such facilities as a conference hall and a shared dormitory. These facilities provide income for members and provide a serene environment for youth seminars and exchange programs. The beneficiaries have expressed their gratitude to the GEF for support that has gone a long way to promote peace and improve the livelihoods of young people from both communities.



Rising Phoenix: The GEF's Contribution to Sustainable Development in Kiribati

BY TUKABU TEROROKO, DIRECTOR
PHOENIX ISLANDS PROTECTED AREA (PIPA)



The Phoenix Islands — roughly halfway between Australia and Hawaii in the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean — form one of the world's last intact oceanic coral archipelago ecosystems. Its reefs have remained unspoiled and its 25 square kilometers of land, scattered through 408,000 square kilometers of sea averaging 4 kilometers in depth, are home to rare birds and plants. Five of its eight islands are officially designated as Important Bird Areas and — since only one island is inhabited, and by fewer than 50 people — this is truly a natural laboratory in the wild.

In 2006, Kiribati declared the establishment of the Phoenix Island Protected Area (PIPA), which in 2010 became a World Heritage Site, the largest and deepest on Earth. It is the biggest marine conservation effort of its kind by a Least Developed Country.

PIPA has benefited from GEF funding, which supported the implementation of the area's first Management Plan, the establishment of its two Implementation Offices and the recruitment of six core staff. The plan focuses on (i) Core Operational (capacity, infrastructure, zonation, surveillance and enforcement, monitoring, evaluation) and Strategic Outcomes (atoll restoration, reverse fishing license, world heritage site management, tourism, climate change adaptation) and (ii) the design and operation of PIPA's Sustainable Financing System.

The islands' wildlife was damaged by mammalian pests, especially rats, and the project enabled it to be restored. Birds and vegetation (which shelters birds and chicks) recovered quickly when rat eradication programmes were implemented

on McKean and Birnie islands, and after all the rabbits were shot and killed on Rawaki Island.

Sharing information on PIPA's values and undisturbed natural beauties through outreach programmes has greatly inspired the school children, youth, and the public at large in Kiribati to take care of the environment and surroundings. Eco-tourism in the protected area - focusing on snorkeling and diving, catch and game fishing, bird watching, amateur radioing, and simply relaxing to enjoy the beautiful environment — brings in income to Kiribati. In January 2015, the PIPA was fully closed to commercial fishing. There have been quite a number of scientific reports on studies there, while research into tuna larvae continues.

The project adopted a multi-ministerial approach which has proven very effective. The Kiribati Police Service Maritime Unit under the Office of the President, for example, is responsible for the PIPA's surveillance and enforcement tasks; the Fisheries Department for research and monitoring in the PIP; and the Attorney General Office for dealing with legal matters. Kiribati is also an active member of regional organizations and benefits from the support of the Forum Fisheries Agency on surveillance and security and the Secretariat of the Pacific Commission, among others, for quarantine and biosecurity assistance. Bodies like Skytruth, Google Watch, and Oceans are very helpful in detecting vessel movements in PIPA.

The PIPA Conservation Trust provides a steady flow of financial support needed to manage the Trust and to sustain the protected area's operations. A total of US\$5 million has been invested with contributions from the Kiribati government,

New England Aquarium, and Conservation International. Implementing the PIPA Fundraising Framework Strategy will provide additional capital to the Trust, while the Waitt Foundation and Ocean 5 are providing US\$1 million annually for the next four years for the protected area's operations and management.

FUTURE EXPECTATIONS FOR THE GEF

Additional financial support is needed for PIPA's programme as below:

- **PIPA Atolls and Reef Islands Restoration & Biosecurity:** Rat eradication was carried out only on four PIPA islands, namely, McKean, Birnie, Enderbury, and Rawaki (rabbits on this island only). Additional financial support to eradicate the rats on the rest of the untreated islands including Enderbury will ensure that their pristine natural environment and beauty are maintained.
- **Surveillance and Enforcement:** Financial support is required to further improve existing infrastructures and equipment for surveillance and enforcement in the PIPA.
- **Science and Research:** PIPA is an important tuna spawning ground. Investing in research on these valuable economic species inside the large marine protected area is vital. A better understanding of the tuna life cycle would contribute to managing stocks and address global concerns on overfishing and food security. And providing support in establishing PIPA as a natural marine laboratory for studying climate change could contribute to better understanding of the impacts of rising temperatures on corals and the marine life.
- **PIPA Eco-tourism development:** Support for sound ecological low-volume high-end tourism development is vital. People will enjoy the pristine natural environment and beauty, while it provides employment opportunities and government revenue.
- **Marine Protected Areas Networking:** Support to the Big Oceans initiatives, to which Kiribati belongs, will ensure a collective approach in working towards saving the oceans from overfishing, pollution, and the impacts of climate change.

PIPA Website: phoenixislands.org.





Republic of Korea: The GEF's Role Will Grow

BY CHO KYEUNG-KYU, MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT

The birth of the Global Environment Facility was one of the most important achievements of the Rio Earth Summit, a milestone in international efforts to protect the global environment.

As the global leader in funding environmental projects, the GEF has continued to prove, through its activities, that protecting the environment is an essential element of economic growth for countries in any stage of development.

The Republic of Korea has continuously supported the GEF as a donor. Our accumulated financial contribution has now reached approximately US\$30 million. We also cooperate with the GEF to address regional environmental issues, including the biodiversity of the Tumen River basin.

While celebrating its 25 years, I cannot over-emphasize the GEF's future importance. Environmental issues continue to be at the top of the global agenda. The impacts of climate change, and of the loss of biodiversity at an unprecedented rate, are felt in every corner of the Earth. If the global community is to meet the Sustainable Development Goals, we will need to mobilize the necessary financial resources for the areas that most need it, and the GEF's role will undoubtedly continue to grow.

The Republic of Korea will continue to be an important partner for the GEF. I hope this 25th anniversary will be a valuable opportunity to remind us of its significance in our shared effort for environmental conservation.

“The GEF has continued to prove, through its activities, that protecting the environment is an essential element of economic growth for countries in any stage of development.”





Kyrgyz Republic and the GEF: Political and Economic Benefits



BY ALIYA OROZAKUNOVA, SPECIALIST OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
STATE AGENCY ON ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND FORESTRY

Developing international cooperation over the environment both brings countries significant political and economic benefits and provides a good basis for addressing global and cross-border ecological issues.

The Kyrgyz Republic has been a member of the Global Environment Facility since 1997. Since 2001, it has also been a member of the Swiss constituency GEF, which includes all the countries of Central Asia and Azerbaijan.

Since 2000, a number of successful projects have been implemented in Kyrgyzstan, in cooperation with the GEF, aimed at achieving global environmental benefits through supporting national initiatives. It is important to point out the importance of the GEF's support for the country.

Cooperation with the GEF is expanding every year. Thanks to the various projects that have been, and are being, implemented in collaboration with the GEF, the Kyrgyz Republic receives technical and financial assistance and the opportunity to introduce new modern technologies in the process of production.

This year the GEF celebrates its 25-year anniversary. The efforts it has made during that period have been a significant contribution to preserving the environment for the present and future generations. The Kyrgyz Republic hopes for the further development of fruitful cooperation with the Global Environment Facility in preservation of the environment for all living beings on Earth.

**“Cooperation between the Kyrgyz Republic
and the GEF is expanding every year.”**



Lebanon: A Successful Collaboration With a Good Track Record

BY MOHAMAD AL MASHNOUK, MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT



This story goes back more than 20 years, specifically to 1995.

Back then, Lebanon was emerging slowly from a period of torment, where development was waging war on our natural resources rather than building on their sustainability. It all started with one grant, one project — “Strengthening of National Capacity and Grassroots In-Situ Conservation for Sustainable Biodiversity Protection”. Forty projects later — and with more than US\$25 million spent under the different thematic areas, excluding regional projects — the GEF has proved to be a major partner in achieving sustainable development, and a good friend to Lebanon.

Our collaboration is successful beyond any doubt. More than US\$13 million has been allocated to addressing climate change and more than US\$5 million to biodiversity conservation and other issues. These projects allow us to develop our policy framework and technical knowledge internally and to fulfil our commitments beyond our borders, in line with our international obligations: Lebanon was one of the very first countries to submit its First Biennial Update Reporting to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The GEF’s contribution goes beyond supporting such activity: it extends to years of support in introducing

the concept of climate change, setting the enabling environment and creating a workforce which drives the momentum at the national and even at the international level and ensures mainstreaming among stakeholders.

And so the story goes for biodiversity, land degradation, and other emerging priority thematic areas.

Experience has taught us that we cannot single-handedly achieve the results to which we aspire. With limited resources and great needs, we stand upon the cooperation with the GEF and call upon more coordination and cooperation as we acknowledge that building partnerships is key for implementing strategies, plans, and projects — and ultimately for achieving sustainable development for Lebanon and for our planet.

Needless to say, the collaboration with GEF was and still is a challenging experience. But great deeds require great efforts and Lebanon is keen on being part of the solution.

On this 25th anniversary, we would like to wish our GEF collaborators, and us all, a successful continuation, building on the previous track record of national and regional success stories.



Liberia: Actors and Actions for Sustainable Development



BY: P. EMMANUEL MUNYENEH, ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

“Heal the world”, Michael Jackson, the late king of pop, would say. “Make it a better place for you and for me and the entire human race.” In contrast with former centuries, the world is now turning in a more careful direction, emphasising environmental considerations. We are beginning to assert our role as custodians of the planet, with an emphasis on bringing humanity and nature into harmony. But isn’t it rather too late to put things back into focus?

Developed countries, whose populations are more conscious of these issues, are more informed about the implications of making the world a better place, and the environment has become a top priority for political candidates. At the other end of the spectrum, developing and small island nations are seriously grappling with the balance between natural resource management and economic growth. For developing countries, the concept of using natural resources in ways and forms that do not jeopardize the rights of future generations poses a seemingly insurmountable challenge. The necessary role and place of international non-state actors is in buttressing the efforts of countries that are caught between limited budgets to meet social and economic needs and the need for sustainable practices on the environment.

The GEF is in so many ways ideally useful in helping developing countries to address environmental challenges including international waters, biodiversity, climate change, sustainable land management, land degradation, chemicals etc.

As the biggest funder of measures to meet global environmental challenges, the GEF is supporting a number of programs in Liberia, ranging from small grant programs to climate change adaptation. Implementing these projects is yielding considerable results. Farmers, for example, now have a broader understanding of climate change and of how such innovative practices as inter-cropping can help them make their livelihoods. The GEF needs adequately to address the issue of sustainability of its programmes, as part of its support mechanism. Monitoring of such short term interventions as a break-water revetment in Buchanan, or setting up early warning systems to help farmers make the right decision is seemingly non-existent; meaning that there is a hurdle in the project management implementation cycle.

Ensuring value for money requires that the GEF goes a step further by investing in human capacity to manage these projects sustainably. Sending consultants to prepare Project Identification Forms and to conduct assessments is staggering for farmers who need information on land degradation and soil management. A more proactive GEF, with a focus on domestication and ownership, could indeed maintain its place as a leading environmental institution.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) — A Global Approach to a Global Problem

BY PIERRE GRAMEGNA, MINISTER OF FINANCE



The 25th anniversary of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) takes place in a promising historical context. Indeed, 2016 is the year where the ratification of the Paris Climate agreement has started and follows the year where the UN adopted its Sustainable Development Goals. The timing could thus not be better to celebrate the existence of a global partnership that helps improve the global environment, in every sense of the word.

The GEF has proved resilient and effective over time. It has become a bridge between 183 countries and is linking in with international institutions, civil society organizations, and the private sector to address global environmental issues. The GEF constitutes a multilateral vehicle of choice to channel parts of Official Development Assistance, which, in the case of Luxembourg, is one of the world's highest, amounting to 1% of gross national income.

Luxembourg has actively participated in the successive pledging sessions regarding the GEF's financing. These sessions

provide any participant with an excellent opportunity to take part in the definition of the strategies needed to address the planet's health. In this context, Luxembourg also takes a strong interest in the GEF Council workings. We are looking forward to fulfilling the role of advisor in our constituency in the GEF Council session in 2017 and of member in the 2018 Council session.

Safeguarding the globe is one of the most critical challenges of our time. This is particularly true when it comes to tracking and evaluating the GEF's contribution with regard to the state of our air, oceans, forests, land, and biodiversity. I am convinced that every cent invested by the GEF will continue to make our planet a better place. I also welcome that the private sector is growing increasingly aware of these challenges and the opportunities offered by green finance in that context. As the world's leading place for the listing of Green Bonds, the Luxembourg Financial Center actively contributes to the development of this important new field in finance, for which the GEF certainly was a trailblazer.

“Safeguarding the globe is one of the most critical challenges of our time.”



Luxembourg

Madagascar and the GEF



Madagascar is one of the richest countries on the planet in terms of biodiversity. In fact, Madagascar has a wealth of biodiversity, home to a variety of terrestrial (forests, agricultural spaces, and grasslands), aquatic (wetlands, continental waters), and maritime and coastal ecosystems.

This biodiversity is so significant, in terms of the variety of its wildlife and ecosystems, of which 80% of animal and plant species are endemic, and exceptional terrestrial and aquatic habitats, that it merits special emphasis.

However, this biodiversity is subject to various pressures. The pressures and threats are primarily manmade in origin, driven by the need to satisfy subsistence requirements and improve well-being.

Since the Republic of Madagascar joined the GEF, the country has received significant funding from the organization, which has helped mobilize co-financing to carry out projects in the area of biodiversity. This funding contributed significantly to the establishment and management of terrestrial protected areas such as the various national parks, resulting in such economic benefits as job creation for the surrounding population and the development of ecotourism. The GEF continues to support Madagascar with its commitment to increase the number of marine protected areas.

Madagascar is also classified as being vulnerable to the effects of climate change. GEF assistance helped reduce the vulnerability of rural communities to climate change in five regions of Madagascar. In addition, with LDC funding

managed by the GEF, four coastal areas in Madagascar subject to coastal erosion owing to rising sea levels have been rehabilitated, thus helping enhance the livelihoods of these coastal communities.

GEF assistance, with the co-financing mobilized, also contributed to reducing land degradation and helped Madagascar devise a national action plan to combat land degradation.

With respect to combating chemical pollution, Madagascar used GEF funding to develop and update its national action plan to implement the Stockholm Convention. The GEF is also helping Madagascar implement a project to reduce emissions of dioxins, furans, and mercury resulting from the open-air burning of municipal and hospital waste, which is the primary source of dioxins and furans in the country.

Moreover, during its fifth operational phase, the GEF Small Grants Programme (GEF SGP) helped carry out activities to support community initiatives relating to environmental protection and improvement of community living conditions. Thus, 104 projects totaling US\$2.88 million were financed in Madagascar. GEF support helped strengthen efforts to protect 1,269,000 hectares of natural ecosystems comprising forests (70%), lakes and rivers (12%), as well as marine and coastal areas (18%). The strengthening of governance and community management of natural resources, efforts to combat manmade pressures, the restoration of degraded areas, and outreach to and mobilization of local, regional, and national actors are among the key actions carried out. With respect to sustainable land management, over 677,000 hectares of

watersheds (74%) and agricultural fields (26%) were restored or protected against erosion and other forms of degradation. Efforts to combat erosion were intensified and agricultural techniques that are less detrimental to soil quality were promoted. The community initiatives supported helped avoid 764 metric tons per year of carbon emissions, a contribution to the efforts to combat climate change. In collaboration with other technical and financial partners, micro-hydroelectric plants were constructed to promote clean energy.

Furthermore, GEF support assisted with the capacity building of 682 community entities (community-based organizations, community-based federations, community-based unions). Their management and technical capacities were strengthened to enhance their project management and implementation skills and for their self-promotion. In addition, institutional strengthening was carried out to improve recognition of the rights of local communities. These support measures helped local Malagasy communities enhance their participation in national and international forums and events (e.g., COP21, EquatorPrize, World Parks Congress, and ICCA). With respect to beneficiaries, the community projects financed resulted in environmental and socio-economic benefits for more than 47,000 households.

Madagascar also participates in around 20 regional and global projects in the areas of biodiversity, international waters, land degradation, persistent organic pollutants, and climate change.

GEF assistance, with the co-financing mobilized, contributes significantly to sustainable development in Madagascar by supporting sustainable natural resources management and the livelihoods of vulnerable communities and by developing environment-friendly economic activities.

“Long live the GEF and this unstinting cooperation.”





The GEF and Mexico



On the 25th anniversary of Global Environmental Facility (GEF), Mexico celebrates the role of this crucial mechanism in supporting national sustainable development and growth.

As the world's largest public funder of environmental projects, the GEF is a cornerstone of environmental strategies around the world. It provides funding for projects that would otherwise receive no support, yet are essential to promote sustainable green growth through clean-energy infrastructure, biodiversity conservation, and thoughtful management of land and marine resources.

Mexico is especially proud of its role as host of the Fifth GEF Assembly held in Cancun on May 2014, which brought together representatives from more than 150 countries, 17 international institutions and 159 organizations. An historic replenishment of more than USD 4.43 billion was agreed to finance projects for the period 2014-2018, part of a new strategy envisioned for 2020. México's commitment to doubling our contribution to GEF showed how much we trust and support the Fund's work.

Since 1990 and until its last replenishment, the GEF has allocated to Mexico grants in excess of 485 million dollars. This amount has been multiplied to more than 2.6 billion

dollars from national and global co-financing sources. Those resources have been put to good use. Mexico has successfully implemented over a hundred projects funded by the GEF. Thanks to the Facility's support, we have strengthened our environmental policy. The National System for Natural Protected Areas is a case in point. It not only preserves the country's natural and cultural heritage, but also improves the quality of life of those who reside in protected areas, while building resilience to climate change through sustainable territorial management. The *Mesoamerican Biological Corridor* is a successful regional project, one that protects the natural environment of species whose habitats have little to do with national borders.

Furthermore, the assistance and technical guidance provided by GEF in the preparation of national portfolios of projects is extremely valuable for the fulfilment of our international commitments, such as the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, recently ratified by Mexico.

In a context of critical environmental challenges worldwide, the GEF will remain a critical ally. Mexico is committed to continue strengthening this successful partnership with a key global institution that is ably led by Dr. Naoko Ishii and her team.



Moldova: The Orhei National Park — From Neglect to World Heritage Recognition



Not long ago, the Republic of Moldova — lacking both mountains and coastlines — was considered to be bereft of tourist attractions. Even its own people did not really realize that there is an exceptional cultural-natural treasury right in the middle of the country, just 50 kilometers from the capital city.

The Orhei zone was perceived to be typical in its riversides, old villages, and forests. Its inhabitants were not aware of what they had: thus architectural monuments were abandoned and degrading, and forests were cut and used inappropriately. As Elisabeta Țurcanu, 56, put it: “When I moved here 30 years ago, the forests here were very rich, full of berries and mushrooms. Now nothing can be found in them”.

Only in 2002 were the first rural tourist services launched. Then, in 2008, the Ministry of Environment — in partnership with UNDP Moldova and with the financial support of the Global Environment Facility — initiated the procedure for establishing the country’s national park, within the framework of “improving coverage and management effectiveness of the protected area system in Moldova”. In 2013, Parliament decided to establish the Orhei National Park.

Attractive for its biological, cultural, and architectural diversity, and easily accessible to tourists, the national park was established to preserve biodiversity, stop the degradation of forestry ecosystems, restore sustainable management of forests and pastures, preserve cultural and architectural-historical

heritage, and promote environmentally-friendly farming and eco-tourism.

With the UNDP/GEF project support, studies were carried out to identify tourist attractions, tourist maps were created, tourist routes were marked, information boards were installed, important areas were reforested, and local people were trained in the importance of conserving biodiversity all so as to sustainably develop rural tourism in Moldova.

Important values of rural civilization and national culture are concentrated in Orhei, within an attractive and picturesque frame. Many centuries-old traditions have been preserved here, with an original combination of habits, rituals, folklore, etc.

The Orhei National Park is an important tourist attraction, as are the Trebujeni and Țiganesti landscape reserves, Churchi forest, dozens of archeological sites, a city from the time of the Golden Horde, an enhanced medieval Moldovan city, five monasteries, four boyar aristocratic manors, and much else. And it is also liked by lovers of transcendental practices, who consider it to be an especially energetic center.

The Orhei National Park is now an area of national importance, protected by law. Part of the national park — cultural-natural reserve “Old Orhei” — is in the process of being included in UNESCO’s World Heritage List.

The Netherlands — 25 Years of the GEF

BY CHRISTIAAN REBERGEN, DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



How different the world was 25 years ago. The international community had just realized that the pace of growth, production, and waste could no longer be sustained by our planet. There was a realization that natural resources were not unlimited, that biodiversity was decreasing, and that the rapid increase of greenhouse gases was causing global warming. We realized that our world's carrying capacity is limited. As a result, the principle of sustainable development was adopted with the Rio Declaration in 1992. We agreed to start “developing by meeting the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. That was when the Global Environment Facility was founded.

In 25 years, the GEF has delivered impressive work to support the transition to a sustainable and prosperous world. We have seen activities in more than 160 countries. The coastal communities of Bangladesh are now better equipped for floods, with a “forest, fish, fruits” model improving resilience, nutrition, and ecosystem protection. In Ghana, coastal sites that are a habitat for migratory birds are now better managed. And five tropical forests in Congo are now better protected to preserve their ecological wealth and diversity.

The GEF has been a constant factor and driving force in implementing the UN Conventions for the environment, in a continuously changing environmental infrastructure.

What's more, the GEF has highlighted how closely the environment and development are interrelated. When disaster strikes, people living in poverty often have to sell off their few remaining cattle and are forced to cut down trees for firewood, leading to land degradation. Boosting development, diversifying income, and creating jobs can have a positive influence on the environment.

However, as the world, its climate, and the environment are changing rapidly, we need to adapt our approach as well. Climate change is threatening ecosystems and increasing the prevalence of extreme weather events like droughts, storms, and heavy rainfall, thereby damaging livelihoods. These threats make climate resilience an essential component of development in the years ahead. Ever greater demand for natural resources, tremendous population growth, and climate change are interdependent factors that threaten our global environment. So an integrated approach to environmental policy is essential.

The Netherlands urges you to continue your environmental interventions in the most effective manner possible, thereby adapting your policies to our ever-changing global environment. Based on the evidence of the past 25 years, we have every confidence that the GEF will achieve this goal.

Here's to another 25 years!

The Netherlands



The GEF and Norway

BY BØRGE BRENDE
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS



The establishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) was an important milestone for efforts to promote global environmental protection. It has a unique role in the global environment architecture. Norway supported the establishment of the GEF and still regards it as highly relevant for future efforts. Indeed the fact that the GEF is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year is testimony to its ability to remain relevant in a time when new initiatives are constantly being launched.

Over a period that has seen tremendous change, the GEF has demonstrated its ability to address and adapt to new challenges in the vast domain of environmental issues. The experience the GEF has gained, coupled with its mandate to operate as a financing mechanism for the main environmental conventions, sets it apart from other instruments.

Today, however, there are many instruments that are focusing on sustainable investment in general, and on reducing emissions in particular. It is therefore crucial that the GEF and these other instruments collaborate closely to ensure complementarity, cost-effectiveness, and the greatest possible impact. We see that the GEF is reaching out and building partnerships. The GEF has also strengthened its engagement with the private sector, and it can further shape the direction and scale of private sector engagement in green investment in the process towards the seventh replenishment.

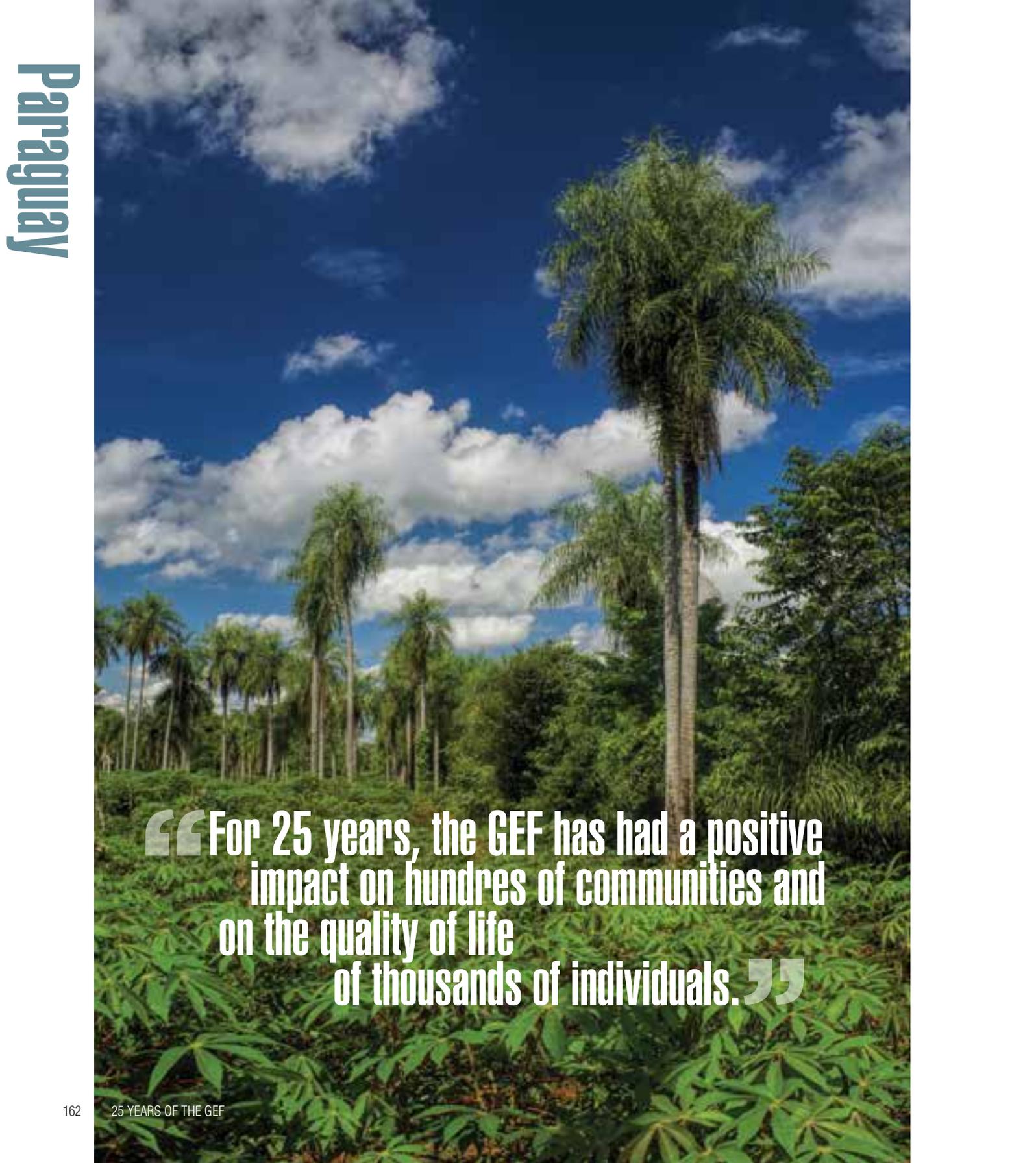
The Sustainable Development Goals provide a holistic framework with the potential to forge greater political coherence both in individual countries and internationally. The SDGs promote global understanding of the way that the natural resource base and ecosystem services relate to our economic and social aspirations. They also highlight the need for instruments, such as the GEF, that translate this understanding into action. Greater coherence will mean greater efficiency as policies become mutually reinforcing rather than cancelling each other out. We value the willingness of the GEF to improve its own effectiveness through comprehensive evaluations.

Norway will continue to support the GEF in communicating the key role it plays in enabling countries to deliver not only on the SDGs, but also on their nationally determined emissions reductions under the Paris Agreement. It is vital to underline the fact that these goals and targets can only be met if environment and climate dimensions are included in the design of projects, programmes, and policies from the outset.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to commend the GEF for its important work and CEO Naoko Ishii for her leadership.



Norway

A tall palm tree stands prominently in the center-right of the frame, reaching towards a bright blue sky filled with scattered white clouds. The foreground is dominated by a dense field of green, leafy plants, likely a cashew plantation. In the background, a line of other palm trees stretches across the horizon, suggesting a larger plantation or natural grove. The overall scene is vibrant and lush, representing a healthy agricultural landscape.

“For 25 years, the GEF has had a positive impact on hundreds of communities and on the quality of life of thousands of individuals.”

Pilot Sites: Transforming Funds into Sustainable Actions in Paraguay



The Global Environment Facility (GEF) has joined forces with Paraguay's Ministry of Environment to generate sustainable production alternatives, create opportunities, and improve the quality of life in the most vulnerable communities, and has provided US\$1,400,000 in grant funding to the Pas Chaco project. The sum of US\$440,000 was allocated for demonstration practices, with each pilot site receiving US\$110,000. The initiative covers over 70,000 hectares and is providing training to some 4,000 persons.

For 25 years, the GEF has had a positive impact on hundreds of communities and on the quality of life of thousands of individuals. According to Dr Carlos Monges, the Coordinator of the Pas Chaco project in Paraguay, these "*funds are being transformed into actions.*" The pilot sites — demonstration projects for sustainable land and forest management practices — are one such example.

There are four pilot sites in Paraguay: Mariscal Estigarribia, Filadelfia, Loma Plata, and Puerto Casado. Activities such as horticulture, beekeeping, medicinal plant gardens, handicrafts, small livestock farming, and forest management (silvopastoral system with *Prosopis sp.* and growth trials of the *Bulnesia Sarmientoii*) are being conducted on each site.

As a result, the awareness of persons who are exploiting the Gran Chaco Americano ecosystem has been raised, and

they are replicating and disseminating environmentally friendly actions. All of the foregoing is contributing to a reduction in the pressure being exerted on forests and land, while increasing their conservation.

The Gran Chaco Americano is an exceptionally diverse ecoregion. Covering 1,066,000 km², it is South America's second largest forested area after the Amazon, stretching across parts of Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia, and Brazil. Various stakeholders in the Boquerón department, such as the *criollos*, the Mennonites, and indigenous communities living in vulnerable conditions are therefore involved in pilot site activities.

Looking ahead, there are signs that improving people's surroundings and quality of life will be no easy task. However, the desire shared by the countries and the GEF alike signals endless opportunities for economic, social, and environmental development, which in turn leads to greater efforts by national authorities. Training, increased use of good practices, and organization are key to improving application of the initiatives.

Improving the comprehensiveness of projects is another critical factor. Pas Chaco stretches over three countries that share an extraordinary ecoregion, thus strengthening the overall impact in a meaningful manner. These crucial factors could ultimately pave the way toward sustainable development.

The Philippines: Protecting the Pearl

BY ANALIZA REBUERTA-TEH, UNDERSECRETARY AND CHIEF OF STAFF
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES, AND GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT



The Philippines — often dubbed “Pearl of the Orient” — is generously gifted with natural resources and biological diversity, enough for many Filipinos to rely on for their livelihoods. It is also humbled by its lack of financial resources, as well as its vulnerability to natural disasters — but the GEF extended its hand and helped the Philippines with its responsibilities at home. Indeed the GEF has been serving since 1992 as a protective and nurturing shell to the natural resources pearl that is the Philippines.

A total of 106 programmes and projects were approved from 1992 to 2016 of which 52 were national projects and 54 regional ones. Of these, 43 approved projects with a total GEF financial support of US\$374.333 million are on-going and 61 were already completed with a total GEF financial support of US\$327.717 million. This GEF support to the country has leveraged a total co-financing of US\$4.651 billion.

The GEF-financed projects being implemented across the country have significantly contributed not just to conserving and protecting the environment, but to empowering and improving the lives of Filipinos through capacity building activities and providing proper sustainable livelihoods. The GEF makes possible the protection of biologically-diverse areas in the country through establishing and strengthening the management of at least 50 protected areas and key biodiversity areas, including the Samar Island Natural Park, the Tubbataha Protected Seascape, the Malampaya Sound Protected Landscape and Seascape, and the Quirino Protected Landscapes. The GEF has also been instrumental in the documentation and recognition of at least seven Indigenous Community Conserved Areas, covering around

200,000 key biodiversity areas, and has supported the country in improving and strengthening its policies on energy and the environment.

Through the GEF’s assistance, such policies, plans, and protocols were reviewed, formulated, or drafted as: the Indigenous Peoples’ and Community Conserved Areas Bill; an amendment to the Integrated Protected Areas Fund; mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in local development planning processes; the draft policy framework on Access and Benefit-Sharing from using genetic resources, that would implement the Philippines’ commitments to the Nagoya Protocol; protocols for in-situ conservation of crops on farms, on climate information-sharing, and on Geographic Insurance Units development; strategic action plans for coastal and marine resources management; an amendment to the Chemical Control Order for Mercury and Mercury Compounds; and passage of the Renewable Energy Act, among others.

Rural infrastructures have been constructed and improved all over the country. The Mindanao Rural Development Project Phase II alone, included around 1,300 kilometers of farm-to-market roads, 688 linear meter bridges, and 1,800 community water points or sources. Efforts to preserve and protect natural resources — from establishing at least 1,750 marine fish sanctuaries to rehabilitating 1,150 mangrove forests — were also successfully carried out in the same project. Another GEF-supported project reported the abatement of emissions equivalent to 122,760 tons of carbon dioxide from energy savings and recovered refrigerants.

GEF-funded projects in the Philippines also serve as effective mediums in imparting valuable knowledge and experience through awareness-raising activities, hands-on training, and interactive seminars and workshops. These capacity building activities not only help the projects to progress, but enable a diverse range of people to become more empowered in developing and implementing at least 70 micro biodiversity-friendly enterprises. These efforts have also heightened popular appreciation of the projects' importance and benefits.

The GEF in the Philippines continues to engage multi-stakeholders from national and local governments, private sector and civil society organizations (CSOs), including academia, in achieving local and global environmental benefits. CSOs, in particular, have participated in all stages of GEF projects — planning, execution, decision-making, monitoring, and evaluation, — and are also beneficiaries of GEF interventions: more than 40 CSOs/NGOs/People's Organizations have been supported.

The Philippines, as a beneficiary, will continue to experience and harvest the ripple effects of the GEF's efforts to establish the Sustainable Development Goals, such as through poverty reduction and an improved environment. It also hopes that the GEF's resilience in the face of future challenges will be as great as that of the Filipinos when they confront storms.





“Integration among various sectors, and partnership with other Caribbean states have been vital aspects in addressing the challenging effects of negative environmental trends.”

St. Kitts and Nevis Celebrates the 25th Anniversary of The Global Environment Facility (GEF)



BY DR HON. TIMOTHY HARRIS
PRIME MINISTER

On behalf of the Government, citizens, and residents of St. Kitts and Nevis, I extend congratulations to Dr. Naoko Ishii, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as this organization celebrates its 25th anniversary. With its record of global advocacy and partnership in sustainable development, the GEF remains a committed partner to its member states, particularly Small Island Developing States (SIDS) such as St. Kitts and Nevis and other Caribbean countries.

Like the GEF, we have recognized that the achievement of long-term sustainable development cannot be done in a silo. As such, integration among the various sectors, and partnership with other Caribbean states, have been vital aspects in addressing the challenging effects of trends such as population growth, expansion of the middle class, and urbanization. Each of these developmental issues can reasonably be expected to positively impact socio-economic transformation.

The GEF has supported both local and regional interventions, which have assisted St. Kitts and Nevis in achieving its sustainable development objectives. These initiatives include the Integrated Watershed and Coastal Area Management (IWCAM) and the OECS Protected Areas and Associated Livelihoods (OPAAL) projects. Recently, with support of the GEF, the Federation has embarked on the implementation of

its first national project, aptly named “Conserving Biodiversity and Reducing Habitat Degradation in Protected Areas and their Areas of Influence”. As we move forward in the global environment that has already adopted the imperatives for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — and illustrated our commitment by the signing of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in April 2016 — we foresee an even greater role for the GEF. We recognize that the Facility will be instrumental in (a) assisting member states to access climate finance resources and (b) ensuring country ownership in the development of national initiatives that will serve to advance both local and regional sustainable development goals.

It is imperative that support and leadership be at the fulcrum of the GEF's ability to advocate for the utilization of a vulnerability index. This index will assist in the determination of resource allocation. We are cognizant of the fact that the increased weight on GDP per capita places the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis — and other Caribbean countries — at a disadvantage. This indicator, at present, does not capture the well-being of the nation, its social development or its environmental management issues that are caused by the effects of climate change.

We are committed to doing our part in transforming our world.

The GEF and Samoa: A Genuine Partnership



BY SULUIMALO AMATAGA PENAIA, GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT;
ALIIHOAIGA FETURI ELISAIA, GEF POLITICAL FOCAL POINT;
ANNE RASMUSSEN, ACEO, GEF DIVISION, MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

This year's 25th anniversary of the Global Environment Facility is an equally significant milestone in the Samoa/GEF partnership. For a quarter of a century, ever since the Facility's pilot phase, Samoa has been — and continues to be — a grateful recipient of its financial support and assistance.

Such a partnership was natural and to be expected. The GEF was set up to provide the means to assist Small Island Developing States like Samoa to enhance their resilience and adaptive capacity to help cushion against the impacts of climate change. Samoa knows well from real-life experience the physical and mental scars that climate change entails, including the loss of life and property and infrastructure and the ease with which a small economy can be crippled. The expected increase in the number and severity of extreme weather events poses a threat to all development sectors of the country such as infrastructure, water, agriculture and fisheries, health, and livelihoods, and make the role and contribution of the GEF all the more important, critical, and vital.

The GEF has partnered with Samoa and some of its bilateral, regional, and international partners to address these challenges, through interventions implemented with the prioritized profiles identified in Samoa's National Adaptation Programme of Action. These are in the form of mitigation and adaptation actions providing soft and hard solutions to help achieve the goal to "*increase the resilience and reduce the vulnerability of Samoa*".

The following is a snapshot of some of the recent GEF-funded projects and programmes, capturing the breadth and scope of its involvement in Samoa. The majority of projects implemented have enjoyed success in various ways.

Importantly, some have resulted in tangible tools and outcomes which have been refined, adopted, and used nationally, and to some extent regionally in one or two neighboring island countries.

One such tool is the Climate Early Warning System (CLEWS) used in our Agriculture and Health Sector for a project on Integrating Climate Change Risks primarily to identify long-term food securities and diversified resilient cropping and farming techniques, as well as the connection between the patterns and dynamics of specific disease prevalence and climate-related trends. The result was that the capability to better prepare and respond when needed was greatly enhanced, as was mobilizing adequate resources.

CLEWS was further modified to meet the needs of later projects in the Forestry and Tourism Sectors of Samoa for projects on the Integration of Climate Change Risks and Resilience into Forestry Management (ICCRIFS) and Enhancing the Resilience of Tourism Reliant Communities to Climate Change Risk, and was subsequently adopted by the Cook Islands.

The need to climate-proof infrastructure became apparent in the aftermath of Cyclone Evans in 2012 with reconstruction costs amounting to US\$204 million. The experience prompted Samoa to construct climate-proof infrastructure such as roads, bridges, a sea wall, and the upcoming Vaisigano River Revetment Wall, including an update of the current 1992 National Building Code.

Active engagement and participation by local communities is an integral part of the government's approach for ownership and buy-in: they are the people feeling the onslaught and physical effects of climate change on the

ground and at the frontline. The use of Participatory 3 Dimensional Modelling (P3DM) has proved to be an effective tool in engaging and instilling a sense of community ownership of projects and programmes. This has contributed to the widespread use of the P3DM nationally and regionally such as in the Ridge to Reef Project in Niue and the project on Strengthening Resilience of our Islands & Communities to Climate Change in the Cook Islands.

There is a close correlation with establishing and adopting lessons from Agroforestry Practices and Community Nurseries lessons encouraged through the ICCRIFS Project, and since adopted by similar projects such as the Project on Forestry Conservation and Protected Area Management in Samoa, Fiji, Vanuatu, Niue funded by the GEF through the Food and Agriculture Organization.

Samoa has invested heavily in such renewable energy technologies such as solar, wind and biomass gasification systems. This makes good sense since all three use resources that Samoa has in plentiful supply — sunlight, wind and invasive weeds.

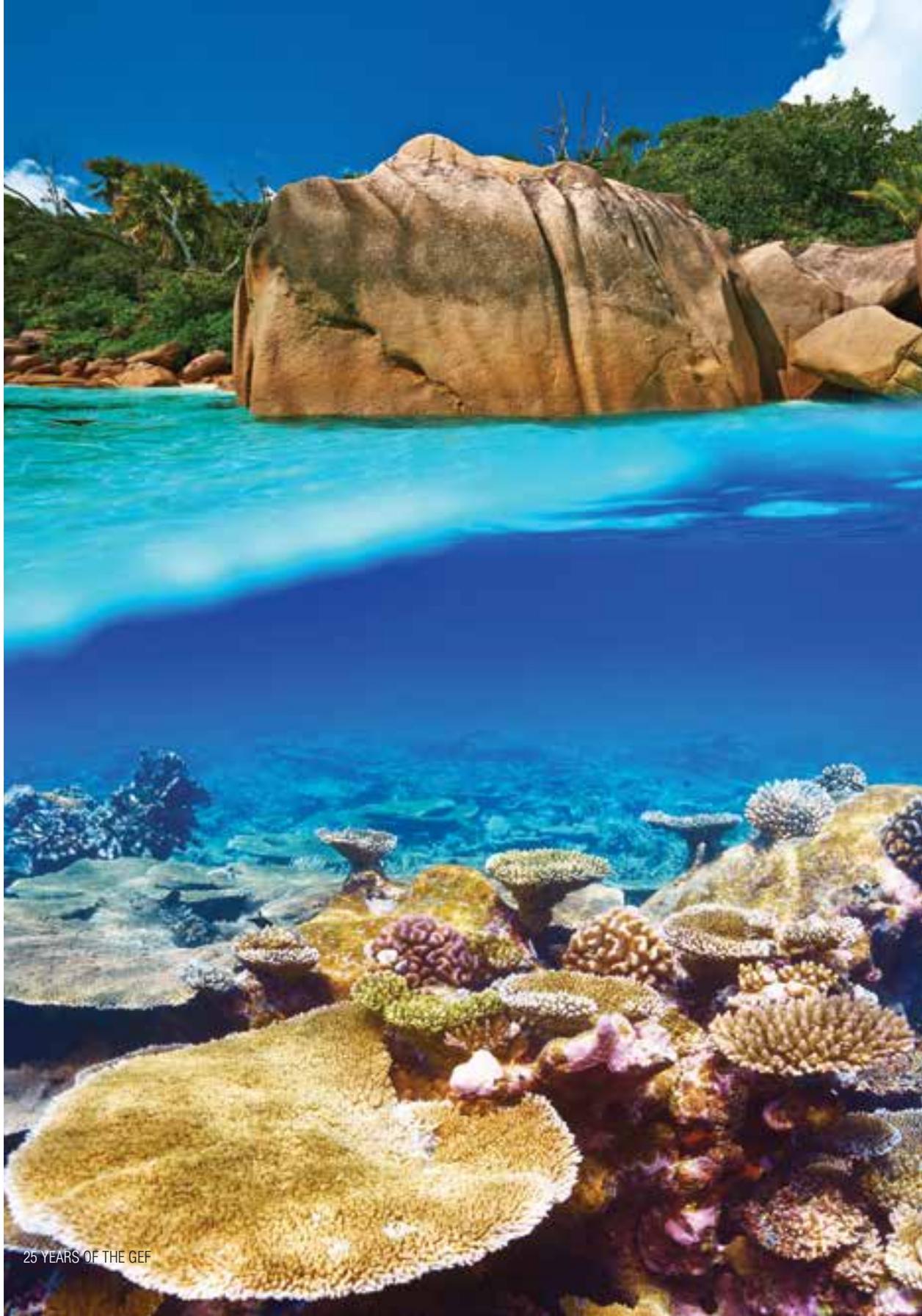
Now the priority is to mainstream climate change with disaster risk management and reduction across all sectors so that climate change is viewed holistically as a cross-cutting issue and not seen as a silo.

The timing is ideal as Samoa is working to finalize its “Strategy for the Development of Samoa, 2016-2020”. This and the resultant sector-level plans will help Samoa implement the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the SDGs and the SAMOA Pathway.

The GEF has been a reliable, understanding, and faithful partner to Samoa during the last 25 years. Samoa is at a critical juncture following its graduation from the Least Developed Country category on 1 January 2014, making it ineligible to receive resources under the GEF’s Least Developed Country Fund. It hopes that it can continue to benefit from other financial support from GEF. For its part, Samoa will continue to contribute optimally to the global effort to address climate change within the constraints of its resources because it is the right and morally correct thing to do. And with the GEF’s assistance and support, nothing is impossible.



Seychelles



The GEF's Contribution to Sustainable Development in Seychelles



Seychelles consists of over 100 islands of granitic and coralline origin with a total land area of 455 km² but a total marine area of 1.374 million km². Its economy is based on its natural assets: tourism and fisheries together contribute more than 70% of national GDP. The population of only 93,000 persons share the land and marine areas with some 7,200 species of animals and plants, including several flagship species, such as the Aldabra giant tortoise and the Coco-de-mer palm, and over 1,000 varieties of reef fish.

Seychelles has been an active partner of the GEF since 1996 and is one of the highest recipients per capita of GEF funding globally. Since 1996, 22 national projects were supported with a total budget of US\$22.6 million. The Seychelles also benefited from an additional 20 regional and international projects.

Seychelles has gazetted 47% of its terrestrial area in national parks and reserves. GEF support has assisted in establishing the PA estate and continues to fund the expansion to include less-represented ecosystems. Less than 1% of the marine area is currently protected, but the GEF has supported the government in regional LME planning and prioritization for zoning of its marine territory to achieve 30% protection through an innovative Debt-for-Adaptation swap mechanism. The GEF is supporting projects to diversify

income streams to achieve financial sustainability of the PA network. To assure social inclusion, the GEF has also supported the piloting of fisheries management and co-management plans, engaging the fishing community, and engaged tourism operators to better manage private islands and associated coral reefs.

Seychelles is highly dependent on imports, both of petroleum and food. GEF support for solar power installation is assisting the government meet its target of generating 30% of its power from renewables by 2030 and to adopt energy efficient technologies to help reduce fuel bill. GEF support for SLM and planned initiatives to promote climate-smart agriculture and agroforestry assists in localizing food production. Moreover, biosecurity measures helps to keep out pests of fruit and other crops as well as protect the natural ecosystems from further invasive incursions.

Seychelles is pioneering a Blue Economy, basing economic development on sustainable use of natural assets. The country has an ambitious vision to establish the world's first eco-capital, democratize renewable energy, valorize its fisheries, and safeguard its environment and biodiversity through sensitive and inclusive development. Seychelles looks forward to continuing GEF engagement in realizing this vision.





The GEF and Slovenia

BY MRS IRENA MAJCEN
MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND SPATIAL PLANNING

Like the GEF, Slovenia is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. As in our own lives, the occasion of this important anniversary is one where doing some evaluation, inventory or review of the past and making plans for the future — or for the next 25 years — cannot be avoided.

At first, Slovenia was a beneficiary of GEF funds: we are proud of the environmental projects we accomplished together. As the nation progressed step by step in its statehood and economic development, it turned from being a beneficiary to a contributing country after 10 years of GEF membership. We are happy that, as a result, we can help other countries in the way that we were ourselves once assisted.

Slovenia is not a big country in the size of its territory or population, but it has a big heart. At the right moment its people knew what they had to do to make a better future — and were able to do it in the right way. Its contribution cannot

be at the same level as those of bigger and richer countries. But I am convinced that we have to preserve the variety of donors within the GEF because it is important not just that we collect enough resources, but that as many countries as possible who qualify for donor status take up the challenge and provide an opportunity to other nations for sustainable development. This at the same time enables their people to express their solidarity and enable them better to understand how — now more than ever before our world is interconnected and interdependent. We cannot have clean air, a healthy environment, and sustainable development in one part of our planet while neglecting all the rest.

Such is the mission and role of the GEF: to collect proper funds for sustainable development and a clean environment globally because we all have only this one planet Earth and it is our duty to preserve it for generations to come.

**“We all have this one planet Earth
and it is our duty to preserve it
for generations to come.”**

South Africa and the GEF: Partners For Sustainable Development



BY MS NOSIPHO NGCABA, DIRECTOR-GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, AND GEF POLITICAL FOCAL POINT

South Africa boasts an abundant supply of natural resources and ranks as the third most mega-biodiverse country in the world. Nevertheless, there is a need to balance economic and other development goals with that of environmental sustainability for the benefit of present and future generations.

The GEF has been the key multilateral environmental financing mechanism supporting developing countries in addressing global environmental benefits and promoting sustainable development. South Africa submitted its instrument of participation in the GEF in 1994, and participates in the GEF Council. It hosted the GEF Assembly in 2006 and participated in the fourth, fifth, and sixth replenishment meetings.

Since becoming a member of the GEF, South Africa has developed a portfolio of 97 national and regional projects worth US\$821.70 million in GEF funding, with co-financing amounting to US\$4.74 billion. Its first GEF project, “the Table Mountain conservation project”, was approved in 1997 and attracted US\$12 million in GEF funding. Resources made available by the GEF have enabled South Africa to implement projects that protect the integrity of the environment while stimulating economic and social development.

The GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) has operated in South Africa for over 20 years and its contribution and impact in addressing a plethora of environment and development challenges have been immense. It is, as the former National Coordinator of the SGP in South Africa has indicated, “rooted in the belief that global environmental

problems can best be addressed if local people take ownership and there are direct community benefits”. Since 2001, it has invested over US\$3.7 million in the country, with similar levels of co-financing leveraged for over 90 community projects. It has ensured linkages between global, national, and local issues through a transparent, participatory, and country-driven approach to project planning, design, and implementation — and recognizes the need to work in partnership with other organizations.

The programme focuses on all dimensions of sustainable development and contributes — in line with the National Development Plan — to addressing the country’s triple challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality, and their underlying causes. GEF projects generally bring together partners, realizing that environmental concerns cannot adequately be addressed until social and development challenges are dealt with.

Country allocations in the Climate Change, Biodiversity, and Land Degradation focal areas have enabled the government to adopt a focused approach to addressing the challenges of environmental degradation as they impact development.

The Department of Environmental Affairs, as the GEF focal point for South Africa, has adopted a transparent and consultative programming approach, including “prioritization workshops” where all interested stakeholders jointly plan and agree on how comprehensively to address environmental challenges. Our programming process is informed by the vision outlined in the National Development Plan and

other important statutes developed by the Department to govern sustainable use of our natural resources, including the National Environment Management Act. The multilateral environmental agreements, for which the GEF is a financial mechanism, are also considered in programming resources. Capacity building is a critical element of GEF projects in South Africa, due to the country's history of inadequately building up skills among the previously disadvantaged groups, and it ensures the sustainability of the projects beyond GEF funding.



South Sudan: The Newest Member of the GEF Family

BY DAVID BATALI OLIVER
GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT



The GEF has played an important role in offering South Sudan the opportunity to join in the global efforts to address such environmental concerns as the climate change and biodiversity loss that adversely affect our planet Earth.

South Sudan is the newest country in Africa, only attaining its independence on 9 July 2011, when it seceded from Sudan following a referendum. When it became an independent country it had hardly any participation in multilateral environmental agreements. The country, through the Ministry of Environment, swiftly embarked on the process of acceding and becoming a party to the three Rio Conventions — the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The UNDP South Sudan Country Office in Juba played a major role in raising awareness about the Global Environment Facility and the urgent need for South Sudan to accede to these conventions and the government is very grateful to it.

Following South Sudan becoming the 183rd member of the Global Environment Facility in May 2013 and its accession to the Rio Conventions, the GEF provided funds for implementing the Enabling Activity projects — the National Adaptation Programme of Action in Response to Climate Change, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, the National Capacity Self-Assessment for Global Environmental Management in South Sudan; and the Initial National Communication as well as the Biennial Update Report under the United Nations Framework Convention

for Climate Change. To date, the outputs of this include the NAPA document, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, and the Fifth Biodiversity National Report. Meanwhile, work has started on the National Capacity Self-Assessment, the Initial National Communication and the Biennial Update Report and is progressing very well. South Sudan has been allocated US\$6 million for the current GEF funding cycle, effective from 1 July 2014. The government has committed the money to a project on building capacity to reduce the illegal wildlife trade and enhance the management of protected areas in the country with UNEP as the implementing agency as part of its efforts to address the challenge of widespread poaching and the illegal trade in wildlife products in the country, coupled with the need to contribute to global impacts and benefits.

The government's expectation for the future is that GEF will have a significant biodiversity and climate change portfolio in the country to address the major drivers of biodiversity loss and the enormous climate change challenges facing the country, manifested in encroaching desertification from the northern parts of the country southwards, alarming deforestation, land degradation, extreme weather patterns and many other impacts. It is very appreciative and grateful to the GEF for being considerate and treating South Sudan specially and is looking forward to more GEF support so as to be able to play a significant role in addressing the environmental issues threatening the livelihood of its rural population, which constitutes 80% its people. South Sudan is privileged to have this 25th anniversary celebrated when it has joined the GEF family.



The GEF and Spain

BY ÍÑIGO FERNÁNDEZ DE MESA
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS



This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Global Environment Facility, which was established in 1992 at the United Nations Earth Summit. At that time when the myriad environmental threats were not yet as well-known or clear-cut, the GEF emerged as a pioneering organization seeking to counteract those threats by focusing its work on such important areas as protecting biodiversity, safeguarding international waters, combating climate change and land degradation, controlling chemical spills, and improving forest protection management.

Spain has worked with the GEF during this period and has been able to provide the organization with its continued support because of the commitment of successive governments and heightened awareness among Spanish citizens of environmental problems. Even in recent years, when budget constraints have grown tighter, Spain has continued to provide the GEF with its unconditional support.

Over such a long period, the world has changed. Demographic pressures and unchecked growth have exacerbated environmental threats. However, the upside is that, because society is now being educated on environmental issues, there is widespread awareness of the need

to protect the environment, as evidenced by the consensus reached on the Paris Agreement at the last COP21, which has already been ratified by more than 170 countries.

The GEF has been evolving. In addition to the 4,000 conventional projects in more than 180 countries, new instruments have been created in an effort to achieve new objectives. These include the Integrated Approaches and small grants aimed at civil society, to name a few.

We have also seen the emergence of other complementary instruments such as the Climate Investment Funds and, recently, the Green Climate Fund, which is being hailed as the key tool to combat climate change. All these Funds benefited from GEF experience during the start-up phase of their activities, although once they became operational, activities and experience, both positive and negative, were shared. It should be emphasized that although the GEF is a pioneer, it continues to expand its objectives and seek new tools to fulfill its mission.

I would like to see the GEF successfully continue its work in the years ahead, given the tremendous benefits that it will continue to offer for our future.





The GEF and Sweden

BY ISABELLA LÖVIN
MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION



The year 2016 marks the 25th anniversary of the Global Environment Facility. Twenty-five is a highly respectable age for an international organization — sufficient to have accumulated a considerable amount of experience, young enough to retain the energy needed to continue to play a vital role in its area. It is an age which allows us to draw several conclusions on the outstanding value the Swedish government believes the GEF has had, and will continue to have.

First of all, the GEF has proved to be the visionary creation many hoped it would be. As the linkages between the environment, climate change, and development have become even clearer over the past few decades, the idea of creating a facility jointly serving several environmental conventions, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and related areas has perhaps proved even more useful than originally expected. Like no other organization in the field, the GEF has been able to unite interrelated concerns such as biodiversity, chemicals and waste, ocean management, and climate change. The value of having such a coherent instrument has been confirmed repeatedly, from the original decisions at the 1992 Rio Conference, through the Millennium Development Goals to, most recently, the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Second, the GEF has demonstrated a high degree of effectiveness. It has served several Conventions in a focused and attentive way. It has demonstrated an ability to adjust its programming and methods to further improve its current work, for example, on programmes with an integrated approach across the GEF's range of responsibilities.

Third, I believe that the GEF has offered a role model for international cooperation in its area. From Sweden's perspective as a Member State, the consistently cooperative spirit of the GEF Partnership has spawned a consensual approach that has long been the GEF hallmark and a source of inspiration in other contexts. The GEF Secretariat and its leadership have been instrumental in generating this spirit.

The Swedish government is proud to have contributed financially to the GEF from the beginning. Climate change is the defining issue of our time. Serious environmental challenges remain on all continents. As the largest intergovernmental financing body uniting climate, the environment, and development, the GEF will continue to play a necessary and vital role in the years ahead.

“If the GEF did not exist,
we would have to invent it!”

The GEF and Switzerland

BY DORIS LEUTHARD, FEDERAL COUNCILLOR
HEAD OF THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT,
ENERGY AND COMMUNICATIONS (DETEC)



Over the last two decades, the global dimension of the environment has become increasingly evident. The protection and sustainable use of the environment as natural resource base for prosperity, and well-being, is clearly for the benefit of all. Effective environmental policies have to be organized in a global manner. However, not all countries have the same capacity to formulate and effectively implement such policies. The GEF has been at the forefront of providing support for such policies all around the world. In doing so, the GEF is an essential element in the structure of multilateral environmental agreements. Its role goes beyond being an instrument in the interest of developing countries, which receive such support. It is a forward looking and solution-oriented instrument in the interest of all of us. If the GEF did not exist, we would have to invent it!

As part of a unique constituency of recipient and non-recipient countries, which includes Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, Switzerland is pleased to have been part of the GEF family since the inception. The GEF has been active in several environmental areas, and new ones, like chemicals, have been added to its mandate. This is indeed a strength of the GEF, since many environmental challenges are interrelated and therefore the most effective solutions are often of cross-sectoral nature. This is evident in our constituency in Central Asia, where climate change, water scarcity, land degradation, and pressure on biodiversity are mutually influencing each other.

Despite some successes — for example in protecting the ozone layer — the pressure on the environment continues. According to science, planetary boundaries are exceeded in several areas, such as biodiversity, chemicals, water, or climate. Especially in developing countries, environmental degradation is jeopardizing if not sweeping off development achievements. We are in a race against time. The GEF's own funds are relatively modest compared to the huge needs to halt environmental degradation. Therefore, it is right that it seeks a catalytic role and that GEF projects support the development of conducive regulatory frameworks with the aim of shifting investment risks and factor in the risks induced by climate change, biodiversity loss, etc. Two of the GEF's main strengths are that it implements projects in cooperation with the GEF agencies, the client countries, and civil society organizations, and that it works across sectors as a financial mechanism of several environmental conventions.

As a pioneer in support of the global environment, the GEF is well positioned to deliver sustainable action in the years to come. Building on 25 years of experience and on its comprehensive mandate and broad partnership, the GEF will need to maintain a sharp focus, yet be prepared to test new approaches and to innovate and collaborate beyond the traditional partners. Only in doing so will the GEF be able to contribute to preserve the very foundation of life, while fostering a transition to a thriving and clean economy and an equitable society.

Thailand as a Member of the GEF Family

BY DR KASEMSUN CHINNAVASO, PERMANENT SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT, AND GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT



The global community faces many challenges which correspond with the focal areas of the GEF, which has been a key financial mechanism supporting developing countries, and ones with economies in transition, in addressing global environmental issues since 1991 and serves as the financial mechanism for several international environmental conventions. Thailand recognizes the need to cooperate with the global community to address these challenges and therefore has become party to many conventions. We are happy that, with GEF support, we can enhance our work at the national level as well as cooperate with other countries to address global environmental challenges.

The GEF's 25th anniversary takes place at a crucial time after world leaders adopted the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September 2015 and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change that December. This year is the beginning of a global community effort in to realize the Sustainable Development Goals. It is also the year in which

we start ratifying the Paris Agreement. Recently, Thailand has formally ratified the Paris Agreement as we want to be part of the global community's attempts to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, while pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change.

Over the past 25 years, the GEF has provided US\$107.25 million for 38 national projects — including ones by the Small Grants Programme, in Thailand and US\$226.11 million for 35 regional and global projects in which the country has participated. The GEF has supported Thailand in carrying out many projects and activities to address environmental degradation and conserve natural resources. Such projects also strengthen community capacity and participation in managing natural resources and the environment, while improving the quality of life of local people. They help us move toward sustainable development.

“We are happy that, with the GEF support, we can enhance our work at the national level as well as cooperate with other countries to address global environmental challenges.”

Thailand has put the most effort into managing GEF funding effectively and efficiently by establishing the GEF National Steering Committee, consisting of representatives of government, communities, and the private sector with economic, social, natural resource, and environmental expertise. The committee is responsible for determining policies and guidelines on implementing GEF projects and for endorsing projects, according to GEF criteria, Thailand's policies and plans, and responsiveness to the country's need.

As well as enhancing the country's capacity to cope with biodiversity conservation, chemicals and waste, seas and the ocean, and the impacts of climate change, the projects supported by GEF have had positive effects, provided benefits and enhanced the capacity of all including project owners, academic researchers, experts, and most importantly the public and individual people. GEF projects have built effective inter-agency coordination and cooperation, while increasing public participation toward achieving common goals. They promote the exchange of knowledge and experience on biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, and this leads to sustainable development and people's well-being.

Thailand welcomes the GEF 2020 strategy, which emphasizes the need to support transformational change and achieve impacts on a broader scale. The strategy calls for the GEF to focus on the drivers of environmental degradation, and addresses the importance of supporting broad coalitions of committed stakeholders and of innovative and scalable activities. We are proud to be a member of the GEF family and look forward to seeing the GEF becoming a champion of the global commons.



The GEF is Supporting Sustainable Development in Togo

Testimonials From Beneficiaries



While Togo has embarked on an accelerated growth and job promotion strategy, it is not neglecting the importance of sustainably managing its natural resources. Indeed, Togo is party to several multilateral environmental agreements and is making progress implementing these agreements with support from its partners.

As the main source of financing for natural resource management and environmental protection projects and programmes in Togo, the GEF is providing substantial technical and financial support to the national sustainable development process.

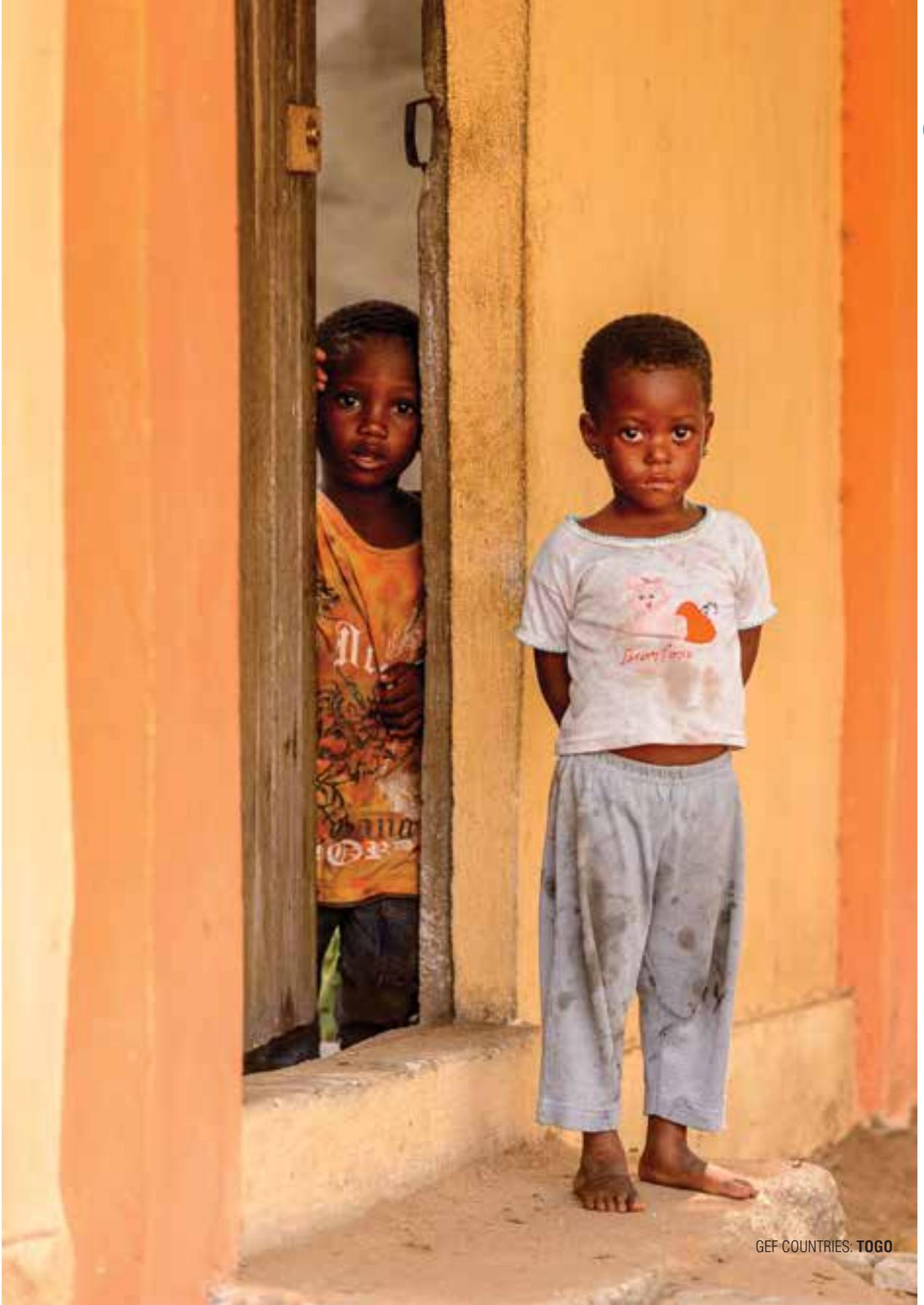
During the fifth operational phase of the GEF, the government accorded priority to the financing of small community initiatives, primarily through the implementation of the Integrated Disaster and Land Management Project (PGICT), the Project to Strengthen National and Decentralized Capacities for Environmental Management (PRCNDGE), the Project to Strengthen the Conservation Role of National Protected Areas System in Togo (PRAPT), the Adaptation of Agricultural Production to Climate Change in Togo (ADAPT) project, and the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP/GEF).

Among other things, this support has provided over 200 poor communities with resources and knowledge for the restoration, conservation, and sustainable development of national and community biodiversity conservation areas and sites, as well as agricultural land and water resources. Moreover, good land management practices are increasingly being adopted by farmers and agricultural producers, thereby promoting intensive farming. Chemical fertilizers are systematically being replaced by organic fertilizers in market garden fields and sites. *"We discovered that cow*

dung and poultry droppings are less expensive than mineral fertilizers. They significantly boost yields, providing us with extremely high-quality, longer-lasting products. What's more, the land remains productive, whereas we begin to see depletion of this farmland after just a few years of using chemical fertilizers," noted Ms Amélie Mensah, a vegetable producer. She further stated that *"our products are organic; they are in demand. Customers are aware of their nutritional value and their positive effects on health and the environment. We have never experienced a slump in sales, even when the market is inundated with vegetables. We even charge slightly higher prices, which increases our income and is a reliable source of livelihood for the well-being of our families."*

Sustainable land management practices have therefore been promoted. Ms Yendab Tani, a resident in Panabagou in the savanna region, declared that *"in the past, as soon as it started to rain, we would have to evacuate our homes because they would be flooded. The children also had no access to their school and, most of all, the flood waters would wash away a significant portion of our fields. With support from the PGICT/GEF, we have built stone barriers and productivity has improved. We were also paid to collect and assemble the stones. The project also provided us with seedlings for replanting purposes. We were paid for digging holes and planting seeds. This helped pay for our children's schooling."*

While welcoming the GEF's invaluable support with the national sustainable development process, the government is counting on this GEF Partnership to finance selected priority actions in Togo's National Investment Program for the Environment and Natural Resources (PNIERN) and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.





GEF Achievements in Trinidad and Tobago Over 25 years



The Global Environment Facility (GEF) continues to collaborate with the people of Trinidad and Tobago (T&T), supporting environmental stewardship through continued provision of new and additional grants and concessional funding related to the core focal areas of the GEF.

This ongoing collaboration with the people of T&T has undoubtedly made positive impacts on the country's policies, procedures, and interventions related to issues such as natural resources usage and management, biodiversity, land degradation, climate change, use of ozone depleting substances, and persistent organic pollutants (POPs).

Since introduction in T&T in 1991, GEF funding and co-financing from local and regional partners, resulted in 24 projects being initiated totaling in excess of US\$530 million, with an overall ratio of 25% GEF funding and 75% co-financing. This represents a significant commitment and investment in the people of T&T and the preservation of its environment. The GEF/T&T partnership projects initiated over the years have produced long-term, sustainable interventions aimed at addressing critical environmental issues.

The distribution of initiated projects by focal areas has been as follows:

- Climate Change — 5 projects totaling US\$122M
- Biodiversity — 5 projects totaling US\$47M
- International Waters — 3 projects totaling US\$170M

- POPs — 3 projects totaling US\$54.5M
- Land Degradation — 2 projects
- Capacity Development — 1 project totaling US\$20M.

In addition to the direct positive impacts to the environment from GEF-funded projects, the ongoing work of the various GEF agencies also assisted tremendously in strengthening capability of public and private partners involved in the areas of project financing, project management, project development, evaluation and measurement, and overall improved governance structures and systems locally.

Looking beyond T&T's shores and projects implemented here, the GEF has facilitated important environmental dialogue and sharing of experiences across the region. This is aptly demonstrated by the Expanded Constituency Workshops for the Caribbean Region. These workshops have provided important opportunities for GEF focal points and other important stakeholders to come together to explore opportunities for addressing region-wide issues related to impacts such as climate change, which have the potential to severely affect the livelihoods of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) such as T&T's.

The GEF continues to play an important role as a partner in furthering T&T's environmental agenda. The Government of T&T and by extension the people, look forward to this continued beneficial partnership, which has produced tremendous positive results.

Turkey and the GEF: From National Challenges to Global Solutions



BY AKIF ÖZKALDI, UNDERSECRETARY
MINISTRY OF FORESTRY AND WATER AFFAIRS, AND GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT

Turkey both actively works to eliminate the negative impacts of today's industrialized world on the environment and to conserve its basic components — such as water, air, earth, and flora and fauna — against them. And it attempts to provide substantial contributions to environmental protection, nationally, regionally, and globally.

The Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, our operational focal point, has led the way in many well-planned and notable environmental projects by coordinating effective communication between the GEF Secretariat and Council, the relevant government bodies, NGOs, the private sector, academia, and the implementing agencies. The GEF 2020 Strategy says: “understanding the causal chain of factors that cause environmental degradation allows us to have a holistic view and to identify the targeted upstream interventions...”. Based on this philosophy, the GEF's main objective is to focus on the drivers of global environmental degradation and then to implement effective projects on a global scale. In this perspective, Turkey has always given priority to projects dealing with the key drivers during all GEF periods, and especially in GEF-6.

From GEF's Pilot Phase onwards, Turkey has adopted certain principles throughout the entire project cycle and placed special importance on particular criteria when proposing or endorsing projects. These include: whether projects give priority to economic growth without sacrificing the environment; whether they serve the economic and social development of disadvantaged communities or support renewable energy and the green economy; whether they are feasible and result-oriented for concrete outputs;

and whether they are able to mobilize multifocal areas and mechanisms other than the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources. Turkey also attempts to balance co-financing of the projects to the extent desired by the GEF Secretariat and focus on solving global challenges at the national level, while promoting the involvement of different stakeholders and elaborating projects in line with the priorities of the Council and Secretariat.

Many strategies and action plans on combating climate change and land degradation, and on conserving biological diversity, have been developed with the support of the GEF and will light the way to 2020. Concrete examples so far developed in Turkey are: “In-Situ Conservation of Genetic Biodiversity”, “National Capacity Self-Assessment for Global Environmental Management”, “Development of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan”, “Implementation of the National Biosafety Framework”, “Alignment of National Action Programs with the UNCCD 10-year Strategy and Reporting Process”, and “Update the National Implementation Plan for the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants”. Another project, launched in the GEF-5 period, is developing a national strategy on conserving and sustainably managing the country's steppe ecosystems.

GEF-funded biodiversity projects have enabled us to perform gap analysis for our protected areas, to improve their national network, and to increase the number of steppe and marine ones. Projects on mitigating the impacts of climate change include promoting clean technology and energy efficient motors for small and medium-sized enterprises, and the market transformation of energy-efficient appliances

and energy labelling to reduce carbon emissions. Global approaches on sustainable forestry have been integrated into Turkey's perspective with sustainable management of high conservation value forests in the Mediterranean Region, thus providing efficient carbon sequestration. As for combating desertification, a specific project will implement the concept of "Land Degradation Neutrality" in Turkey. There are also many other projects in these thematic areas.

Turkey's vision for subsequent GEF periods will be developed on the basis of an integrated approach underlining green growth, renewable energy, water efficiency, food security, and climate change issues. In summary, the lessons and experiences learned through GEF-funded projects enabled us to leverage their qualitative characteristics during the GEF-6 period. The projects in Turkey have contributed, or will contribute, to eliminating existing environmental problems. Thus the GEF functions as a key mechanism for fulfilling the the country's obligations under the international environmental conventions.



Turkmenistan: International Environmental Cooperation

BY BATYR BALLYEV
GEF OPERATIONAL FOCAL POINT



Preserving the country's abundant natural resources and using them carefully and rationally are among the key elements of Turkmenistan's public policy. Comprehensive, far reaching, and long-term national conservation programmes currently underway in the country are aimed at ensuring harmonious interaction with the environment and the creation of a green economy.

Our country has acceded to a whole range of United Nations conventions to protect the environment — which serve as a global guarantee of environmental conservation and the prevention of environmental disasters — including: the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biodiversity, the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and its Montreal Protocol, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, and the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.

Turkmenistan is committed to fulfilling all international and national obligations aimed at addressing a broad range of environmental problems. Turkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov notes: "The concept of environmental diplomacy should be firmly rooted in our foreign policy strategy. In the international space, in various forums, in bilateral and multilateral relations we should express steadfast support for the initiatives put forward at the high-level United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)." All our large-scale national reform programmes contain an environmental component as an essential condition for ensuring the people's well-being, in all aspects of life. In using natural resources, our government takes into consideration both Turkmenistan's interests and those of other countries.

Turkmenistan's active cooperation with the GEF began in 1997. To date, dozens of national, regional, and global projects have been, and are being carried out, with Turkmenistan's participation. The total value of national projects implemented with GEF support is more than US\$18 million: when participation in regional programmes is included, this figure reaches around US\$60 million.

In 2006, the GEF approved funding for an ambitious project "Conservation and Sustainable Use of Globally Significant Biological Diversity in the Khazar Nature Reserve on the Caspian Coast" — the first large-scale national project that took into consideration the basic needs for better management, greater technical potential, and an improved information base for the preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The project ensured the development and introduction of innovative approaches to protecting biodiversity, improved the legal framework for its preservation, and increased the potential of specialists in the managing conservation areas.

The significant results achieved by the GEF biodiversity conservation projects include developing national reports, strategies, and action plans to preserve Turkmenistan's biodiversity; improving the system for managing specially protected natural areas; and designing an information-sharing mechanism.

The GEF has financed projects involving preparation of the first, second, and third National Communications to support fulfilling Turkmenistan's commitments under the UNFCCC. Measures aimed at boosting technical and institutional capacity, improving energy efficiency in housing construction, and developing renewable energy sources were also implemented.

With GEF assistance, a National Action Programme to Combat Desertification was developed and implemented to help Turkmenistan meet its commitments under the UNCCD. The country was an active participant in the GEF regional programme “The Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management” (CACILM), under which its National Programming Framework for Sustainable Land Management was developed.

Turkmenistan also received significant support from the GEF for fulfilling its commitments under the United Nations Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and its Montreal Protocol. A report on the use of ozone-depleting substances in the country was prepared for the first time, along with the National Programme for the Withdrawal of Ozone-Depleting Substances from Circulation, and a package of documents on amendments to the Montreal Protocol, which were subsequently adopted by the Parliament of Turkmenistan.

Cooperation between Turkmenistan and the GEF was discussed in detail during the National Dialogue on the GEF, held September 14-15, 2007, in Ashgabat, which served as a forum for national multilateral participants involved in GEF activities in the country.

Under GEF-6, Turkmenistan was allocated more than US\$10 million for further implementation of projects on biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation. This will be used to continue the work begun under the regional project for the sustainable use of land resources (Phase 2 of CACILM), and will also be earmarked for the sustainable cities of Turkmenistan project, which addresses issues related to mitigating climate change, including developing and using renewable energy sources and sustainable transportation.

Turkmenistan supports the decisions of the global Summit on Sustainable Development, and is taking a very responsible approach to developing international cooperation on climate change. It recently put forward specific initiatives aimed at stepping up regional and global cooperation on the issue and is drafting an action plan for mitigating climate change.

The country is seeking to expand its cooperation with the GEF and playing an active part in effectively implementing global measures aimed at protecting the environment and improving its health, preventing a worsening of environmental conditions, and ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources. These are priorities of Turkmenistan’s environmental policies.





The GEF and Ukraine: 25 year-olds Jointly Overcoming Environmental Challenges

BY OSTAP SEMERAK
MINISTER OF ECOLOGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Ukraine, as an independent country, is the same beautiful age of 25 years as the GEF. It split away from the Soviet Union in 1991, the year that the Global Environment Facility was established to address the world's most challenging environmental issues.

Since , the GEF has been providing significant support for reforming Ukraine's environmental sector, demonstrating and piloting new environmental principles and methodologies in the fields of biodiversity conservation, integrated water resources management, energy saving, nutrients and POPs reduction, climate change, etc. Applying these new methods became a background for developing a new national, sound environmental policy compliant with the main international conventions and helped to build the country's capacity to pave

its way towards sustainable development despite its economic difficulties. The first steps towards integrated water resources management of the Dnipro, Dniester, and Tisza River basins, with GEF support, for example, led to the development of a new Programme of Water Resources Management until 2020 and further amendments to the Water Code. In total, more than 50 projects have been implemented in Ukraine: many more are planned for the future.

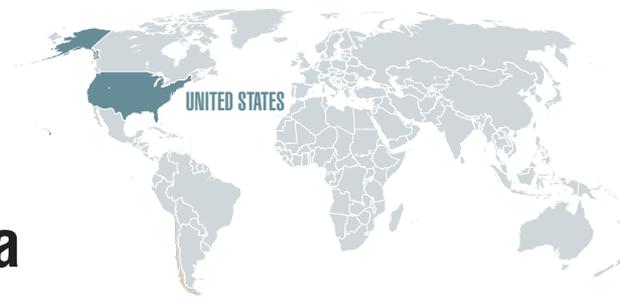
The Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (the authority in charge of cooperation with the GEF) confirms the importance of such further cooperation for Ukraine. Only actions coordinated at the highest international level and implemented practically at national and local levels are effective in improving the condition of the global environment.

“Only actions coordinated at the highest international level and implemented practically at the national and local levels are effective in improving the condition of the global environment.”



The GEF and the United States of America

BY LEONARDO MARTINEZ-DIAZ
U.S. COUNCIL MEMBER



Since its inception in 1991, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has been a critical piece of the United States' environmental agenda, both internationally and domestically. Serving five multilateral environmental agreements, the GEF helps the United States achieve our goals in the areas of biodiversity, wildlife trafficking, mercury remediation, food security, water management, land degradation, and climate change. As the Facility turns 25, we celebrate its impressive achievements and look forward to an even more impactful future.

The GEF's track record boasts many successes for the global environment. With over 4,000 projects approved since 1991, the GEF has strengthened management of 33 major river basins and one-third of the world's marine ecosystems. GEF projects have increased food security, protected wildlife habitats, and enriched the livelihoods of millions of people worldwide.

GEF projects have benefited the U.S. economy and environment by addressing external environmental problems that affect our domestic health, safety, and prosperity. For example, the GEF has supported efforts to conserve important fish stocks through habitat protection outside U.S. waters. These efforts contribute to more sustainable global fisheries, which are critically important to the U.S. food supply chain, as the United States imports over 90 percent of its seafood. The GEF has funded dozens of wildlife preserves and law enforcement training programs to protect wildlife habitat and combat the growing problem of wildlife trafficking.

The GEF has shown excellent value for money. The Facility has leveraged \$65 billion in funding from other sources since its inception (not including MDB resources). Every dollar the United States contributed to GEF-4 and GEF-5 generated another \$5 in co-financing from recipient governments and the private sector.

The GEF is now being asked to do more than ever, including implementing the Minamata Convention on Mercury, ensuring the resilience of its investments to climate change, and building in-country capacity under the new Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency.

Recognizing that many crucial environmental challenges are not confined to particular countries or sectors, the GEF has funded three integrated approaches programs that address cross-sectoral environmental problems, such as tackling environmental degradation caused by global commodity supply chains, inefficient city planning, and food insecurity in Africa. These programs represent the GEF's first step in promoting a more multi-sectoral approach towards global environmental protection.

As we begin to prepare for the seventh replenishment of the GEF trust fund, we find ourselves at an important juncture, a time to reflect on the GEF's many accomplishments and to chart a new path forward in the seventh replenishment of the GEF trust fund. We look forward to building a GEF that is even better equipped to tackle the environmental challenges of the future, one that will do so using the best ideas, flexible financial instruments, and scientific innovations to improve the environment. The United States remains committed to the important work of the GEF.



The GEF's Contribution to Sustainable Development in Vietnam



Anyone seeking to assess the impact of the GEF's work in Vietnam should go and visit Mr Phan Trong Xuan. He used to live within five meters of a persistent organic pollutant (POP) pesticide warehouse in Mau 2 village, Kim Lien commune, in the Nam Dan district of Nghe An province. The pesticides caused soil and water pollution, and produced a bad odor that pervaded the whole village. Many people suffered health problems: some died from cancer.

The GEF/UNDP Building Capacity to Eliminate POP Pesticide Stockpiles in Vietnam Project (2010–2015) helped to remove the pesticides in Mau 2 village, one of its demonstration areas. Both the quality of the environment and human health have improved. The project has national, as well as local effects, properly treating nearly 1,000 tonnes of seriously contaminated soils nationwide.

This is just one example of how — thanks to the support of the GEF in Vietnam — many of the country's serious environmental problems have been gradually addressed.

Strengthened policies and legal frameworks addressing illegal wildlife consumption — and increased awareness of the need to change behavior — are another result of successful GEF support, this time via GEF/WB Project (2012–2015) Wildlife Consumption in Vietnam: Reforming Policies and Practices to Strengthen Biodiversity Conservation. This project has helped to establish and coordinate a partnership of government ministries, local and international NGOs, the private sector, socio-political organizations and communities, to increase support for efforts to reduce the practice.

Thus GEF projects have supported the formulation and promulgation of national policies — like the policy on POP pesticides and legislation on wildlife consumption — consequently contributing to global environmental benefits. And these two examples make up only a very minor proportion of the GEF's contribution to the sustainable development of Vietnam.

Since 1991, Vietnam has implemented 53 small, medium to large-size projects of about US\$135 million and participated in 45 regional and global ones. Though not a big GEF portfolio country, it has set out a strategy on how to use and mobilize GEF resources most effectively. This includes: tackling the root causes of environmental degradation; multiplying best practices; supporting innovative and scalable activities; mobilizing the support and participation of the whole society; institutionalizing policies; delivering the greatest impacts and performing cost-effectively — while implementing locally feasible solutions with national and global incremental impacts.

Achieving the promise of climate change agreements and the Sustainable Development Goals will be more challenging unless urgent actions are taken. GEF resources are very important in helping Vietnam — a developing country, heavily affected by climate change — to take such measures to implement its global commitments and to sustain both its environment and its development.







Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions

Minamata Convention on Mercury

United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD)

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

GEF AND THE CONVENTIONS

The GEF and the Global Community: Working Together to Rid the World of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)

The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) was adopted on 22 May 2001 and entered into force on 17 May 2004. By 1 June 2016, 180 parties had committed to take measures to eliminate or reduce the release of POPs into the environment.



BASEL CONVENTION



ROTTERDAM CONVENTION



**STOCKHOLM
CONVENTION**



The Stockholm Convention is a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from chemicals that remain intact in the environment for long periods, become widely distributed geographically, accumulate in the fatty tissue of humans and wildlife, and have harmful impacts on human health or on the environment.

After first targeting the identification, listing and then phase-out of the so-called “dirty dozen” (legacy chemicals) including polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB), Dieldrin, Endrin, hexachlorobenzene (HCB), DDT and others, the Convention has moved on to the listing of new POPs, focusing now on chemicals that are used very widely as constituent substances in a variety of pesticides, industrial chemicals, and commercial processes. These POPs, such as hexachlorobutadiene, polychlorinated naphthalenes, and technical Endosulfan and its isomers, require a holistic life-cycle approach for their sound management. Their cross-sectoral use and the increasing need to focus on downstream and upstream users have also necessitated a shift away from turn-key projects dealing with obsolete stockpiles of legacy POPs, towards new and innovative project approaches including market transformation through private sector engagement.

The GEF, as the principal entity entrusted with the operations of the financial mechanism on an interim basis, is well adapted to tackle these shifting requirements given its catalytic role in addressing the drivers of chemical pollution at all levels.

In response to this global challenge and in support of the international community’s efforts to eliminate or reduce POPs as provided in the Convention, the GEF has financed the national implementation plans and national implementation plan updates in all eligible Parties, financed the phase-out of the production of Chlordane and Mirex and the use of DDT to produce Dicofol, supported the identification and deployment of alternatives to DDT for vector control, including non-chemical alternatives, implemented PCB projects in over 50% of Parties, and removed tens of thousands of tons of obsolete chemicals and stockpiles in all regions of the world. At the same time, the GEF is fostering the development of new project approaches that address the challenges of legacy and new POPs in a progressive and innovative manner. Focused on stimulating transformational change

by leveraging national finances and incentivizing the private sector, the following GEF-supported projects are examples of such cutting-edge approaches:

- The greening of the scrap metal value chain through the promotion of best available technologies and best environmental practices to reduce unintentionally produced POPs releases from recycling facilities in Thailand is a UNIDO-implemented project that promotes the principles of a Green Economy by strengthening the management of natural resources at the national level.
- The project on reduction and phase-out of PFOS in China is implemented by the World Bank and addresses a newly listed POP in a holistic manner in the country.
- UNEP and WHO are implementing a project on the strengthening of capacities for sustainable management of vector-borne diseases including alternatives to DDT in Africa. The project marks an innovative way of reducing the reliance on DDT through the introduction of chemical and non-chemical alternatives.
- The project on reducing unintentional POPs and mercury releases from healthcare waste management, e-waste treatment, scrap processing, and biomass burning in Latin America, which is implemented by UNDP and the Colombian Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, not only promotes synergies among the chemicals and waste conventions, but also addresses the important health-environment nexus.

These projects continue to support very directly the core objective of the Convention, which is to protect human health and the environment from POPs. These projects have also triggered further implementation across the globe by acting as inspirational demonstration channels, showcasing best available technologies and best environmental practices and supplying a wealth of public awareness and communications materials. The project outputs have been effectively utilized by the GEF Secretariat, for example through the well-distributed short documentary film “Planet Detox”, which continues to focus public view on the need for sustainable management of chemicals and waste.

With the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, the focus of the international community now lies firmly on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It is evident that the environmentally sound management of chemicals and waste affects almost all aspects of development and therefore supports the implementation of many, if not all SDGs. The GEF, with its 25 years of experience and its innovative project approaches, is well positioned to be fully supportive of the post-2030 development agenda by continuing its mandate of the sustainable management of chemicals and waste.

Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions





The Minamata Convention on Mercury and the Global Environment Facility: Partners from the Start

BY THE INTERIM SECRETARIAT
MINAMATA CONVENTION ON MERCURY

The Minamata Convention on Mercury is the newest multilateral environmental agreement. Adopted in 2013 in Kumamoto, Japan, the Convention commits to protect human health and the environment from the toxic effects of mercury.



**MINAMATA
CONVENTION
ON MERCURY**

As a naturally occurring element, mercury cannot be destroyed. Once vaporized into the air, or released into water, the oceans or onto soil, mercury persists, accumulates in flora and fauna such as fish, terrestrial, and marine mammals, and travels over great distances including through migratory species, to affect people and the environment far from where it originated.

There is no safe limit when it comes to mercury and its organic compounds. Breathing contaminated air or consuming contaminated food is harmful to anyone. Pregnant women, infants, and young children are particularly vulnerable, as damage caused by mercury is neurological and irreversible. It is harmful also to animals.

The world is acting. Many primary mercury mines are closing, and some countries have export bans in place, but the challenge is that mercury is still part of many of our everyday processes and products. Mercury is released through mining, metal, and cement production, the combustion of fossil fuels, and the burning of waste. Mercury is also part of several industrial processes, such as chlor-alkali manufacturing. While the application of dental amalgam fillings is familiar to many, what is not widely known is mercury's use also in electrical switches, measuring devices, cosmetics, fluorescent and UV lamps, and batteries.

Through the Minamata Convention, the international community seeks to eliminate human-related releases and emissions of mercury by: eliminating primary mercury mining; cutting the uses of mercury in products and processes as viable alternatives become available; minimizing the releases of mercury as by-product from coal combustion, as well as industrial and manufacturing processes; and ensuring the sound management and disposal of mercury and its waste streams.

Cognizant of the clear global environmental benefit of reducing and eventually eliminating mercury, the Global Environment Facility has been a key companion and pro-active partner from the start of the international community's multiple-year journey to negotiate the Minamata Convention.

Though the negotiations for the fifth replenishment period had been concluded by the time the First Meeting of the

Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee convened in 2010, the Global Environment Facility showed remarkable flexibility to initially provide resources for demonstration projects in key areas requiring most urgent action, including primary mercury mining. This initial investment did much to help the early phases of the negotiation process. During this replenishment period, the GEF also supported capacity-building projects to assist countries to begin the process of readying themselves to reduce the use of mercury by: reducing the use of mercury in products and industrial processes, reducing mercury use and exposures in artisanal and small-scale gold mining, enhancing capacity for mercury storage, improving data and scientific information at the national level, and enhancing the capacity to address waste and contaminated sites.

The GEF support grew even more strongly for the sixth replenishment period where the resource envelope made available grew to US\$141 million. Specifically, GEF has enabled countries rapid access to two forms of important support:

- the Minamata Convention Initial Assessments (MIA) to support developing countries, rapid ratification by enabling national assessments of legislation, policies, mercury emission, and release sources, as well as required institutional and capacity needs, and
- the National Action Plans (NAPs) to enable developing countries to prepare to meet their obligations with regard to artisanal and small-scale gold mining.

The 25th anniversary of the Global Environment Facility comes at a special time for the Minamata Convention. By now at least 30 countries have already deposited their instruments of ratification, and so the requisite 50 ratifications are expected by early 2017, allowing the Minamata Convention to come into force before the end of the GEF-6 period.

The Global Environment Facility will continue to play a key role in the implementation of the Minamata Convention, along with the Specific International Programme, which constitutes the Convention's financial mechanisms.

This intertwined journey of intergovernmental negotiations with GEF-supported projects and demonstrations at national and regional levels, has allowed the international community

to gain key insights into the intersections of mercury with a multitude of other sustainability concerns. One of the significant insights was to learn that small-scale gold mining was a leading source of mercury releases, particularly in light of the rising gold price as driver for this sector. Moving the artisanal mining community to new, healthier, and more sustainable livelihoods will be one of the key environmental, health, and developmental challenges.

Other areas where the Global Environment Facility will be well-placed to assist the implementation of the Minamata goals is through the support of interlinkages and co-benefits including through: addressing pollution challenges in energy production, the introduction of energy-saving lighting and cleaner, more efficient manufacturing processes; the design of multi-faceted urban projects; more direct linkages among the biodiversity and chemicals and wastes sectors, and the promotion of sustainable consumption and production patterns to decouple the economy from natural resources use and dramatically reduce waste streams.

The concurrence of a strengthened and wiser Global Environment Facility after 25 years of service to safeguard our planet, and the Minamata Convention coming into force at this time, bodes well for careful, coordinated and even catalytic action to support countries to safeguard the health of their nation and environment, and therefore the health of our global commons. In the context of agreed Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change that aim to guide our future actions to ensure we stay within the capacities offered by Earth, while ending poverty and ensuring prosperity for all, we are collectively well-placed. The real work begins now.



The GEF and the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity

BY BRAULIO FERREIRA DE SOUZA DIAS, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (UNCBD)

Ever since 1996, when the Global Environment Facility (GEF) was accepted by the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as the institutional structure to operate the financial mechanism of the Convention, the GEF has provided essential support to Parties. The reports received from the GEF on its activities to support biodiversity over the past 20 years provide a significant track record not just of the substantial contributions made by the GEF to support the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols, and to sustainable development more generally, but also of its evolution over time.



**Convention on
Biological Diversity**



A SIGNIFICANT AND INCREASING SOURCE OF FUNDING

According to the first report received, the GEF approved a biodiversity project portfolio with a combined financing of US\$65.27 million between July 1994 and June 1995. In its latest report, to the 12th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 12), the total GEF resources provided to implement biodiversity projects had risen to US\$242 million annually between July 2012 and June 2014. Even taking into account inflation, this represents a noticeable increase in the level of funding to biodiversity over the past 20 years.

Based on the GEF project database at the end of May 2016, the financial mechanism has provided financial support to 1,115 national projects in the Biodiversity focal area, with a total grant of US\$2.7 billion and co-financing of US\$8.8 billion. An additional amount of US\$0.7 billion, with co-financing of US\$1.4 billion, went to 178 regional and global projects.

As a result, most, if not all, major biodiversity initiatives over the past 20 years, from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment to the Global Invasive Species Programme, have benefited from resources from the GEF. An increasing number of biomes of significant global importance, from the Amazon forest through Borneo to the Congo Basin, have witnessed the results of financial support made available through the financial mechanism.

A SOLID BRIDGE BETWEEN GLOBAL COMMONS AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES

While the CBD, along with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and associated Aichi Biodiversity Targets, establishes a global framework for action on biodiversity, it is the implementation by Parties, in accordance with their circumstances and conditions, which are necessary to achieve these globally-agreed objectives, goals, and targets, and the associated global benefits. Financial resources from the GEF have contributed to ensuring that national actions translate to global benefits. Over the past 20 years, the financial mechanism has approved 375 national, as well as 9 regional and global enabling activities projects in

the biodiversity focal area. Most national Biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) have been developed and revised with funding support from the financial mechanism. The successful entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization is another testament for the important enabling role of the financial mechanism.

National reporting is the primary tool for the Parties to the CBD to receive feedback on the status of implementation, and examine and review the progress made in achieving agreed global priorities. With financial support from the GEF, the CBD Secretariat has received 179 fourth and 181 fifth national reports, close to a universal submission considering that some countries joined the CBD recently and others face internal conflicts. The information received from Parties has been used in the formulation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the globally agreed framework to conserve, restore, and sustainably use biodiversity and enhance its benefits for people. It has also been used in the preparation of the CBD's flagship report, the *Global Biodiversity Outlook*, the latest issue of which provides a global assessment of progress made in achieving the Aichi Targets, based on revised NBSAPs and fifth national reports, which was updated for the first meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation.

HARNESSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL SYNERGIES

The GEF is a multi-convention financial mechanism, and is thus uniquely positioned to identify opportunities to finance the multiple objectives of the global environmental conventions that it supports in a holistic and synergistic manner. The GEF has increasingly used innovative approaches to focus on multi-focal area financing and integrated projects.

The multi-convention approach has already generated significant benefits to biodiversity, and holds promise for further upscaling. According to the recent reports from the financial mechanism, in addition to the implementation of work in the Biodiversity focal area, most projects under the

focal areas of International Waters and Land Degradation also address direct drivers and underlying causes of biodiversity loss, while the funding under the focal areas of Climate Change and Chemicals also respond to several Aichi Targets of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020. The importance of such synergies is recognized by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. At its 12th meeting, the COP decided to invite Parties to identify national priorities in support of the implementation of the various biodiversity-related conventions that are aligned with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and with the implementation of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and incorporate them into their NBSAPs. It further invited the governing bodies of the various biodiversity-related conventions to provide elements of advice concerning the funding of pertinent activities, to be shared with the GEF.

TOWARDS TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE IN FINANCING

Starting with a limited number of implementation partners — the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme, — the GEF has over the years evolved into a substantial network of agencies, which now includes four major regional development banks, United Nations development system organizations, and selected international environmental organizations. In 2011, the GEF Council approved Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards and a Gender Mainstreaming Policy, and started to assess the GEF agencies as to whether they met the requirements of both policies. All GEF partner agencies are expected to meet the criteria for Minimum Standard 1 (Environmental and Social Impact Assessment) and Minimum Standard 2 (Natural Habitats), as well as on a case-by-case basis, Minimum Standards 3 (Involuntary Resettlement), 4 (Indigenous Peoples), 5 (Pest Management), 6 (Physical Cultural Resources), and 7 (Safety of Dams). The policy on environmental and social safeguards has also been extended to new agencies, such as subregional development banks and national partner agencies.

THE GEF AS A PARTNER FOR THE FUTURE

With 25 years of operational experience behind it, the GEF has truly come of age. It has become stronger, both institutionally and strategically. There is no doubt that, given more resources, the GEF will be able to play an even greater role in supporting the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols. On this celebratory occasion, I know that I am not alone in saluting its many achievements and wishing it many more years of being at the forefront of tackling the world's most pressing environmental problems.





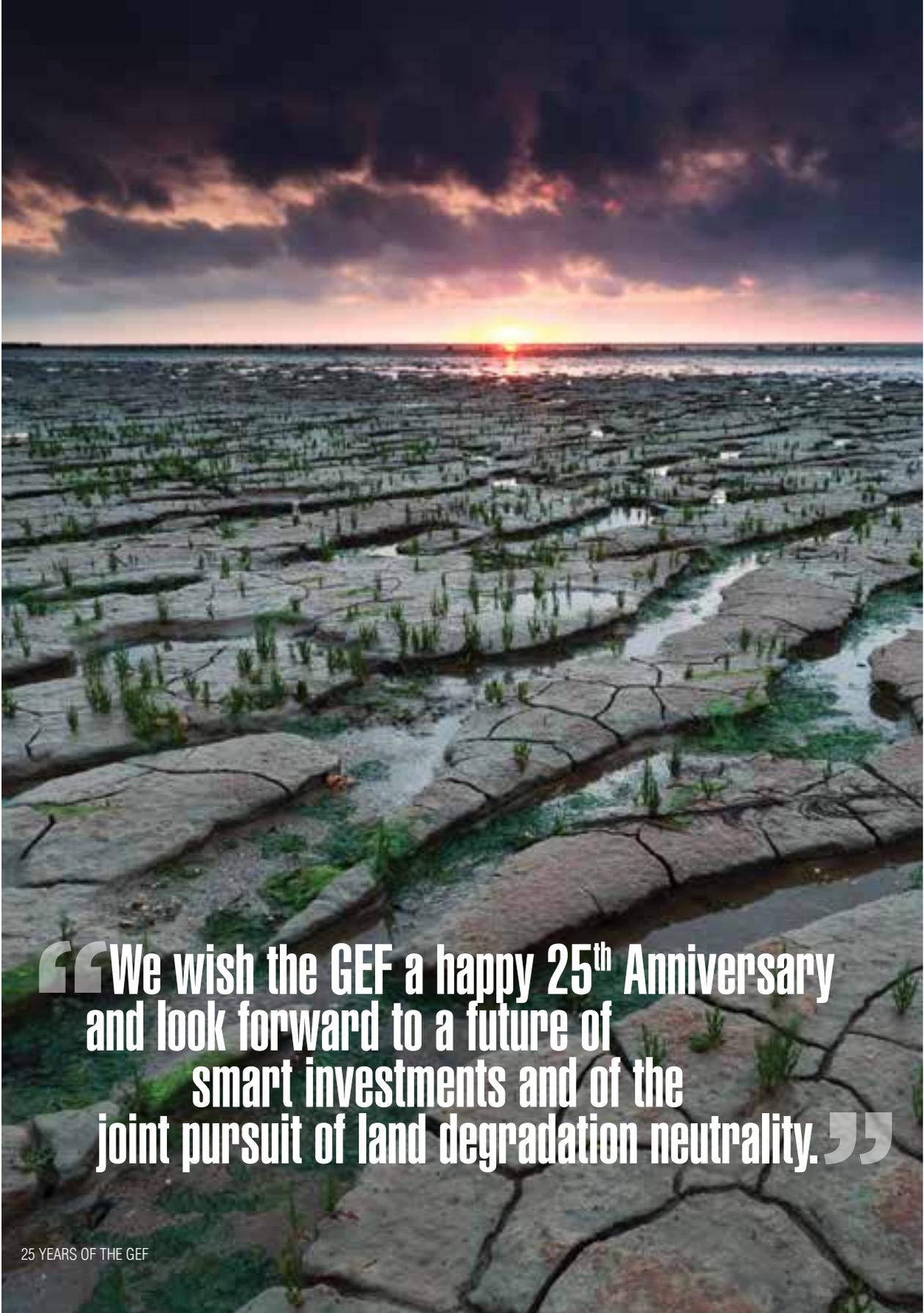
Land Degradation Neutrality Heralds a New Dawn for the GEF and the World

BY MONIQUE BARBUT, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (UNCCD)

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) raised sustainable land management to a new level of land stewardship when it established a focal area on land degradation 15 years ago and later became the financing mechanism for land degradation initiatives under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). But the adoption of the land degradation neutrality (LDN) target last year marks the dawn of a new era for the GEF family.



United Nations Convention
to Combat Desertification



“We wish the GEF a happy 25th Anniversary and look forward to a future of smart investments and of the joint pursuit of land degradation neutrality.”

The target is a game-changer in the way land is managed. It is an accelerator for the achievement of other sustainable development goals. And it is an engine for building synergy among the global treaties served by the GEF.

But the GEF's role is critical.

The world's drylands are still more vulnerable and threatened by desertification and drought than other terrestrial ecosystems. However, 78% of land degradation is occurring outside the drylands. More than 20% of all cultivated areas, 30% of natural forests, and 25% of grasslands are degrading. An estimated 24 billion tons of fertile soil are lost due to erosion in the world's croplands every year.

With the adoption of the land degradation target, countries made a commitment that is poised to change these trends.

By 2030, every hectare of productive land that is degraded needs to be recovered by restoring an equal amount of land. This will ensure that the amount of productive land that was available by the end of 2015 is maintained or increases by 2030, for our use and by future generations.

In the first six months since its adoption, more than 90 countries have signed up to this commitment and are setting their voluntary targets for 2030.

The LDN target has become a game changer by virtue of moving land management into the realm of measurability and enabling the international community to monitor the status of land degradation worldwide.

But the target can also accelerate the achievement of other sustainable development goals.

The goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is to "leave no one behind". More than a billion poor and hungry people live off severely degraded lands and were left behind, despite the progress made under the Millennium Development Goals. Today, more than 2 billion people depend on just 500 million small-scale farms for their livelihoods — jobs, food, housing, education, and more. The adoption of the target will help to preserve these farms and restore them where degraded. In turn, this will speed up the ability of land-dependent populations to reach other SDG targets — food, water and energy supplies, the education

of women and girls, poverty eradication, and adaptation to climate change.

The GEF's experience in leveraging power and catalytic funding if applied to the LDN target can advance and accelerate this movement.

Lastly, the indicators for measuring land degradation neutrality make the LDN target a powerful engine for firing synergy at the national level among the conventions mandated under the GEF.

Measuring soil carbon stocks, the change in land cover, and the change in land productivity would strengthen actions under the Climate Change, Biological Diversity, and Desertification Conventions respectively.

The GEF is in the unique position of promoting the use of these indicators for reporting and assessing progress, as well as driving investments and generating quick global and local benefits. Using the joint indicators could reduce the burden and duplication in reporting that has impeded implementation.

We have made remarkable progress towards the sustainable use and management of a resource on which much of life depends. We have activated the policy mechanisms that hindered progress. The need to act is urgent.

Land degradation and ecosystem loss are progressing at unprecedented rates, with arable land loss at 30 to 35 times historical rates. Not surprisingly, population growth, internal displacement, forced migration, conflict, and extremism are rising in tandem, especially in the areas affected by land degradation.

The rise to a new dawn now hangs on the GEF's ability to invest enough resources to turn the international community from net degraders to net restorers of productive land. For the next replenishment, the GEF can position itself so as to advance the achievement of SDGs, especially LDN, for which it is a major funding mechanism.

An investment in land rehabilitation is a smart investment. The impact on lives and ecosystems is evident and the benefits multiple and tangible.

The GEF and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

BY CHRISTIANA FIGUERES, FORMER UNFCCC EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC)

Whenever an organization that does a great deal of good for the world reaches a major milestone, it is a cause for celebration. The 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Global Environment Facility, or GEF, is no exception. For the past quarter century, the GEF has empowered the developing world and enabled positive progress on our most urgent environmental issues. Today, the GEF stands as a testament of what can be accomplished through collaborative and cooperative action.



United Nations
Framework Convention on
Climate Change



As the GEF celebrates its 25th anniversary, its accomplishments must be recognized. The GEF has invested billions of dollars directly, and leveraged tens of billions more towards a better future.

This work isn't limited to the 167 countries the almost 4,000 projects are in, but for every country. We all share the oceans and atmosphere and we all benefit from vibrant forests and well-managed land. In a world where environment and economy must move forward together to open opportunity for all, the role of the GEF as the financial mechanism for the Rio Conventions builds crucial bridges.

The GEF deserves recognition in particular for supporting governments negotiating last year's Paris Agreement. Under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention devoted to the stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that prevents dangerous anthropogenic interference with the Earth's climate system, 195 countries and the European Union adopted the first universal climate change agreement. It could not have happened without the GEF.

The historic Paris Climate Change Agreement adopted in December of 2015 marked a turning point in the global response to climate change. The Paris Agreement is built on a foundation of 190 Intended Nationally Determined Contributions, or national climate change action plans, and supported broadly by investors, businesses, regions, and cities. It is a framework for concrete action that outlines a vision of a sustainable future where growth does not come at the expense of the vulnerable or the planet.

Throughout the negotiations that led to the Paris Agreement, the GEF provided crucial support to developing world governments. The GEF provided hundreds of millions of dollars for UNFCCC-related reporting and assessments, including the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions. And the GEF helped integrate the findings of these documents into national policy planning and implementation.

Almost a billion dollars flowed in support of national climate change mitigation strategies, renewable energy, energy efficiency, climate-smart agriculture, and curbing of short-lived climate forcers. This transformative support will

be further enhanced with funding for increased resilience, adaptation to climate change impacts, and disaster risk reduction strategies.

To put it simply, many of the national climate change action plans that underpin the Paris Agreement were made possible by the GEF. And many developing world governments were able to negotiate with confidence because of GEF support in planning an orderly and smooth transition to low-emission and highly resilient growth.

I look forward to what the GEF will accomplish in the next 25 years, because it is now up to us to turn the Paris vision into reality. It is no exaggeration to say that what we accomplish on climate and environmental issues over the next 25 years will likely determine the long-term fate of humanity on this planet.

With the Paris Agreement in place alongside a set of aspirational Sustainable Development Goals, we have a framework to transform growth into a model that meets our development needs even as our population swells from 7 to 9 billion people or more.

If Paris was a turning point, the next few years will determine if we truly were able to steer the ship in a new direction towards a healthy economy underpinned by a healthy planet.

From a climate change perspective we know what this new direction will look like. We must bend the emissions curve as quickly as possible and drive emissions down with an aim of limiting temperature rise to less than 2 degrees Celsius, or better still, 1.5 degrees.

If we can do this, we will arrive at the destination of climate neutrality, the point where our greenhouse gas emissions are in balance with the planet's ability to absorb emissions. This is the long-term goal of the Paris Agreement, and a goal that will serve our sister Rio Conventions by reducing land degradation and improving the outlook for biodiversity.

The GEF — alongside the Green Climate Fund, the other financial mechanism for the Paris Agreement — has already embraced this goal, a crucial step for swift ratification of the

Paris Agreement, immediate implementation, and the enabling contributions that ensure the Paris Agreement goals are met.

By setting sights firmly on the long-term goals laid out in the Paris Agreement, the GEF fosters the enabling conditions that mainstream mitigation into sustainable development, and the enabling conditions that will make national climate action plans a success.

Helping countries adapt to climate impacts — particularly through the Special Climate Change Fund and the Least Developed Country Fund — improves the lives of millions and creates a portfolio of projects that provide practical knowledge for increasing resilience. With adaptation now elevated to its own goal in the Paris Agreement, this work also contributes to the success of the Paris outcome.

Success of the Paris Agreement also hinges on transparency. The GEF is spearheading the new UNFCCC Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency, which will help all countries accurately assess and report their progress to ensure we are on course to meet our collective global goals.

So this anniversary is not just a celebration of what you have done, it is a celebration of what you have committed to in the future and a new era for the GEF. It is a celebration of the good yet to come.

With the record-breaking signing of the Paris Agreement at the Secretary-General's ceremony in April of 2016, there is no question regarding the future direction of global growth or our destination.

To get on course to low-emission and highly resilient growth and arrive at climate neutrality as quickly as possible, the spirit of collaboration that enabled success in Paris must continue and escalate even further. Governments must work together and work with the private sector. Agencies across

the United Nations must seek synergies in their work and cooperate across traditional silos. We all must recognize that we have common goals and work together to overcome our economic and environmental challenges.

Under the able guidance of Naoko Ishii, the GEF has long sought synergies between different arms of the UN organization and supporting governments as they seek to improve their economic outlook while safeguarding their environmental resources. When you consider each individual dollar in support of climate action, you can also see that this supports food and water security, energy security, biodiversity, and a host of other issues across the sustainable development agenda. Collaboration must come to define our work as it has defined the role of the GEF.

Collaborative action implemented with urgency and purpose towards our climate change and development goals can and must usher in a new era of growth. This new era of growth holds great potential to lift people out of poverty, safeguard the most vulnerable populations, and protect the planet's natural capital that underpins human development.

The GEF, the UNFCCC, our sister Rio Conventions, the UN System and every government in the world must do their part to breathe life into the aspirational vision that the Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Agreement represent. From what I have seen in 2015 and how the momentum for change has carried into 2016, I am optimistic that achieving this vision is in our reach.

We must turn aspiration into achievement. We must turn vision into reality. We must turn incremental good into enduring good. If we follow the lead of the GEF and build on the foundation put in place last year, we can deliver a lasting legacy of climate-safe and sustainable growth to our children and their children.



A toucan with a large, colorful beak (red, yellow, green, and blue) is perched on a grey rock. The bird has a yellow throat, a dark brown body, and a red patch on its tail. The background is a blurred natural setting with green foliage and grey rocks.

Adaptation Fund

GEF Civil Society Organizations Network (GEF CSO Network)

GEF Small Grants Programme (GEF SGP)

Independent Evaluation Office (IEO)

Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group (IPAG)

Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP)

Globalst Global Industry Alliance

Private Sector: Danfoos Heating

Private Sector: International Copper Association

Private Sector: Johnson Controls

Private Sector: Mabe

GEF PARTNERS

The GEF and the Adaptation Fund

BY MARCIA LEVAGGI, MANAGER
ADAPTATION FUND (AF)

The Adaptation Fund (AF) is steadily growing, innovating, and delivering an increasing number of projects to vulnerable communities in just the short time since it was established in 2008.

The support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) from the AF's inception was pivotal and has allowed the Fund to flourish into its own business model and develop into new areas.

The AF was established to finance concrete adaptation projects in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to climate change. Later on, the Kyoto Protocol Parties invited the GEF to host the AF Board Secretariat. This has allowed the AF to learn from the GEF's solid organizational structure and 25 years of experience in project implementation, monitoring results, and sharing knowledge through its efforts to address some of the world's most pressing environmental challenges.

The AF particularly benefited from the GEF's experience in funding many adaptation projects with large resilience components through its main trust fund, Least Developed Countries Fund and Special Climate Change Fund.

The AF has taken this valuable experience and knowledge and grown into a different entity, focusing entirely on climate change adaptation for the most vulnerable communities in developing countries and innovating new approaches. It was the first climate fund to implement a Direct Access modality, which provides developing countries the opportunity to build their adaptation capacity by receiving funding and designing

projects directly through accredited National Implementing Entities (NIEs). The AF has since increased the number of its NIEs to 24, and its Direct Access model is being emulated by other climate funds which allow its NIEs to attract additional needed funds.

In addition to NIEs, the AF works with regional and multilateral institutions accredited by the AF Board to receive funds to develop and implement adaptation projects.

The AF strives to enhance access for more climate-vulnerable countries by increasing the number of accreditations and enhancing the quality of project proposals through its Readiness Program, which offers regional and global climate finance readiness workshops in developing countries and at the global level, as well as webinars, technical assistance, and South-South cooperation grants.

Through implementing gender, environmental, and social policies, the AF has also stayed ahead of the curve in promoting human rights, biodiversity, and equal access to Fund resources for women and men. The AF and GEF have benefited from complementarity and synergies in gender issues.

Furthermore, the AF continues to receive record demand for proposed new project funding. To date, it has committed US\$355 million for 54 concrete adaptation and resilience projects in 48 countries, with more than 3.6 million direct beneficiaries. Many of its projects have potential to be replicated or scaled up, and are already doing so in places like Senegal, Costa Rica, and others.

Increasingly, the AF has received international recognition for the value it adds to climate finance since it was included in the language accompanying the Paris Agreement. As importantly, the urgency of adaptation was elevated in both the Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development Goals.

The GEF helped pave the way for the AF. Its early support, in particular, when the AF was building a dedicated secretariat team and its processes and procedures, made for a smooth start and will continue to have a lasting impact for the climate-vulnerable communities the AF continues to serve throughout the world.





The GEF-CSO Network: With Cooperation, Nothing Is Impossible

BY ESSAM NADA, CHAIR
GEF-CSO NETWORK

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have been participating in the GEF's operations since its inception, and the network connecting them together has more than 500 active members in over 120 countries. The GEF-CSO Network was established in May 1995 and has been a key partner of the GEF since then, contributing to policy formulation and advocating strong public participation in all stages of implementing programmes. Among other initiatives, the Network supported the development of GEF Principles and Guidelines for Engagement with Indigenous Peoples, promoting inclusion and respect of their rights in projects, and contributed to the policy on minimum standards for environmental and social safeguards, gender mainstreaming, the Gender Action Plan and other areas. The Network also successfully pushed for a review of the 1996 GEF Public Involvement Policy (PIP), resulting in the development of guidelines for implementing it and in the establishment of the PIP Working Group in 2015.

Since 1996, the GEF-CSO Network has collaborated with the GEF Secretariat to organize CSO consultations twice a year before GEF Council meetings — and has helped organize a CSO Forum during the GEF Assembly every four years. It also helps to facilitate regional CSO meetings in association with GEF Expanded Constituency Workshops.

After actively contributing to the GEF's successful fifth and sixth Replenishments, the Network now looks forward to working closely with it in examining what will be needed to achieve an ambitious seventh one and at further fine-tuning of the organization's unique role in safeguarding the global environment, including what is needed to implement the conventions it supports.

We congratulate the GEF family on this 25th anniversary. The last quarter of a century has been a journey in safeguarding the environment, one filled with many successes and lessons learned.

The state of the environment has become serious. It is getting harder and wilder for everyone, with daily disasters. Environmental degradation is not a theoretical future risk, but the very real present for our communities. No-one is totally safe either in developed or developing countries.

Cooperative innovative action has thus become essential. Governments and international organizations cannot solve environmental problems alone. We must get communities and stakeholders involved: as the "street level" of government, cities have no choice but to act. Without such cooperation we would face unknown consequences. So we look forward to collaborative efforts to achieving the GEF 2020 Strategy.

GEF Small Grants Programme

BY DELFIN GANAPIN, GLOBAL MANAGER
GEF SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME (GEF SGP)

“It was the first and only opportunity given to us” community stakeholders often say when receiving support from the GEF Small Grants Programme (GEF SGP). Launched in 1992 as a GEF corporate programme with UNDP as the implementing agency, the SGP was the GEF’s answer to the Rio Summit’s challenge to implement environment and sustainable development through a “thinking globally, acting locally” approach involving the officially-named Agenda 21 “Major Groups” for channeling broad participation. Indigenous Peoples, farmers, workers, NGOs, women, children and youth, and the scientific and technological community were involved as early stakeholders for the SGP, which eventually expanded to include local authorities, business, and industry as partners for scaling up.

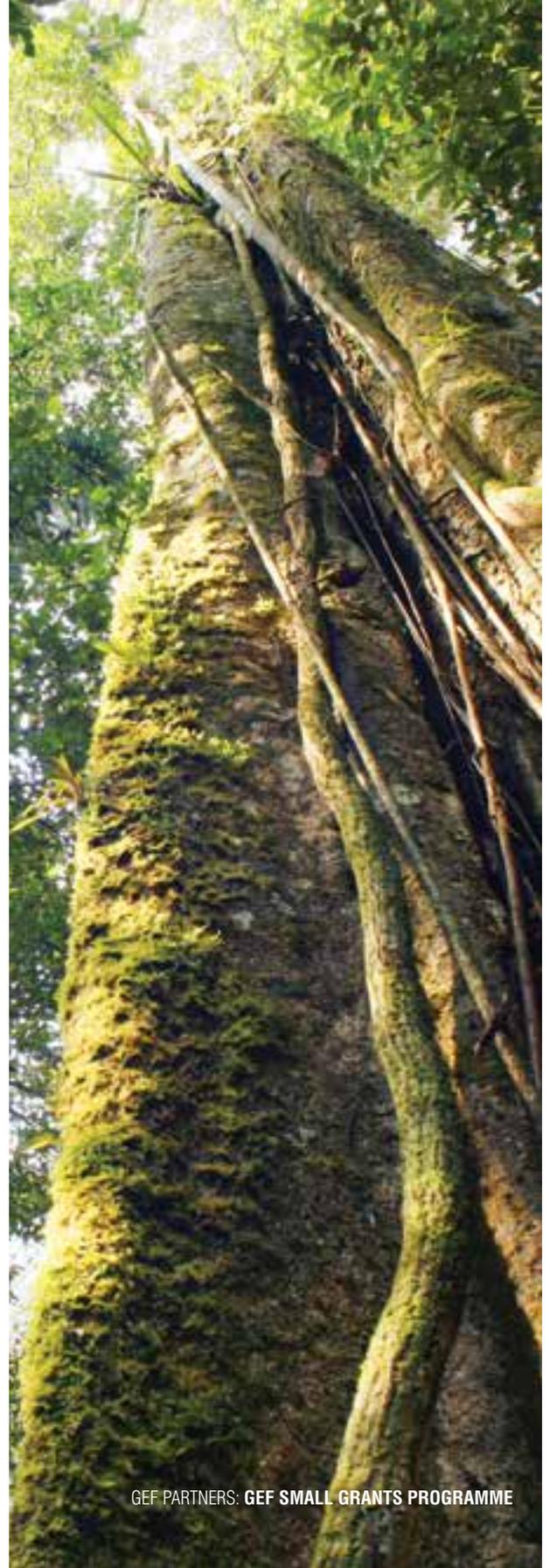
The SGP focuses on poor and vulnerable communities and local civil society in the frontline of critical environmental issues. This makes the task difficult. While other grant mechanisms award competitively to the most capable groups, the SGP has to do the reverse, awarding to the ones most in need — which countries need for building capacity if their environment and sustainable development efforts are to have foundations and sustainability on the ground. And they need not just one-time support, but long-term institutional assistance.

So one way of looking at the GEF’s 25 years is through its sustained support to communities and civil society through investing in an SGP modality that provides them with facilitative access to GEF resources. The combination of funds and long-term support has resulted in more than 20,000 communities and CSOs gaining experience in implementing projects that

simultaneously protected the environment, created sustainable livelihoods, and fostered citizen empowerment. Behind such bare numbers lie the impacts of innovations that moved away from failed business-as-usual approaches and set precedents that influenced national policy and development planning — whether through a network of community microhydros in the Dominican Republic (creating new legal provisions for renewable energy) or the more than 200 Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas globally (helping countries achieve Aichi Biodiversity Targets for awareness, sustainable use, equitable management, and respect of traditional knowledge, practices, and innovations of indigenous and local communities). Where once environmental NGOs were limited, such as in Jordan and Mongolia, there are now robust networks for national action, knowledge sharing, and advocacy.

As the SGP has grown to 126 participating countries, a global platform has developed for fast and effective delivery, using well-tested mechanisms and procedures, for the community and civil society components of large national and global projects. It has served as the delivery mechanism for such GEF projects as the Nile Transboundary Environmental Action Project and the South China Sea Project, as well as those of projects from donors including Germany, Australia, Japan, and the European Union. There is potential for more services through SGP National Steering Committees — composed of countries’ most committed civil society leaders and high government officials — which are now extending their collaborative work beyond grant review and approval and into “Grantmaker+” action such as national dialogue platforms and South-South exchanges.

GEF's 25th anniversary coincides with start up action on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The principle of "leave no one behind", enshrined in the 2030 Agenda, is also at the very heart and design of the GEF SGP. Almost 25 years of GEF investment in the SGP will bear further fruit in the pursuit of the SDGs particularly in assuring that the required attention on environmental integrity is omnipresent, with social inclusion and empowerment providing foundations for change and sustainability.



Independent Evaluation in the GEF Partnership: Promoting Accountability and Learning

BY JUHA I. UITTO, DIRECTOR
INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OFFICE OF THE GEF

Evaluation plays a central role in the GEF Partnership. The purpose is to promote accountability for the achievement of GEF objectives through the assessment of results, effectiveness, processes, and performance of the partners involved in GEF activities, in particular for their contribution to global environmental benefits. Equally important, evaluation promotes learning and knowledge-sharing regarding the results and lessons from GEF operations in order to further improve performance.¹ Although learning and accountability have been important features in the GEF since its establishment 25 years ago, the evaluation function has evolved significantly over the years. Initially, there was a small M&E Unit located within the GEF Secretariat reporting to the CEO. Then a separate Evaluation Office was established by the decision of the GEF Council in July 2003, no longer reporting to the management but directly to the Council. Finally, in 2013, the office was formally renamed the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) codifying its role as an independent body within the GEF partnership. The IEO sets the minimum M&E requirements and ensures oversight of the quality of M&E at the programme and projects levels with the GEF Secretariat and agencies, and facilitates cooperation on evaluation issues within the partnership and beyond. Most importantly, the IEO is charged with conducting independent evaluations that involve sets of projects and programmes from multiple GEF Agencies, as well as on cross-cutting themes.

The evaluations we conduct cover a wide range of topics. The IEO produces an Annual Performance Review (APR) that covers the entire GEF portfolio of now over 1,000 projects. The APR looks into the results and performance trends by focal area, region and GEF agency, largely based on a thorough analysis of project terminal evaluation reports. The office has hitherto conducted 23 country portfolio evaluations in Africa, the Middle East and North Africa region, Asia, Pacific Islands, and Latin America and the Caribbean. There are numerous evaluations covering thematic areas in which the GEF works, as well as institutional and process issues. The office is constantly refining its approaches and methodologies working closely with leading research and evaluation institutions from around the world in order to ensure that our work adheres to the best state-of-the-art standards. A recent impact evaluation pioneered the use of geospatial technologies, such as remote sensing and geographical information science, as well as a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to gauge the GEF impacts to conserving biodiversity through its support to protected areas and protected area systems globally.² The evaluation of the GEF civil society network utilized social network analysis in its conduct.³ Such approaches are now mainstreamed into all IEO evaluations.

Central to the role of the IEO is to conduct periodic comprehensive evaluations of the GEF in order to feed information to the replenishment processes regarding the GEF performance and results, governance of the partnership, and

1 The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy. Evaluation Document No. 4. GEF EO 2010.

2 Impact Evaluation of GEF Support to Protected Areas and Protected Area Systems. GEF IEO 2015.

3 Evaluation of the GEF Civil Society Network. GEF IEO 2016.

lessons on what has worked and what the challenges are. The fifth overall performance study⁴ completed prior to the sixth replenishment concluded that the GEF intervention logic is catalytic and largely successful in achieving impact over time, not only at the national level, but also regionally and globally. Overall, individual GEF projects across the board deliver excellent outcomes. These positive findings have been reconfirmed since then by the APRs: on the average, 81% of GEF projects have ratings in the satisfactory or higher range.⁵ Yet, despite these project-level successes, the global environmental trends continue to decline, largely due to the fact that economic flows towards environmentally harmful practices, including subsidies to fossil fuels and unsustainable agriculture, overshadow the investments in the global environment by orders of magnitude.

If the purpose of evaluation is learning and programme improvement, how do we ensure that evaluation findings influence policy at the GEF? There are helpful structures and processes in place. The fact that the IEO is independent enhances the credibility of our evaluations and allows us to provide independent feedback to the GEF partners. Furthermore, the GEF requires that every evaluation must have a management response and the Council approves the plan on how evaluation recommendations are to be addressed by the GEF Secretariat and the partners. The cases where evaluation influence on GEF policy is clearest often involve process-oriented matters. Examples of how evaluations have influenced GEF policy in this regard include revisions to the results-based management system and changes in co-financing policy at the central level. Country portfolio evaluations contributed to new minimum requirements for the involvement of GEF country focal points in M&E and changes in the resource allocation system. At the project level, APR findings led to improvements in the quality of terminal evaluations and more attention to projects at risk. However, the impact evaluations have also been welcomed by the Council and the partners, and have helped to clarify how the GEF reaches and measures its global environmental goals. Another case would pertain to gender mainstreaming. The fourth overall performance study of the GEF⁶ in 2010

raised the issue that social and gender dimensions were not systematically addressed in GEF projects, which led to the development and approval of the gender action plan for the GEF.

Like in all fields, evaluation in the GEF provides primarily technical inputs to decisions on how to best achieve the goal of benefiting the global commons. Policy-making obviously relies on a number of factors of which evaluative evidence is one. Some clear lessons can be drawn from the GEF experience on the conditions that make evaluations influential. First of all, evaluations must answer questions that are of interest to the stakeholders, including the Council and the partners. Therefore, while we conduct our evaluations in a fully independent manner, we also consult with the stakeholders when setting the evaluation agenda. Second, evaluations must be timely to feed into decision-making processes.

We are now in midst of the sixth comprehensive evaluation of the GEF,⁷ which aims to provide solid evaluative evidence for the seventh replenishment negotiations starting in 2017. The purpose is to assess the extent to which the GEF is achieving its objectives and to identify potential improvements for going forward. The evaluation will analyze GEF performance, results, partnerships, institutional structure, and governance in the context of the rapidly changing environmental finance landscape. It will hone in on a number of strategic questions, such as: What are the comparative advantages of the GEF in the climate change arena following the Paris Agreements of 2015? How could the GEF enhance its partnerships with the private sector and civil society organizations? What are the lessons from programmatic approaches utilized by the GEF and are the Integrated Approach Pilots established under the GEF-6 — addressing key issues such as taking deforestation out of commodity supply chains, sustainability of cities, and food security in Africa — providing truly new ways for the GEF to address the drivers of global environmental change? These are challenging issues to tackle, but providing evidence from the field is essential for the continued relevance and future success of the GEF. The IEO will rise to the challenge.

4 Fifth Overall Performance Study of the GEF: At Crossroads for Higher Impact. GEF IEO 2014.

5 Annual Performance Report 2015. GEF IEO 2016.

6 Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF: Progress toward Impact. GEF EO 2010.

7 Sixth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF: Approach Paper. GEF IEO 2016. GEF/ME/C.50/07.

IPAG: Building On Trust and Dialogue

BY MS LUCY MULENKEI, CHAIR OF THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ADVISORY GROUP (IPAG)

Indigenous Peoples — and our knowledge, lands, cultures, and traditions — are continually at risk both directly, due to development and investment activities, and indirectly, through environmental degradation, climate change, and natural disasters, among other causes.

Indigenous Peoples understand the pivotal role that the GEF plays — as the financial mechanism to many multilateral environmental agreements, including the Convention on Biological Diversity, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, UN Convention to Combat Desertification, Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, and Minamata Convention on Mercury — in financing sustainable development and the protection of our global environment. So it is invaluable that the GEF has recognized the imperative to partner with Indigenous Peoples and their local communities (IPLCs) to achieve its mission successfully.

The GEF has incorporated Indigenous Peoples into its work since its inception. It has demonstrated strong leadership and influence in the international community, especially by revising its programmes, processes, safeguard policies, and projects to address many Indigenous Peoples' concerns.

In recent years especially, we've seen the GEF's efforts to enhance meaningful dialogue and partnership first hand. It is piloting innovative initiatives that continue to partner with Indigenous Peoples in support of sustainable development, including: establishing an Advisory Group; supporting activities that build capacity among Indigenous Peoples to access GEF project financing; updating operations and policies; promoting best practices in GEF projects; and supporting an Indigenous Peoples Fellowship programme through the Small Grants Programme.

It has been a great pleasure to witness this strengthened relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the GEF. IPAG is working hard, as a team, to see how the GEF can provide special financial support for IPLCs. Indeed — while congratulating it on its 25th anniversary — I see great opportunities for amazing outcomes as I look ahead to the next 25 years. We look forward to building on the existing trust and dialogue, and applying the knowledge and experience of the past quarter of a century to make strong investments that secure the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the protection of our global environment.

Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group



The GEF and the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel

Over the past two decades, the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) has supported the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in delivering its mission “...to assist in the protection of the global environment”, and promote “environmentally sound and sustainable economic development.” STAP’s goal is to support the GEF in delivering on this mission by leveraging knowledge and science on the global environment and sustainability. STAP advises the GEF on ways to advance a better understanding of the global environment and development, and how to address them. STAP provides a forum for integrating expertise on science and technology, and functions as an important conduit between the GEF and the global science and policy communities. STAP works in close collaboration with the diverse GEF network of countries, GEF agencies, Conventions, the GEF Secretariat, and its Independent Evaluation Office. Seven prominent scientists, supported by a Secretariat, work together across natural, social and physical sciences as an interdisciplinary team to deliver this mandate.

STAP influences the GEF’s work at three distinct levels: (1) **programme and strategy** — assisting the GEF define its thematic areas of work in each funding cycle based on an assessment of trends and pressing social and environmental concerns influencing the sustainability of the planet and its people; (2) **projects** — advising on ways to strengthen GEF interventions by tapping into science and technologies appropriate for the project; (3) **policies** — advising how to tackle changes to the Earth system — for example, complex social-ecological systems threatened by global change.

These concerns relate directly to the Earth system framework based on the nine planetary boundaries identified by the Stockholm Resilience Centre, and of significant relevance to the GEF’s efforts in safeguarding the global commons. Some examples of how STAP is assisting the GEF improve the health of ecosystems and the well-being of people that depend on its services, include:

(1) **Assessing for resilience, adaptation, and transformation.** The planet and people living on it are facing rapid change that is poorly understood. To assist the GEF in better learning from its interventions, STAP and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) of Australia developed the Resilience, Adaptation Pathways, and Transformation Assessment (RAPTA) Framework. This approach offers a new dimension to project planning and development — one which explicitly considers rapid social, physical, and environmental change in an uncertain world — leading to projects which deliver better results, more reliably and consistently.

(2) **Understanding the nitrogen cycle.** The Earth’s nitrogen cycle, a key planetary boundary, has been dramatically altered by humans, and is impacting the biosphere and oceans. Through a review of the evidence of coastal hypoxia for the GEF, STAP concluded that “the growing problem of coastal hypoxia requires accelerated GEF attention.” STAP proposed “to establish principles for supporting priority systems in which to test management responses to permanent and seasonal hypoxic systems.” To improve understanding of the nitrogen cycle, test practices and

management policies across scales (global, regional, and local), STAP recommended that the GEF develop a research project to address this challenge. The project is currently being implemented by UNEP and is executed through the UK Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), and its Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (CEH).

(3) **Addressing the global challenge of marine plastic pollution.** STAP was among the first global entities to define marine plastic debris as a global environmental issue. This finding was based on the global occurrence of plastic in the ocean, and the transboundary nature of plastic debris sources and impacts — including impacts on marine organisms and biodiversity, and social and economic impacts on developing countries. STAP emphasized that the root cause of plastic debris entering the sea from the land lies within unsustainable consumption and production patterns that encourage a single use of most plastic products. This work led to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), at its 13th meeting, adopting practical guidance on preventing and mitigating the impacts of marine debris on marine biodiversity.

(4) **Under the direction of former STAP Chair, Tom Lovejoy, STAP commissioned an assessment by UNEP-WCMC of the potential impacts of climate change to GEF projects on biodiversity, sustainable land and forest management, and international water management.** This assessment led to a GEF project focused on understanding the effects of climate change in a highly biologically diverse site in Mexico. The outcomes of this project will be influential in defining future GEF actions on biodiversity conservation and climate resilience.

In her vision statement, Naoko Ishii stated that it is “time for transformational change” to guide the GEF towards greater impact. STAP is deeply committed to Dr Ishii’s vision and her goal that the “GEF is and must remain an innovator”. The GEF has a long history of supporting innovation in technology, institutions, policies, business models, and practices. STAP believes that the GEF’s global value proposition and comparative advantage lies in its convening power and ability to mobilize its extensive partnership network and finance for innovation in support of environmentally sustainable development across multiple domains, countries, and regions.

For the future, STAP will continue to strengthen the GEF’s function as a leader in generating and disseminating knowledge that is of great importance to meeting its mission. By leveraging the best scientific knowledge and building iterative learning from project design through to implementation, STAP can assist the GEF to generate an evidence base about what works and under what conditions. GEF support for applied research addressing interconnected global challenges of climate change, food, energy, land-use change, chemicals, and waste should play a prominent part in sustaining the GEF’s mission to support innovation, and carrying its recipient countries forward towards transformational change in environmentally sustainable development.

Further information about STAP and its advice can be found at: www.stapgef.org.



The GEF and Globallast Global Industry Alliance

BY MR. SHAJ U. THAYIL, CHAIRPERSON,
GLOBALLAST GLOBAL INDUSTRY ALLIANCE TASK FORCE

"As a responsible global shipping carrier, APL is dedicated to protecting ocean biodiversity. With ballast water identified as a major threat to the world's marine ecosystems as a key vector for invasive species transfer, effective ballast water management (BWM) has been a hot topic of discussion among the global shipping industry and scientific community over the years.

My involvement with the GloBallast Programme (a partnership between the GEF, UNDP and the International Maritime Organisation, IMO), commenced when I was approached to represent APL on the GloBallast Global Industry Alliance (GIA). This is an innovative public-private sector partnership created under GloBallast to assist in creating common solutions to address ballast water issues, including new technologies, along with capacity-building activities to benefit the participating private sector companies.

One of the many milestones of GloBallast was their highly awarded documentary, "Invaders of the Sea", co-produced with the BBC. In one scene, an Iranian fisherman in the Caspian Sea graphically explained the dramatic impact of the invasive comb jelly on the local economy, and the lack of alternative resources to support his family. This was the poster story that was necessary to raise awareness about the damage caused worldwide by harmful invasive aquatic species, estimated at a cost of US\$ 100 billion per year.

It is important to understand that marine bioinvasions are the source of important environmental and socio-economic impacts that go beyond the reduction in fisheries production due to competition or predation; they also include impacts on aquaculture or they can jeopardize the development of a tourism industry. Moreover, unlike most other threats to the marine environment, aquatic invasive species are nearly impossible to eradicate.

Participating in the Global Industry Alliance has helped APL to partner with technology providers, the scientific community and governmental organizations, in addressing ballast water issues. In 2011, APL started installing ballast water treatment systems onboard its vessels, to reduce the risks associated with the discharge of non-native aquatic species in foreign waters through the vessels' ballast water.

Collectively, these efforts have enhanced the implementation of the Ballast Water Management Convention, and dramatically reduced the damage caused by marine invasive species. As the global shipping industry gets ready to comply with the Convention guidelines once they enter into force, public-private sector partnerships, exemplified through the GloBallast Global Industry Alliance, will raise global momentum in tackling the ballast water issue and developing effective solutions collaboratively."

Globallast Global Industry Alliance



The GEF and Danfoos Heating

BY LARS TVEEN, PRESIDENT
DANFOSS HEATING

The GEF grant really accelerated the work of the SEforAll District Energy Initiative. Without the grant we couldn't go further faster together.

We wouldn't be able to spread the word to so many cities and countries. The joint effort between the public and private sector is really what makes the difference here. We bring together technological insight, policy know-how and finance expertise in order to create a pipeline for bankable projects. The GEF enables us to scale these projects and replicate. This makes for a truly unique partnership.

Private Sector: Danfoos Heating



Private Sector: International Copper Association



The GEF and the International Copper Association

BY STEVE KUKODA, VICE PRESIDENT,
INTERNATIONAL COPPER ASSOCIATION, LTD.

The work of the GEF has been critical in ways too numerous to list fully in this space. The GEF has long recognized the value of collaboration through public-private partnerships, and these PPPs have made significant impacts and continue to do so.

The GEF has been visionary when it comes to PPPs, recognizing the need for global coordination on key sustainable development priorities, like climate change mitigation. In particular, the GEF has been on the leading edge when it comes to recognizing the importance of energy efficiency partnerships for climate change mitigation efforts. In this space, the GEF is funding several Energy Efficiency Accelerators under the UN's Sustainable Energy For All (SE4ALL) initiative. The importance of energy efficiency actions on climate change is underscored by a recent International Energy Agency report, which shows that half of the actions needed to meet the goal of limiting manmade climate change below two-degrees Celsius can come from energy efficiency.

Funding for the SE4ALL Accelerators is enabling the needed scale-up of energy efficiency programmes across regional, national, and sub-national jurisdictions in the developing world that will help to ensure the goals agreed upon at COP21 are realized. One such project is United For Efficiency, which is focused on market transformations towards energy efficient lighting, appliances, and industrial equipment. U4E would not be possible without the ongoing commitment of the GEF.

The International Copper Association is proud to be a long-standing partner of the Global Environment Facility. ICA and its members offer congratulations on the GEF's 25th anniversary, and wish you continued success for many years to come.

U4E Website: <http://united4efficiency.org/>

U4E Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6KE8nXcmVg>

“The GEF has long recognized the value of collaboration through public-private partnerships.”

Private Sector: Johnson Controls



The GEF and Johnson Controls

BY CLAY NESLER, VICE PRESIDENT
GLOBAL ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY, JOHNSON CONTROLS, MILWAUKEE, USA

Congratulations on this significant milestone — 25 years of improving the environment around the world.

The GEF has been a great partner with the private sector as we worked collaboratively to create the United Nations Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) Energy Efficiency Accelerator platform. From the very first SE4ALL Energy Efficiency Working Group Session in 2014, to the announcement of GEF funding for the Building Efficiency and District Energy accelerators at COP21, GEF has served a leading role in guiding the development of the overall accelerator platform, in addition to providing financial support to many of the individual accelerators.

While international development banks have a long successful history of funding environmental projects in developing countries, the GEF is unique in its commitment to support policy and programme development activities for accelerating building efficiency in cities. With rapid urbanization, energy efficiency improvements in buildings represent a great opportunity to lower emissions, reduce energy costs, and increase local employment. With more than 25% of global energy demand, 60% of electricity use and 33% of

energy-related carbon dioxide emissions, buildings should be a key focus for investment.

GEF funding to the World Resources Institute (WRI) provides the ability to expand the Building Efficiency Accelerator with the goal of reaching 50 cities in the next couple of years. These collaborative engagements will help cities establish policies, programmes, and partnerships, as well as implement projects to demonstrate the environmental, economic, and social benefits of building efficiency improvements. Mexico City has benefited from its participation in the Building Efficiency Accelerator, working with WRI and more than 100 local partners in business, government, and civil society to update construction codes and retrofit municipal buildings.

As the industry co-convener of the Building Efficiency Accelerator, I would like to thank the GEF for your leadership, commitment, and generous support of the SE4ALL Energy Efficiency Accelerators. I am confident that the GEF-supported, WRI-led Building Efficiency Accelerator will demonstrate the potential for public-private sector collaboration to deliver the innovation and resources necessary to address the greatest environmental challenges facing our global cities today and in the future.

Mabe: An Alliance for Sustainability and Technological Innovation

The Global Environment Facility plays a key role in building a strategy covering a wide range of topics and challenges in an ever-changing field. Through its funding and experts, the GEF has created an invaluable data base of knowledge and sustainable growth throughout the world.

Mabe is honored to work with the GEF to promote and accelerate the use of energy-efficient technologies that will both benefit the environment and dramatically improve people's quality of life, while having a positive impact on governments in developing economies.

By building alliances and partnerships with the private sector and companies such as ours, the GEF shares a unique

vision that allows sustainable projects to be implemented that include the latest technological advances and exclusive industry knowledge: this helps it to create strategies that suit every industry in a unique way. Such alliances form the foundation of projects that will impact and benefit large populations through effective and comprehensive programmes.

Throughout its 25 years, the GEF has covered a broad range of climate change and environmental issues, providing exemplary solutions to hard challenges. It has a fundamental role from investing in technology and partnerships to consulting on policy development and Mabe is proud to be part of its efforts.

Private Sector: Mabe





GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET