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## **Statement on behalf of the Constituency for Sweden, Finland and Estonia**

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

As a representative for three countries in Northern Europe - Sweden, Finland and Estonia – I am pleased and honored to address the Fourth GEF Assembly here in Punta Del Este, Uruguay. I would like to start by thanking our hosts for the excellent arrangements; their efforts to ensure efficient working conditions, the beautiful setting in this warm and friendly environment.

My constituency sincerely welcomes the positive outcome of the GEF 5 negotiations. The replenishment agreement is a crucial step towards meeting the daunting challenges for many developing countries in the environmental area. And the boost of the GEF Trust Fund by 52% is a clear testimony of the commitment of the entire donor community – including our constituency - to the international environmental agenda. We are particularly pleased that the agreement is based on an ambitious reform package to transform the new resources into concrete results on the ground.

- We celebrate now, but can reassure you, that we intend to follow up closely in the work of the GEF Council that concrete necessary steps are taken to implement the agreed reforms.

Our strong commitment to sustainable global development – and to the GEF – stem from a deep rooted solidarity in our societies with those in need, the poor people of this world. As part of this commitment we are striving to make the best use of development cooperation money. We are strongly engaged in improving aid effectiveness both bilaterally and in the multilateral organizations. This also involves a continuous and intensified work to increase transparency in all our development cooperation. One crucial element is making aid data available. People in developing countries are the main clients of aid and must be able to look for information on, and scrutinize, our aid initiatives. At the same time, we strengthen the conditions for accountability to tax payers in our own countries. Therefore, as strongly committed donors, we are pleased to note that GEF has come a long way in terms of increasing transparency (the GEF website in itself gives a clear indication of this), and – as discussed in the GEF Council - we would like to see further steps in this direction.

Regarding the "Amendments to the Instrument" which are on the agenda of the GEF Assembly, I can assure you that my constituency fully supports the proposed amendments as well as the recommendation to forwarding them to the Implementing Agencies and the Trustee for adoption. We are particularly pleased that the Instrument will now reflect that GEF is serving as a financial mechanism of all the Rio Conventions.

We are also pleased that mainstreaming of gender will continue, even more intensified, during GEF 5. This is a very important element not only for advancing gender equality but also to add value of GEF projects and increase their impact on ground.

We will have the opportunity here, during the GEF Assembly, to listen and learn from both the Chairperson of the STAP (GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel) and the Director of the GEF Office of Evaluation. My experience is that their lessons can be extremely useful

for improving the functioning of the GEF network as a whole. "The Fourth Overall Performance Study of the GEF" provided invaluable guidance to the replenishment process and agreements on reforms. In this respect, we are pleased with the more comprehensive and synergetic programming as highlighted for example with the decision to develop a more comprehensive focal area strategy for chemicals. However, there is still room for improvement of the way relevant STAP advice and findings of GEF evaluations is fed into the regular work of the GEF network. Changes are needed to make it function more as a learning network with a strategic focus on cross-agency and cross-country learning. I look forward both to the presentations here during the GEF Assembly and to more concrete proposals in the November GEF Council discussions on how to ensure more strategic learning across the GEF Network.

Finally, let me ensure you that my constituency will continue to stand by the GEF - as active partners committed to supporting policy reforms for a stronger GEF, with more focus on recipient country ownership and results – for the coming four year cycle until the next GEF Assembly, and beyond.