

**Fourth GEF Assembly
24 – 28 May 2010**

New Zealand Statement

New Zealand would like to take this opportunity to register its appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Uruguay for so generously hosting the Fourth GEF Assembly. We would also like to extend our thanks to the GEF Secretariat, which we know has worked hard to arrange this important event.

New Zealand fully associates itself with the statement delivered by Australia at the opening plenary of the Fourth GEF Assembly on behalf of the KANZ GEF Constituency (Republic of Korea, Australia and New Zealand).

New Zealand welcomes the successful conclusion of the fifth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund. US\$4.25 billion, the highest ever replenishment in the history of the GEF, is a commendable achievement - particularly when one considers the difficult international financial context. Consistent with our longstanding support for the work of the GEF, we were pleased to pledge approximately NZ\$10 million.

This replenishment will help the GEF respond to the major environmental challenges ahead. Financing for climate change agreed under the Copenhagen Accord has already started to flow to the GEF, and the new initiative inside the GEF linked to sustainable forest management, including REDD plus, is timely.

2010 is an important year for biodiversity, and we are encouraged by the level of funding committed to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

We welcome, too, the fact that this replenishment positions the GEF well to deliver on its expanded chemicals management mandate, including funding to support the development of an agreement to reduce mercury contamination.

International waters is a focal area of crucial importance, and we are hopeful that the funding set aside will have a catalytic effect on our ability to address the multiple stresses on both freshwater and our oceans.

New Zealand acknowledges the strong leadership of the GEF CEO, Monique Barbut, in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the GEF, and welcomes the policy reforms and programming directions articulated for GEF-5.

New Zealand considers that successful reform of the GEF will lessen the risk of an unworkable proliferation of new financial institutions and mechanisms, including in the climate change area.

New Zealand has a close partnership with Pacific island countries, and we strongly support the Pacific Alliance for Sustainability established during GEF-4. We welcome the fact that the new System for the Transparent Allocation of Resources will give Pacific and other vulnerable island states enhanced access to GEF funds, and hope their different institutional capabilities are also taken into account.

Bearing in mind the interconnectedness of the environmental challenges facing the globe, we would also like to emphasise our hope that the GEF intensifies its focus on the importance of cross-focal area approaches, which we consider will help ensure deeper and wider-reaching global environmental benefits. We welcome the work of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel in this regard.

It is clear that the programmatic approach, with its ability to increase synergies across the thematic and regional areas of the GEF, has an important role to play in this area.

We acknowledge the efforts made over the last several years by the Secretariat and the agencies to streamline the GEF project cycle. We look forward to continued exploration of options to further streamline projects, procedures and criteria associated with the project cycle for standalone projects. At the same time, however, it is essential that the scientific rigour behind projects is maintained.

New Zealand recognises, too, the importance of improving country ownership of projects, and welcomes the policy reforms aimed at realising this under GEF-5.

New Zealand looks forward to engaging on these issues at the Fourth GEF Assembly, and throughout the GEF-5 period.