

**Basel / Rotterdam / Stockholm (BRS) COPs  
High Level Segment  
Geneva, Switzerland**

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

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Excellencies and colleagues.

It is wonderful to be back in Geneva for the joint Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Convention COPs. Thank you for inviting me to address the High Level Segment.

The world is in a different place today, compared to two years ago when we last gathered here. Since then, we have reached important milestone agreements—including the 2030 agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris agreement. We are moving into action and implementation, based on commitments and agreements already reached. As countries tackle the sustainability agenda, they are increasingly recognizing the importance of the chemicals and waste agenda as the catalyst for sound economic and social systems.

I applaud all of you for your tremendous effort to bring the chemicals and waste agenda to the forefront of the global sustainability efforts. I am grateful to Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary, for his strong leadership and for facilitating stronger partnerships with the GEF.

Global pollution is worsening at alarming rates. The continued use of toxic chemicals puts unsustainable pressure on our global environment, compromising

our land, forests, water, oceans, and our lives. We are pushing the vital Earth systems towards and beyond the tipping point, with devastating consequences. Business as usual cannot place us on a positive trajectory towards a sustainable, detoxified future.

Chemicals and waste is not an isolated topic. It is integrated into the key economic systems, and needs to be addressed systematically. With the world's population rising to nine billion by mid-century and with a rising middle class, there is no other option than to transform current production and consumption patterns. The future success of the Chemicals Conventions and our ability to eliminate toxic chemicals and waste depend on such transformations, in our cities, industries, and food systems. We must embrace supply chain interventions, innovative waste management approaches, and alternatives to harmful chemicals.

Economic sectors such manufacturing, building, agriculture, and healthcare are not only highly dependent on chemicals, they also offer great opportunities for reducing chemicals and waste through innovative approaches, like sustainable chemistry and circular economy. Further, our experiences show that initiatives in these sectors offer significant synergy potential for climate action, responsible consumption, life on land, and other SDG themes.

I am therefore absolutely delighted that the Ministerial Roundtables discussions will explore: opportunities for a detoxified future in the 2030 Agenda and SDGs; opportunities for strengthened implementation through partnerships; and opportunities for reducing waste and pollution while enabling economic and social prosperity. We clearly share a common vision, as these three opportunities are the key themes that GEF also stands ready to support. In fact, these themes are central

to the ongoing GEF-7 replenishment, which will be guided and informed by the COP outcomes. I look forward to the discussion on your national priorities and a united way forward for the BRS Conventions, towards higher impact.

Our ambition is high, since the task ahead is huge. We must work with urgency to bring about transformations through political leadership, coalitions for change, and innovation. The GEF is committed to working with you in this journey towards a “future detoxified.”

Thank you very much.