

”Statement on behalf of the Constituency for Sweden, Estonia and Finland ”, delivered by Mr Juha Pyykkö, Council Member for Finland.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a representative for three countries in Northern Europe - Sweden, Estonia and Finland – I am pleased and honoured to address the 5th GEF Assembly here in Cancun, Mexico. I would like to start by thanking our Mexican hosts for the excellent arrangements; their efforts to ensure efficient working conditions and a beautiful setting in this warm and friendly environment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our constituency sincerely welcomes the positive outcome of the GEF6 replenishment negotiations. We were not able to repeat the huge leap forward we took during the GEF5. But the fact that we were able to maintain the upward trend at a time when most of our economies face serious problems is definitely an achievement. But the level of funding is only the other, though crucial side of the coin. More importantly, the programming and policy decisions of the replenishment round underline that we have embarked on a new journey towards further strengthening our unique GEF network and increasing its impacts.

When turning for the future with this 6th replenishment, it is good to look back, as well. On the basis of one of our real flagship products - the OPS 5 – there are a couple of particular issues that our constituency wishes to pinpoint as real achievements during the past replenishment period – namely, gender mainstreaming and the role of the private sector. The OPS 5 shows that we are far from perfect when it comes to translating our policy on gender mainstreaming into practice. But it shows that we have made serious and real progress. Our constituency will continue to be in the forefront – in the Council and elsewhere – making sure that this policy will continue and be enhanced. Furthermore, we will keep on emphasizing the importance of engaging the private sector which is an increasingly important partner to Governments in realizing global environmental benefits.

GEF projects are resulting in concrete effects and facilitate actions on global environmental concerns all over the globe. Not the least in the climate change area where we in the latest Annual Monitoring Report can see that GEF projects have contributed to a decrease of 218 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions this past year.

We are also very pleased with the positive signal sent by the new Minamata Convention on mercury that chose the GEF as its financial mechanism - a choice that clearly shows that the GEF delivers. Since chemicals-related challenges are most likely to continue to increase in number and complexity, we warmly welcome the fact that GEF 6 has now adopted a broader approach to chemicals and waste.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our constituency has repeatedly emphasized, and will continue to do so, that we should preserve and build on the unique features of the GEF, as a multidimensional network of institutions and organisations to serve the financial needs of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements with the specific purpose of promoting global environmental benefits. And building on the foundation of the GEF's unique features serving the financial needs of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements, we believe that the new integrated approach reflected in the programming for GEF 6 as a first piloting phase, is the right way forward. This dynamic evolution of the GEF would not be possible and feasible without a solid evaluative as well as scientific and technical foundation. In this respect, I would like to express our constituency's deep appreciation for the high-level work of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office and the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel.

In the spirit of this holistic and integrated approach, our constituency welcomes the idea of having a strategy for the GEF and we welcome the long-term strategy itself – the GEF2020 Vision – that is currently being finalized based on the comments expressed in the Council earlier here this week. What we have at hand now at this Assembly is of course not the final answer to the challenges ahead. The strategic work should continue, and our constituency particularly looks forward to a further and deepened discussion about the role of the GEF in environmental financing in the broader context of economically, environmentally and socially sustainable development. This, we think, would allow the GEF to evolve in a dynamic and innovative way during the rest of this decade and beyond.

We, the Governments, together with other stakeholders, are engaged in the ongoing UN-led processes on Sustainable Development Goals, Sustainable Development Financing as well as the prospective intergovernmental negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. We should make sure that the GEF, as the principal financing entity of the environmental dimension of sustainable development, continues to position itself as a relevant and valuable actor in the broader framework, while at the same time remaining true to its mandate. Recognizing the broader significance of the work of the GEF, we would need to continue the work on analyzing the broader socioeconomic impacts of the GEF activities in order to be able to illustrate more clearly the comprehensive nature and impact of the GEF programmes.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, our constituency would like to congratulate Dr. Ishii at the helm of the GEF – and the GEF Secretariat – especially Naoko Ishii for her great dedication and contribution to the positive replenishment achievement as well as overall smooth functioning of the GEF family.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.