

64th GEF Council

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Opening of the Meeting

Remarks by

Carlos Manuel Rodriguez,

GEF CEO and Chairperson

Prepared Remarks

Good morning – Bom Dia!

It is my great pleasure to open the 64th GEF Council meeting here in Brasilia.

I want to also welcome the Elected Chairperson Mr. Tom Bui of Canada.

Brazil has been an important and close partner of the GEF for decades since it was founded on the eve of the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992.

Over the past 30 years, the GEF has invested more than \$1.2 billion in Brazil in 133 projects and helped generate an additional \$5 billion in co-financing.

Brazil boasts extraordinary biodiversity, the largest intact forest on Earth, more than 7,000 kilometers of coastline, vast natural resources, and a diverse, highly educated population, making it an economic and political powerhouse. Brasil has another unique ecological feature; it hosts unique biomes not found anywhere else. Caatinga, Cerrado, Mata Atlantica together with Pantanal and Pampas are areas that are strategically important in the global effort to preserve nature and deal with climate change.

At the same time, Brazil must confront climate change, biodiversity loss, chemical pollution, and pressures on forests, land, oceans, and wildlife that threaten to undermine human development, livelihoods, and social justice. We can say that Brazil's challenges are, in many ways, a microcosm of the challenges facing the planet as a whole.

It is fair to say that projects across Brazil's diverse ecosystems helped shape the GEF as it evolved from a small pilot program to a multilateral fund seeking to catalyze transformational changes in the behavior of people, governments, and businesses.

Together with the GEF, Brazil is well-placed to demonstrate the enormous potential of a transition to a nature-positive economy, to tackle the drivers of environmental destruction, and to advance transformative change across our food, land use, energy, urban, and other key human systems that shape the planet.

This week, the GEF Council will decide on the approval of a record \$1.4 billion work program to tackle the climate, biodiversity, and pollution crises targeting the root causes of environmental damage. They include national, regional, and global initiatives such as the Amazon, Congo, and Critical Forest Biomes Integrated Program, which spans 87 percent of existing tropical forests across 25 countries.

I am coming from a very interesting 3-day visit to the State of Amazon where together with many Council members we witnessed the great strides Brazil is doing to preserve and sustainably manage key biodiversity areas, and where local communities and indigenous groups are key actors who are fully empowered to drive actions.

With this backdrop, I am honored by the presence of Ministers and Vice Ministers from the Federal Government. Please allow me to give the floor to Minister Silva.