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Opening Remarks

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Global Environment Facility**

**Conference of the Parties to Stockholm Convention on
Persistent Organic Pollutants 5th Meeting
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President of the 5th COP of the Stockholm Convention (.....), Honorable Ministers and Distinguished Heads of Delegation, Mr. Donald Cooper, Executive Secretary of the Stockholm Convention, Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you for this opportunity to update you on recent accomplishments and developments at the Global Environment Facility, an operating entity of the financial mechanism for this convention.

The past 12 months have been busy and productive at the GEF. Donors showed their confidence in our recent reforms with a record replenishment of the general Trust Fund: pledging \$4.3 billion dollars, a 54% increase in new donor funding over the last four year cycle. Of this \$425 million is identified for chemicals, an increase of over \$100 million from the previous replenishment four years ago.

Much has happened in the past year: many of our donors face daunting fiscal and in the case of our dear friends in Japan and elsewhere humanitarian crises. Luckily our investment partners trust us to adapt to changing business climates which is why over our 20 year history we have consistently

attracted high levels of co-financing to make the biggest impact possible with the least amount of taxpayer money.

The bottom line is that whether it is a time of budget crisis or surplus the GEF consistently responds to the conventions and countries it serves, holding true to rigorous standards to ensure countries have the most cost-efficient and results-based projects possible to work with.

So, in the next few minutes I want to briefly outline topics of interest to this COP: to update you on what we are doing to meet this Parties' guidance now and what we plan for the future.

First: On the Progress of National Implementation Plans (NIPs) Development, the GEF directed resources to 138 Developing Country Parties and Parties with Economies in Transition. Further, the GEF approved a total of 86 projects to assist countries to implement their NIPs to eliminate over 36,000 tones of PCB and PCB contaminated material and over 100,000 tones of obsolete pesticides.

Following the amendment to the Stockholm Convention to add nine new POPs, the GEF council has approved a strategy in GEF 5 for reviewing and

updating the National Implementation Plans to include these new chemicals. Funding of up to \$ 250,000 will be made available to countries to update their NIPs: it is important to note that these funds can be accessed directly by the countries themselves. (More on this direct access in a minute)

Additionally the GEF has approved two projects to provide countries the tools they need to update NIPs and to include new chemicals in the Global Monitoring Plan. The idea here is to gather data on POP levels and to allow Parties, the Stockholm Convention and the GEF to collectively assess the impact we are having on POPs.

In preparing countries to address unintentionally released POPs, the GEF has approved projects to demonstrate the effectiveness of Best Available Technology and Best Environmental Practices (BAT/BEP) and we encourage countries to learn from this work and build on the experiences and knowledge created.

The GEF takes seriously the challenges of capacity to manage chemicals and mindful of its role as a financial mechanism to this convention provided resources to countries to build institutions and provide technical assistance.

We are also keenly aware of the special needs of LDCs and SIDS and have approved a Program to provide implementation support to LDCs and SIDS notably in the African Region.

Of course one of the more persistent public health threats to this region is malaria: the GEF has taken steps to assist parties develop and implement safer alternatives to DDT to meet your obligations to the Convention. At the same time we recognize the need to keep in place existing tools that have been shown to be effective for eliminating this disease.

To respond to party guidance on all these critical issues requires a robust partnership. The GEF partnership includes ten Agencies, a large number of national partners including the NGO and Private Sector communities and the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention. As we move forward the role of these national partners will become increasingly more important as parties move from the enabling stage to implementation phase where we expect to see more investment activity. [To that end the GEF is looking to engage with the Parties on how the Stockholm Convention Regional Centers can be strengthened.]

Moving onto the Global Chemicals Agenda, the GEF will approve pilot activities to assist countries to tackle wider chemicals issues. The GEF Council has approved a Sound Management of Chemicals and a Mercury Strategy in GEF 5 as well as reaffirmed its commitment to the Montreal Protocol. These strategies are meant to guide countries to design projects that coherently address multiple chemicals in a cost effective and efficient manner. In this regard we encourage Parties to submit projects that reach beyond the mandates of the Stockholm convention to include, where feasible action, on other chemicals of Global Concern and issues such as mercury, lead in paint and e-waste.

I have now outlined what the Secretariat intends to do for this convention as the largest public funder of chemical issues. Next I want to talk for a moment about what the GEF has done through its recent reform process to meet the expanding needs of the countries it serves through a series of policy and strategy reforms.

First, the GEF has enhanced efforts to become a more country driven financial mechanism. We listened to your suggestions, and we are implementing changes. For example, we have introduced voluntary National

Portfolio Formulation Exercises (NPFES). We expect a lot from this initiative. Hopefully this planning activity will help countries program their own GEF resources and improve project quality.

From the secretariat side the GEF continues to become more efficient and effective. In particular, we have streamlined project review and approval procedures.

Now I have saved the best for last: let me tell you about the biggest reform at the GEF. It is the opening of the GEF to new entities. In November last year, the GEF Council took steps to enlarge the GEF partnership. The Council clearly stated their preference for national entities over multilateral entities. This is a major change in the GEF investment model!

So we learn from and respond to your guidance. We adapt and evolve.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The large increase in GEF financial pledges was concrete proof the Parties to this convention respect their commitments and are moving from words to action. Now the time has come for meaningful change. The GEF recently

installed a series of reforms and we want to make these reforms work for you.

At the third International Conference on Chemicals Management in 2012 and at UNEP's 27th General Council in 2013 Parties will be discussing a financial architecture for chemicals. Additionally in 2014 it is expected that a new Mercury Treaty will be adopted, and major decisions on its Financial Mechanism are still pending. We can say with confidence that the GEF is fully prepared to support these initiatives and given our own far-reaching reforms and proven on the ground experience, the GEF holds a strong comparative advantage to remain the financial mechanism for this convention.

I look forward to continuing the very successful partnership of the GEF and the Stockholm Convention and its Secretariat and to engaging the Parties in a discussion on critical issues and hope that we will reach a productive result.

Thank you.