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GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

Speaking Notes

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Global Environment Facility

Breakfast Meeting with Pacific Island Ministers CBD COP

Ministers, Delegates, Agency Officials, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this morning; I also want to recognize Mr. David Sheppard, the Director of SPREP for bringing us together at such an important time.

I trust your recent meeting in Madang with my staff met your expectations. From our side we appreciate the insight you bring to these consultations as well as international venues like the negotiations here in Nagoya. You are on the front lines of a very real threat to sustainable development and to a way of life that the next generation may never see. Your voice must be heard.

That is a fact that cannot be emphasized enough. Unfortunately in previous funding cycles of the GEF, there was little GEF activity in the region; most projects were either part of a larger global desktop project or were enabling activities to assist in reporting to conventions. And, for many countries the small grants country program was just getting started.

Thankfully, those days are over. The \$100 million I pledged to you is now in place; GEF-PAS is up and running. In fact the Secretariat has already approved most of the proposed projects so you should congratulate yourself: you have done far better than others articulating what needs to be done.

Nevertheless we still have a problem with getting these projects started. Only 12 projects are now fully implemented, and I think we all need to improve on this.

From the GEF side I promise we are rolling up our sleeves, picking up the telephone, meeting face to face like today, whatever it takes to see what else can be done to help you improve the pace of projects getting out the door. But we need your help too.

GEF SEC recognizes the key role which SPREP has to play in speeding up the project pace as well. I recently met with Mr. Sheppard on how to move forward and let me share with you some areas of interest.

One key challenge is with coordination--ensuring that capacity remains in SPREP to assist countries with GEF-related technical issues and to get these projects started.

I know this remains problematic, but within GEF 5, we have robust reforms that I am confident with your support will ensure on the ground results.

For example we have reduced the project cycle down to 18 months and we will be piloting direct access in GEF 5, for national communications (up to US\$500,000) and for National Portfolio Formulation Exercises (NPFE). For the NPFE, countries can receive US\$30,000 directly from the GEF Secretariat (without an agency) to do a national planning exercise on how countries would like to utilize their GEF resources over the GEF5.

Remember the NPFE is NOT an obligation. It is simply up to the country. If you want to do it then we will provide the resources. If you do not, it will not affect your ability to access the GEF resources which have been allocated to you.

Let me also point out that we are here to help: we have increased the amount of resources available to focal points through the Country Support Program , from US\$8,000 to US\$9,000 per year.

The country support program is now implemented directly by the GEF secretariat; this means you have the opportunity to hold extended constituency meetings, where focal points for the environmental conventions (eg UNFCCC and CBD) and NGO representatives can attend. This will naturally facilitate the accurate distribution of information as it relates to the GEF. We have also introduced a

facility of flexibility for countries who have smaller country allocations such as those in this region. You can now use your resources as you like in the focal areas, --so for example if you want to use all of your allocated resources on a biodiversity project or a climate change mitigation project you can, but these projects have to have multi focal area benefits.

I recognize there has been a lot of speculation and misinformation about our expanded role. However let me be clear, you are under no obligation to put funds from your country allocation into the small grants program. Each country in this region will obtain US\$250,000 per year.

Now I would like to talk about what the future holds. GEF-PAS of course is what we hope is just one step in a larger investment in the region. So an important question now is how do we move forward? I would like to have a new or an extension of the program for the region. I think so far we have been successful. Yes, we need to improve, but in reality it still makes far more sense for countries in this region to move forward together, rather than individually.

So first we need a period of stock taking and reflection, to determine where we are, and where we want to go, and I think the NPFE process is a good way to get there. I know some of you have already started the NPFE process by requesting the application form, and this process can be used for stocktaking, to identify gaps, and to see where you want to go in the future and how you want to use your GEF resources.

Then once you have completed this process and identified how you want to use your GEF resources we can then use this information to design a new program. We cannot however have a new program unless we improve the current program, and get more projects under implementation. We cannot go to the GEF Council

asking for a new program, unless we can see the tangible outputs of the current program.

So allow me to repeat here again what I said a few minutes ago: we are committed to giving you the help you need to fully implement the current program. The faster we have these projects operating the sooner we can fully leverage the impact we all want: helping governments meet international commitments to support delivery on biodiversity, climate change and poverty targets.

Thank you again for your time and attention and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have,