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**GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY**  
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

## **Opening Remarks**

**Monique Barbut, CEO and Chairperson**  
**Global Environment Facility**

**The East African  
Ministerial Meeting  
Nairobi**

Ministers,

Dear Achim and Kandeh

GEF Agency Coordinators,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very happy to be here in Nairobi today.

First, I would like to start by offering my sincere appreciation to Hon. John Michuki, the Minister of Environment and Mineral Resources who graciously agreed to host us in Kenya and for his unwavering support.

Sincere thanks also go of course to Mr. Achim Steiner, the Executive Director of UNEP for hosting us at Gigiri and for being with us here today; I also want to recognize Mr. Kandeh Yumkella, the Director General of UNIDO, who joins us in his capacity as Chair of UN-Energy, the group of UN Agencies that focuses on the energy issue. He has made it a priority to work very closely with the GEF and I thank him for his support and leadership.

Speaking of leadership, before I begin my remarks I also want to give a warm welcome to all the ministers attending here who have taken time to come to Nairobi. Thank you and I am confident we will have a productive meeting.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the GEF and over time we have learned a lot: enough that donors entrusted us with a fifth replenishment that despite the financial downturn resulted in a 54 percent increase in funds.

We are meeting today, barely a few months into this new replenishment period at a critical time for you and for the GEF. Therefore to me it is essential that I start this meeting by giving you a short overview of my priority focus for GEF-5. My main goal is to continue our efforts to ensure the GEF remains a world class institution.

You recall in May 2010, 35 nations concluded negotiations on the fifth replenishment, with commitments totaling a record \$4.34 billion. This aid is the largest increase in new donor support for the GEF. I made the commitment then that we would do more with these resources by expanding our work program in each GEF focal area and through powerful reforms that aim to empower countries through new and innovative activities to create synergy among various sectors. I

also specifically promised to ensure that countries, including those in Eastern Africa represented here today will have the tools they need to make choices that fully leverage the resources available to us.

As part of this process, GEF-5 resources have been allocated with your country's share in the climate change, biodiversity and land degradation focal areas. These have been communicated to you. Do note that smaller countries will be able to use these resources flexibly across focal areas, for example, on forest conservation or resource management programs, which will further enhance country ownership.

The broad reforms of GEF-4 are now in place. Yet we will deepen them to make sure access to GEF resources is easier and offer more flexibility for you to finance projects that YOU choose. In that context, in GEF-5 we will be enhancing our country driven agenda in everything we do. We know that when projects are aligned with national objectives and developed in a strategic context with input from a variety of stakeholders in a country, the impact is stronger.

To ensure this alignment you will see me and staff from the secretariat more often. We will be moving into direct funding of national communications, and broadening of the GEF partnership, including national institutions. The GEF

Secretariat is reforming the Country Support Program for Focal Points to make it even more effective. From January 2011, it will be integrated into the GEF Secretariat's other outreach programs with countries to create a single platform for enhanced communications with and support to GEF focal points.

Now I would like to take a moment to highlight the objectives of this meeting. You know well that with new money comes new responsibility and expectations that I take very seriously.

In GEF-4, we worked hard to make it easier for the countries of Africa to gain access to GEF resources. We launched a wide range of initiatives including a set of programmatic approaches: many of you have heard of the Congo Basin Forest Ecosystem and two others in West Africa on biodiversity and energy access issues. Unfortunately, we did not develop one in Eastern Africa, despite expression of interest I received from many of you. But we now have a great opportunity before us: The GEF-4 experience has been extremely positive. It has taught us that programmatic approaches, when well constructed and in an all inclusive manner are one of the best ways to assist countries in this region. I have therefore decided to pursue them in GEF-5. In doing so, there is no doubt in my mind that Eastern Africa can be the first region in this cycle to receive our support.

Therefore in this meeting we are gathered with the express purpose to reach a better understanding of YOUR priorities for GEF-5 financing. Based on individual country priorities and your understanding and knowledge of the region, now is the time to explore opportunities for considering programs that add value and build on the results we have already achieved.

Here is what I expect to see: simply put I want projects on the ground that have a DIRECT impact on people: I do not want to fund workshops or enrich consultants. What you need and what I want to approve are projects that people can feel and which are built on solid baselines that match national strategies led by agencies with the right capabilities. These will be the criteria in which we prioritize projects, nothing more nothing less. And this will be done in an efficient and transparent way that leverages the resources we have for maximum impact.

Let me also remind us all: We are not here to develop full programs. We are here to discuss and agree on broader priorities, project and program ideas you feel must be considered in GEF-5. The outcome of our deliberations will then constitute the basis upon which GEF Agencies will work on with the view to submit program to be implemented in this region. I am glad that experts from your countries, my staff

and GEF Agencies have spent two days together. This gives a good foundation in which we can have recommendations for our consideration.

Of course I also anticipate in the course of the discussions some issues may be unclear to you. Do raise them and I will be happy clarify them.

Let me conclude by reminding you that we have the good fortune to be gathered at the right time and the right place. We are here at the start of GEF-5, AND just a few months after Nagoya and Cancun where the international community renewed its commitment to protect the environment. Addressing climate change and promoting conservation are not luxuries for the rich. The choices we make at this meeting can show the world that development can and should be sustainable.

Thank you.