



GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

GEF Perspectives on the Post-Copenhagen Climate Challenge
and Oceans

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Thank you ladies and gentlemen. It is an honor to address this group.

As you know the powerful link between oceans and climate is too often a neglected one. When you protect the oceans you protect the planet and yet the oceans are in political terms the poor relation of this and other conventions.

During our 18 year history at the GEF we have been working to highlight the obvious synergies between healthy oceans and combating climate change.

Let me give you a snap shot of our portfolio:

- The GEF has played a catalytic role in helping 172 countries work together on shared water systems by leveraging \$1.1 billion in GEF grants to access \$4 billion from outside sources. Today, the GEF remains the world's largest financier of transboundary water collaboration.
- We direct the largest ecosystem-based program to reverse depletion of coastal and marine fisheries in over 50% of Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) that are shared by developing countries.
- We have catalyzed action in the Danube and Black Sea basins as well as in East Asia to reduce land-based sources of nitrogen pollution that creates "Dead Zones". We also have directed Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) on most every continent to help protect coastal habitat like kelp,

seagrass beds, and mangroves: these are now recognized as a key global sink for carbon---the blue forests of the world.

- Currently, 38 SIDS of the Africa, Pacific, and Caribbean groups are working with GEF projects to protect their coastal surface and groundwater supplies so that the communities will have a chance to safeguard their water.

Balancing competing uses of coastal habitat, fisheries, oceans, and the incoming freshwater basins secures local food sources, livelihoods, water supplies, and health benefits for the world's most vulnerable people.

It is a sad story but it bears repeating: our coasts and oceans are degraded almost to the point of no return. Oceanic fish stocks depleted, vast coastal “dead zones” created from pollution, and habitats lost. These large water systems cover most of our planet but, if we continue to manage them in fragmented ways, food supplies are at risk for billions of people.

The world does not need a new set of adaptation programs operating in a vacuum through competing organizations to address sea-level rise, coastal storm vulnerability, drought, or floods. What IS needed is to integrate these stresses into existing institutions focused on integrated coastal management for multiple

benefits. Indeed, the majority of GEF funding in the international waters focal area, over two-thirds of a billion dollars, has been devoted to these integrated approaches that help reduce land-based pollution, conserve coastal habitat, and reverse coastal and marine fisheries depletion.

During these times of global change, achieving sustainability will depend on fostering trust and commitments among governments—all the way down to the community level. The GEF International Waters focal area has built this needed trust in these harsh economic times through its integrated programming approach designed to address the linked issues of water, coasts, oceans, and climate change. And now GEF's experience in securing blue carbon sinks, which support one half of the world's fisheries and nourish almost one half of our planet's population, is being recognized as contributing to climate mitigation just as terrestrial forests do. But it would be short sighted to focus just on the habitat without the integrated approaches piloted by GEF that have multiple beneficial impacts on marine ecosystems, community livelihoods, food security, and now a high capacity to sequester carbon to help meet climate change challenges.

Even in Copenhagen, we must not forget about "Dead Zones" that come from agriculture and sewage pollution: they threaten food and economic security for billions of people, too often the most vulnerable and poor. Therefore we cannot just focus on funds for blue carbon but on integrated approaches with partners who can

deliver different types of assistance. The good news is that countries are ready to help and so is the GEF.

Just as GEF piloted protection of terrestrial forests to set the stage for programs such as REDD, the GEF has also piloted ICM approaches that empower communities to protect their blue forests represented by coastal habitat. Improving the ability of coastal ecosystems to absorb and bury CO₂ is a critical aspect of GEF's support for ICM and ecosystem-based approaches to fisheries in LMEs. Think of GEF as having the delivery system to support not only REDD programs but "Blue " REDD programs. The GEF as a unique, networked institution with its many partners can undertake different roles in assisting countries to secure their coasts, oceans, and islands. We have a history of delivering multiple benefits through this approach, not just single thematic interventions.

And, depending on the level of GEF Replenishment to be decided in the next few months, our International waters focal area may devote up to one-third of a billion dollars the next 4 years with another billion of projected co-financing to deliver this integrated approach for coasts and oceans. In short we stand ready to support countries as they work with their neighbors to sustain shared coastal and marine resources. This will help secure the coastal blue forests of our planet and help build a stable, productive future for all. Thank you.

