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## Opening Remarks

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

**THE MEETING WITH THE PARLIAMENTARIANS  
19 DECEMBER 2011, 8:00-9:00AM,  
IMPERIAL HOTEL (TBD), TOKYO, JAPAN**

**Organized by the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank (PNoWB) Japan  
and Global Legislators Organization for a Balanced Environment (GLOBE) Japan**

*Presidents of the Parliamentarian Network of the World Bank in Japan and GLOBE Japan*, honorable diet members, ladies and gentlemen, OHA-YO-U, GO-ZAI-MASU (Good morning in Japanese).

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for all the members of PNoWB Japan, GLOBE Japan and the World Bank Tokyo Office for holding this event today.

Before I begin, let me convey to you my sincere sympathy and solidarity with the Japanese people for the tragic losses and terrible devastation caused by the massive earthquake and tsunami on 11 March this year. I am impressed with Japan's resilience and confident that it will soon recover from this disaster.

I am grateful for Japan's continued strong support of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), especially during this difficult time for your great nation. Since its establishment in 1991, the GEF has benefitted from the strong support and leadership of Japan. Japan has consistently been the second largest donor to the GEF, after the United States. Japan has also

shown great leadership in increasing its contribution by about 60% last year for the fifth GEF replenishment cycle, which led to a historical increase in GEF finance. I would like to particularly recognize and thank the key policymakers here for your confidence and support and for the key role you have played in enabling this important contribution.

The Japanese people have been dealing with extraordinary environmental and safety issues as a result of the tsunami. Given the challenges you are facing, I would like to share with you an innovative project that the GEF has recently approved at Chernobyl in Ukraine. The project will help establish a research and environmental protection center as well as some new protected areas within the current Chernobyl Exclusion Zone. Twenty-five years after the tragic accident, a long-term monitoring and transparency initiative focusing on the impact of the nuclear accident will enable the international community, particularly Japan, to better understand the potential for ecosystem rehabilitation.

This year, we are celebrating the GEF's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary serving as the financial mechanism for all the three Rio conventions, namely the Convention on Biological Diversity, UN Framework Convention on Climate

Change, and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, and other environmental agreements. During the past two decades, the GEF has allocated \$9.2 billion, supplemented by more than \$40 billion in co-financing, in support of more than 2,700 projects in 165 developing countries. We have grown to become the largest environmental fund worldwide.

At the same time, the international community is celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit with the Rio + 20 Summit next June. Given its unique and prominent role, the GEF intends to share experiences and lessons in the lead-up to the conference.

As you may know, the GEF is providing technical support towards organizing the First Global Summit of Legislators for the Environment with the GLOBE International at Rio. We are also working with the GLOBE on a number of different fronts, including a recently approved GEF project on Sustainable Forest Management and REDD+. GLOBE international is the implementing agency working with the national legislators on policy framework related to forest in key forested developing countries. These forest projects are particularly exciting as they promote programmatic

synergies that join biodiversity, climate change and local livelihood objectives into more efficient projects.

The reforms that I have put in place over the past several years have not only increased GEF's efficiency but also strengthened a harmonized approach to finding synergies under the different objectives of the Conventions. I believe this is the true strength of the GEF that has prompted the Government of Japan to trust us to manage the Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund, which was established under the GEF with Japan's leadership and generous contribution. The fund is specifically designed to support countries with projects that will promote technology transfer, private sector engagement, and the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources together with the indigenous peoples. I sincerely thank Japan for this trust towards the GEF, and I am committed to making this fund a success.

Today, the world is facing very difficult times. Economic and financial crises are casting a shadow over our future. The global environmental crisis

could worsen this situation. Addressing global environment issues is no longer a luxury. It is a necessity, and a key security issue for our future. I cannot emphasize enough the role of the GEF in this regards. Our 20 years of experience helps us in making an important contribution to the global environment and economy.

Distinguished parliamentarians and guests, before concluding my remarks, I would like to thank you for your kind support that you have provided me during the past five years as the GEF's CEO. During this time, I have come to Japan every year, sometimes more than once, to share our work and seek your guidance and support. As you may know, my term as the CEO of the GEF is ending in July of next year. No matter who comes new to the seat, I am confident that the GEF would continue to enjoy your warm support and further strengthen our relationship.

ARI-GA-TOU, Thank you very much.