



**Speech delivered by Monique Barbut**

**Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson of the GEF**

**Workshop “Discussion of Lake Chad at Rio +20”**

June 21, 2012, 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., Rio Center, Room T-4

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His Excellency Idriss Deby Itno,

His Excellency Mahamdou Issoufou,

(...)

Ladies, Gentlemen,

It is a great honor for me to be in your midst again. I would like to thank Mr. Emile Mallet for organizing this event and for extending an invitation to me.

I am extremely happy to have been afforded this opportunity for us to review together what has been achieved in a matter of months, since our last meeting in March of this year.

In fact, since the World Water Forum in Marseille, we have made every effort to ensure that our ideas and discussions are reflected in concrete action. I am therefore pleased to share with you three decisions that I have made:

First, in March, right after the Forum, I approved a project concept related to the adaptation of local communities in the Maradi region. This US\$3.75 million project paved the way for the mobilization of US\$13.25 million in cofinancing and seeks to promote income-generating activities in the most disadvantaged communities, targeting rural women in particular. It also provides for assistance to local authorities with the incorporation of adaptation measures into governance and

planning systems. This project draws on the excellent results of a preceding Programming Strategy for Adaptation pilot project.

Second, on April 12, I approved the final project document for Chad, prepared in the context of the program to support the Great Green Wall. The World Bank, which spearheaded a fast-track process to respond to the urgent situation, should be both thanked and commended. In fewer than four months, the US\$9.2 million project, funded with GEF STAR and LDCF funds, was finalized. This project facilitated leveraging with two other projects, each amounting to US\$25 million, related to agriculture and local development. The Government of Chad also managed to mobilize significant sums on its own.

Third, on May 31, 2012, I approved a preparation fund in the amount of US\$415,000, linked directly to the Lake Chad basin protection program. The African Development Bank will thus be able to spearhead the necessary consultations and finalize specific projects for each of the five basin countries. A regional project will supplement this initiative in order to strengthen integrated water management in the lake's watershed and contribute to implementation of a Strategic Action Programme funded earlier by the GEF.

I considered this an opportune time to be able to share these initiatives and to note the proactive approach of the GEF, which applies not only to projects but also to the way in which GEF resources are deployed. A number of these projects in fact combine the resources of the different GEF focal areas—combating land degradation, climate change, biodiversity, management of international waters, forests, or even adaptation, as a way of addressing, in a single project, the different problems that affect local communities and the global environment. I believe that

this very concrete *modus operandi* is central to the discussions now taking place here in Rio.

As you are aware, I am nearing the end of my second term as Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson of the GEF. In addition to providing the three earlier examples to illustrate the GEF's proactive approach, I also wanted us, together, to take the analysis one step further.

Chad and Niger are indeed two countries that can attest to the changes and the impact of the reforms that I have sought to implement over the past six years. I will cite two examples I consider critical.

First, the LDCF mechanism is a prime example of an instrument that has been placed at the service of countries. You know that this has been one of my ongoing concerns in all reform processes—putting beneficiary countries in the driver's seat so that they can make the decisions regarding the projects that affect them.

We therefore funded National Adaptation Programs of Action (NAPAs) for Niger in 2006 and for Chad in 2010. These programs enabled the countries to assess their vulnerability and identify their most pressing needs in the area of climate change adaptation. All adaptation project proposals must now be in line with these priorities.

Consequently, Niger has already developed two projects with the UNDP totaling US\$8 million, and a third project is being prepared with the FAO. In the case of Chad, the World Bank used US\$4.6 million to develop an integrated project using STAR funding, and several agencies have indicated their willingness to help Chad implement its national priorities. It is also important for future projects to be discussed in a context of collaboration and sound understanding with the other

partners working in this area, such as the European Union or bilateral cooperation agencies. Though I have in mind the AFD and GTI in particular, there are others in the region.

Second, I think that Chad and Niger are particularly well placed to attest to the benefits of the GEF program approach. Since the start of the GEF-4, Niger was included in the Strategic Investment Program in the context of TerrAfrica and benefitted from three projects to combat land degradation to the tune of more than US\$10 million. At the midpoint of the GEF-4, while the West African countries were unable to program other GEF resources, Chad and Niger were able to implement projects in the areas of biodiversity and climate change through the Strategic Program for West Africa.

At the start of the GEF-5 cycle, because of the knowledge garnered by Sahelian countries, they were the first, this time around, to benefit from a program approach with the support of the Great Green Wall program. In addition, by using various STAR allocations and pooling these funds with LDC funds, the average number of projects has more than doubled, with Niger and Chad benefitting from projects amounting to US\$8 million. Lastly, during the work program last November, the Lake Chad basin program was approved. This is also the first program developed by the African Development Bank, which also signals greater regional bank ownership of GEF activities.

Ladies and gentlemen:

Throughout my tenure at the GEF, I have sought to make projects as concrete as possible. They must respond to the needs articulated by countries and have a tangible effect on the ground, in a way that benefits populations and the global environment.

I have also sought to make the GEF more flexible and to have its resources pooled with more strategic and ambitious programs and projects.

As you are aware, however, the GEF never acts alone. I would go as far as to say that it is critical for the GEF to continue to be one of several donors and to serve as a catalyst for the efforts of all the actors involved. For this reason, I would like to commend President Idriss Deby Itno and President Mahamdou Issoufou for their personnel commitment to the protection of Lake Chad. I would also like to express my appreciation to the development partners and civil society actors.

I am confident that Dr. Naoko Ishii, my successor at the GEF Secretariat, will be able to count on you, and that you will serve as GEF ambassadors in an effort to ensure that the work you have started is continued.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to you and to bid you what is, assuredly, farewell.