



Global Environment Facility

**Revitalizing Our Stewardship
For Life On Earth**

**Monique Barbut
CEO and Chairperson**

**Convention on Biological Diversity
Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group on
Review of Implementation of the Convention
Second Meeting
July 9, 2007
Paris, France**

Distinguished Delegates:

It is a pleasure to be here with you this morning. I know you have a very busy agenda ahead of you, and I would like to take this opportunity to offer a few reflections in the context of your pressing work. My presence here today is symbolic of the commitment I have made with the Global Environment Facility to renew and revitalize our dialogue with the Convention. I am here to offer you my wholehearted service and support.

Indeed, I believe it is fundamental that we move the commitments of the Convention from paper to reality across the globe. We are at a point today in human history where the protection of biological diversity has become imperative to the future of the planet, but this is not a fact which has penetrated population and leaders around the world. The Convention has a unique, and daunting, role to play to ensure that adequate political will and resources are focused toward biodiversity, and the GEF stands ready to help you in that effort. I believe it has become indispensable that we all make an effort to refocus and reinvigorate our joint efforts. Without a harmonized and coherent approach among all players, we stand in danger of failing to meet our commitments.

A few weeks ago, I was pleased that the GEF Council approved a broad slate of reforms which I had proposed to them to start to revitalize the GEF. The approved reforms include a shorter and more effective project, revised strategies for all GEF focal areas, a Public-Private Partnership program that will allow GEF to leverage private sector investment in areas of common interest, and a restructured Secretariat to facilitate integration across focal areas – we now have a Natural Resources Management Team under which two thematic clusters will operate, one on biodiversity and one on land and water resources.

I believe that all of these new reforms will help us facilitate a more integrated approach to biodiversity management with countries consistent with the ecosystem approach.

In particular, the revised biodiversity strategy is designed so that it will allow us to better serve countries' commitments to their biodiversity goals. The new strategy encompasses four objectives: improving protected area system sustainability; mainstreaming biodiversity conservation and sustainable use into production sectors that impact biodiversity; safeguarding biodiversity by building country capacity to implement the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and helping prevent, control and manage invasive alien species; and finally, a big first for GEF, capacity building to support implementation of the Bonn Guidelines on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-sharing.

I believe it is important that the Convention undertake a similar revitalization and harmonization, so that our priorities and yours are negotiated together. I also believe that all the Conventions together should do the same.

In support of that idea, the GEF has started work with all three Conventions for which we serve as financial mechanism to put in place an approach by which countries can mainstream their national plans. GEF plans to support a pilot project to help countries

develop a more coordinated process for joint reporting to CBD, UNFCCC and other Conventions as relevant. This pilot project will be executed in a select group of willing LDC and SIDS and fully respond to Convention requests. As you aware, several small countries have expressed concern about the administrative burden of national reporting without a matching domestic demand. This project will not only explore ways to reduce the administrative burden by strengthening institutional coordination mechanisms but also support areas necessary for mainstreaming, particularly the establishment of common data maintenance including information analysis and the follow-up policy development and enforcement.

The project, to be implemented by UNDP and UNEP, will be initiated in six developing countries and its results will be communicated to CBD and other Conventions.

Distinguished Delegates:

Perhaps the most important point I would like to raise today is that, while the public swell of support for climate change has risen to a global awareness and momentum for change, the commitments to biodiversity protection must be seen as equally determinant. At the GEF, we consider the Convention on Biological Diversity to be as vitally important as the Climate Change Convention, and we must do everything we can to ensure that the issues and concerns the CBD is working so hard to address become as compelling a set of commitments as the climate change commitments. We are ready to help you to that end.

That is why I wanted to be here today. Among all the Conventions, it is only the Biodiversity Convention which is the path to stewardship for all life on earth.

Thank you