

## 29<sup>th</sup> LDCF/SCCF Council Meeting

### Opening Remarks

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#### CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

- It is a pleasure to co-Chair my first LDCF/SCCF Council Meeting. Through my own experience working with vulnerable people, nations and ecosystems in tropical and developing countries, I have first-hand knowledge and appreciation of the critical importance of climate adaptation and resilience. I am a strong believer in the mission of the LDCF and SCCF and in the potential for these funds to deliver transformative resilient outcomes.
- **The LDCF/SCCF is supporting multiple dimensions of resilience-building in the COVID context, and we work in projects that will be reflected** in the Work Program that target vulnerable ecosystems and people that are likely hit hardest by both the climate crisis and COVID-19. Some of the opportunities these projects have identified to support green recovery and building back better include: enhanced food and water security; ecosystem-based adaptation, particularly in the agricultural sector, and its translation to national and sub-national planning and policy development; green entrepreneurship and resilient supply chains; diversified livelihoods and job creation; sound land use practices; and integrated food-water-energy solutions.
- **IEO's evaluation of the LDCF has confirmed its relevance to countries, its comparative advantages, and its ability to deliver results.** Evidence is emerging on the catalytic role of the LDCF, its experience in paving the path for larger projects in countries, its success in achieving a replication of approaches, and being perceived by stakeholders as having more smooth approval and implementation. Stakeholders also appreciate the LDCF's support for risk and innovation. We hope that donors and recipient countries take note of these solid contributions as we move forwards towards the next replenishment.
- As we tackle the interlinked challenges of pandemic, climate change on vulnerable communities and degradation of nature; we need to focus on systemic issues underpinning these and prioritize solutions that deliver cross cutting benefits. Some of these are:

**Nature Based Solutions**- The pandemic has very clearly shown that we need to work with nature and invest in nature. In recent years, thanks to many of our partners and leadership of champion countries, the importance of nature-based solutions for climate change adaptation and long term resilience has been well acknowledged and promoted as a strategic priority. In our LDCF portfolio we are encouraged that LDCs are designing projects which are at watershed and landscape scale with a strong focus on natural resource management. We are stepping up further with an analysis of our own NBS portfolio with the great help of STAP.

- **Mobilizing domestic finance**, political leadership and governance is important to scale up adaptation and resilience benefits, something that I have been highlighting throughout this week. We are seeing good domestic co-finance commitments for adaptation projects supported by LDCF. However, I think we are yet to unlock the full potential which could be ensured through strong political leadership from countries and more integrated and cross sectoral adaptation projects that bring in various government departments.
- In relation to this, we also know that the adaptation finance gap is huge and therefore we need **innovative financial mechanisms** involving public and private finance. Models similar to payment for environmental services in the context of scaling up nature-based solutions for adaptation in landscapes and cities that can deliver large scale benefits. Having countries take a look to the tropical carbon tax that Colombia and Costa Rica have, and how they've been using that innovative financial mechanism for land restoration and climate adaptation is an excellent example of how we can begin understanding how to narrow down the adaptation financial gap.
- The pandemic has **highlighted inequality issues** more than ever before making it clear that future resilience must be built on the foundation of equality with a focus on the most vulnerable. In this context we are strengthening integration of our gender strategy in adaptation programming - this is extremely important for the GEF. We are encouraged by the findings of IEO that gender integration has improved in our projects and will work with our partners to strengthen it further.
- As we need to innovate, deliver solutions quickly and reach out to communities directly, coordinating with the **private sector, an important actor, is one of our top priorities**. We have already initiated this through our challenge program for adaptation innovation, supported by the LDCF and the SCCF, which is supporting private sector investment models in areas such as insuring natural assets, blended finance with banks and micro credit institutions to meet capital gap for small holder farmers and applying innovative modern technologies such as the use of artificial intelligence and drone technologies to generate localized climate impact information for investment decision making by local governments and financial authorities.
- As countries aim to recover from this pandemic, a key priority for them is creating jobs and the biggest potential for this is offered by small and medium enterprises in least developed countries which are one of our biggest interests. We are **tapping the potential of SMEs to develop and deploy adaptation solutions** and create jobs to support local economic recovery through projects like the ones we have in Sierra Leone, Madagascar and Liberia.
- The unprecedented situation that we have now clearly **requires working together** building on mutual strengths. The global momentum we are seeing for a recovery which is green and climate resilient is excellent with a strong push by the Global Commission on Adaptation and climate funds including the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund. We all not only have to be just aligned in our thinking but also deliver results building on our complementarities. For the GEF, as we operate through different focal areas and integrated programs, the timing is perfect to mainstream climate risk across our portfolio and design projects which benefit from

multiple perspectives. We have increased focus on multi-trust fund projects linking adaptation with biodiversity and land degradation focal areas. The projects in Benin and Mali in the proposed work program is a testimony of this.

- **Finally, I express my sincere appreciation to all donors to the LDCF and SCCF** and commend the Netherland's leadership in hosting the Climate Adaptation Summit in January 2021.
- Thank you.