

**Global Environment Facility Statement
1st Preparatory Committee for the UN Conference on Small Island Developing States**

Thank you Madam Chair for allowing the Global Environment Facility to make a short intervention.

The Global Environment Facility (the GEF) would first like to join in celebrating the recent declaration of the first International Year of SIDS. The events and activities of this year are sure to be highlighted by the conference in Samoa, which will provide a vital opportunity to draw attention to the importance of SIDS in safeguarding the global environment and the crucial needs of SIDS to develop sustainably. In recognition of the particular challenges faced by SIDS, the GEF has supported projects through our partners in many SIDS. As a financial mechanism for several multilateral environmental agreements, the GEF continues to ensure that resources are provided to SIDS to support the fulfillment of treaty obligations.

The GEF is a strong supporter of sustainable development for SIDS. Our funding model uses our financial resources and convening power to bring together governments, global environmental conventions, intergovernmental agencies, NGOs and the private sector to implement projects. The GEF also works with the needs of SIDS to address pressing challenges for SIDS through funding a variety of projects and partnerships in support of sustainable development. Our governing body, the GEF Council, has repeatedly expressed support for special considerations for SIDS in project development and implementation. For the GEF, the funding of SIDS programs and projects are a high priority. Programs and projects supported by the GEF range from targeted interventions around specific issues, such as toxic chemical disposal and ballast water management, to broad reaching initiatives on integrated land and sea management. In the SIDS, the GEF has supported programs on climate change adaptation, fisheries, tourism, protected areas, energy efficiency, renewable energy, toxic chemicals, and integrated land management. Some particularly notable GEF-supported programs include the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change project, Energy for Sustainable Development in Caribbean Buildings, the Coral Triangle Initiative, Micronesia Challenge, and Caribbean Challenge (on conservation), and PEMSEA – Partnerships for Environmental Management of the Seas of East Asia.

One of the GEF's newest initiatives, the Ridge to Reef program, provides resources for Pacific island countries to implement integrated land and sea planning and management. Each Pacific island country has the opportunity to focus on issues of particular importance for their national situation while still working under the auspices of the larger initiative. The GEF and partners hope to learn from the different approaches being used in each country while reducing the administrative burden through this coordinated program.

At the same time, the GEF recognizes the ongoing threat of climate change to SIDS and continues to make investments in SIDS to address the threat climate change. We are also helping SIDS address their sustainable energy needs.

As the GEF begins its next replenishment cycle in July, we will be placing particular emphasis on important issues for SIDS including sustainable fisheries, toxic chemicals, integrated land management, invasive species, sustainable, energy and climate change adaptation. Our support for these and other SIDS sustainable development priorities will help lay the foundation for the work of the post-2015 development agenda. We know that the SIDS have valuable lessons to share with the international community as we wrestle with the challenges of implementing what are sure to be ambitious Sustainable Development Goals and the GEF will be their proud partner.

The GEF will be an active participant in the upcoming SIDS conference in Apia. We want to applaud the organizers for choosing such an important theme – partnership. This conference provides an important venue to learn from lessons of the past, launch new initiatives, and discuss what is needed for the future. The GEF will continue to be an effective partner with the SIDS and we want to continue to exchange ideas about how to build sustainable partnerships for lasting development.