

Green Climate Fund Global Programming Conference
Realising Climate Ambitions, Empowering Action

19-23 August 2019

Opening remarks by the Executive Director of the Green Climate Fund

Hon. VP of Kiribati, Hon. DPM of the Cook Islands, Your Excellencies, distinguished guests,

It is my honor and immense privilege to welcome you to the first Global Programming Conference of the Green Climate Fund. I also look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in person during the week.

July 2019 was the warmest month on Earth since at least 1850. The record heat was felt all over the world, including parts of North America, southern Asia, southern Africa and parts of North America and Europe. In addition to extreme heatwaves, this brought massive wildfires, record and sudden melt event to the Greenland Ice Sheet and affected the health and livelihoods of communities all over the world.

It was the latest sign that the global climate crisis is accelerating even faster than scientists had feared. In response to the climate crisis, developing countries are rapidly raising their climate efforts to avoid the unmanageable and manage the unavoidable.

As the largest dedicated climate fund, the Green Climate Fund's mandate is to support this ambition by turning innovative ideas into reality. It helps catalyze and scale up

policy, technology and business innovations to foster low emissions climate resilient development pathways. We will discuss these both today and tomorrow.

A core principle of the GCF is to follow a country-driven approach. This has been repeatedly reaffirmed by the GCF Board. The GCF is stepping up its readiness support to ensure that developing countries drive the formulation and implementation of the sequence of steps to be taken to achieve their unique low emission climate resilient pathways.

With committed financial support in 99 developing countries, the impact of GCF in empowering developing countries to lower emissions and enhance climate resilience is increasingly evident.

This ranges from GCF finances supporting the development of the world's largest solar power array in Egypt to helping Mongolian businesspeople expand renewables and energy efficiency markets through low-interest loans

GCF's support is helping to make communities more climate resilient across the planet, including through the planting of argan orchards in Morocco to improve the ability of Barbados' water sector to deal with rising sea levels, droughts and extreme weather events.

The GCF is not a development bank or technical assistance agency. The GCF is a partnership. The GCF works for and through its partners, including the GCF national designated

authorities and focal points, accredited entities, civil society organizations and private sector.

Our role is to enable our partners to raise and realize their climate ambitions through sharing costs and risks. We can also use a wide range of grant and non-grant instruments to help mobilize additional resources from the public and private sector to magnify their transformative impact.

It is only through working in tandem with countries and accredited entities that the Green Climate Fund is able to contribute to the efforts of countries to achieve the Paris Agreement and the Climate Change Convention.

This leads me to the Global Programming Conference. The Conference brings together all GCF programme countries and accredited entities to help set the Fund's programming directions for the next four years.

As you may all know, the Green Climate Fund is in the midst of its first replenishment process. We are calling on contributors to significantly increase their contributions to the Fund and many of them are willing to do so.

To support this call, we must develop a robust strategy and ambitious programming plans. We must demonstrate that GCF is fit-for-purpose to help your economies withstand and adapt to the impacts of climate change; while also significantly reducing emissions that further exacerbate climate change.

During the Conference, we will work intensively with each one of you to refine and sharpen our evolving strategy and programming directions.

What would success be for this Conference? Our ambition is to close the conference with a common vision for how to best foster economy-wide transformations in the built environment; livelihoods; energy and industry; and ecosystems, including forests, land and water.

We are also keen to learn from each other's experiences in each region, Africa, Asia-Pacific, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and identify key thematic areas where the GCF can have a significant impact in each region.

Last, but not the least, we would like to come away with directions on how to respond to the unique circumstances of small island developing states and least developed countries. SIDS and LDCs are amongst the most vulnerable yet also amongst the most ambitious in their climate efforts. GCF is committed to supporting these efforts.

I encourage you to engage vigorously, challenge our assumptions as we challenge yours, and bring your most ambitious ideas forward. We want to draw on your experience, ingenuity and resolve to shape an ambitious and transformational strategy for the next four years and beyond.