

SPEECH BY H.E PRIME MINISTER NGUYEN XUAN PHUC

AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE 6th GEF ASSEMBLY

(Da Nang, 27 June 2018)

Madam Naoki Ishii, CEO and Chairperson for the Global Environment Facility (GEF),

Distinguished Heads of delegations,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of Viet Nam, I would like to extend my warmest welcome to all distinguished delegates attending the 6th Global Environment Facility Assembly held in the beautiful City of Da Nang. I sincerely thank the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for selecting Viet Nam as the host of this significant international event on environment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our Earth, the common home of mankind, is suffering from severe impacts of environmental degradation and pollution, climate change and the rise of sea level. As a result, all nations and peoples, with no exception, will have to face immeasurable consequences if we fail to come up with integrated solutions.

Nevertheless, this enormous challenge also presents an opportunity for humankind to review and rethink the path and models of development, thereby fostering changes in the people's mindset and behaviors so that our global natural habitats would stay permanent, and the cultural and historical values of previous generations would be well preserved and passed on to future generations. And most importantly, it is also an opportunity for us all to unite and realize the dream and aspiration of many generations, regardless of skin color and ethnicity, of a ***“Resilient, Sustainable and Life-affirming Planet”***.

Throughout nearly three decades since its establishment, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) has been playing a significant role in addressing the great global environment and climate change challenges. In particular, GEF have extended much-awaited support for many developing countries, including Viet Nam in this regard.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Viet Nam, being a developing country, is facing various problems of environmental degradation and pollution, climate change and sealevel rise. Notwithstanding numerous difficulties and limited resources, the Vietnamese Government keeps on incorporating environment protection and climate change response into its national socio-economic development plans. The Government has

also actively engaged the business community and the people so as to bring into full play the synergy of their creativity, solidarity and resources. The Vietnamese Government does not and will never sacrifice the well-being of the environment for economic growth because what we are pursuing is sustainable development.

Viet Nam is working hard to realize the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2030) and its commitments at the COP-21 on climate change. In my speech at the G7 Outreach session in Canada on 9 June 2018, I spoke highly of GEF's important role and its effective cooperation with Viet Nam, and highlighted that Viet Nam would work closely with GEF in implementing the *Regional project for an ocean free of plastic waste*.

Viet Nam sincerely thanks the GEF, its member countries and development partners for the effective collaboration and assistance. We look forward to your further much-awaited advices, cooperation and assistance in this regard. Viet Nam is a suitable location for the GEF to implement new projects on environmental protection, and we are ready to participate in global, inter-regional, inter-disciplinary projects so as to share our experience and learn from others the good practices on addressing global environmental issues such as marine plastic waste, biodiversity conservation...

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to share with you several points as inputs for your discussion today:

First, we need to identify the key environmental challenges that humankind faces today, thereby formulating effective and integrated solutions.

Second, we need to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the **existing support and cooperation mechanisms**, thereby undertaking momentous reforms, particularly in terms of mobilizing and allocating resources in order to best assist member countries, especially those facing enormous challenges from environmental degradation and pollution and global climate change.

Third, we need to come up with **integrated projects** that are global, inter-regional and inter-disciplinary in order to address the underlying causes of environmental degradation and pollution, biodiversity loss, climate change, etc.; We also need to come up with **target projects** to address the current pressing issues such as plastic waste in general and marine plastic waste in particular.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Will our planet be able to withstand the risks of natural disasters? Will the future of humankind be sustainable? Will our continents still be full of vitality? The answers lie in each and everyone of us, depending on our own actions right from this moment on, for a **“Resilient, Sustainable and Life-affirming Planet”**

Viet Nam is ready to work closely with you for sustainable development for the current and future generations.

Thank you./.