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Adaptation Fund Board's New Vice-Chair Brings an Inclusive Perspective: 'We Believe that Climate Change Concerns All Citizens and All Levels'

Adaptation Fund's Concrete Work to Most Vulnerable Populations Is Critical in the Global Climate Finance Landscape

Bonn, Germany (March 23, 2018) -- The Adaptation Fund Board's newly elected Vice-Chair Sylviane Bilgischer brings an interesting perspective to the Board's leadership, having served as a national delegate for Belgium at the UN's international climate change negotiations and at the subnational government level for the Belgian Regional Government of Wallonia.

Ms. Bilgischer, who represents Belgium and Annex I Parties (developed countries) on the Adaptation Fund Board, assumed the Vice-Chair role at the Board's biannual meeting this week in Bonn, Germany, from Victor Viñas, who became Chair. Bilgischer has served as a Board member since March 2017.

She appreciates the collaborative spirit of the Fund, and said she looks forward to the challenges ahead but also the "great opportunities to demonstrate the added value and concrete results on the ground" in what she hopes will be a fruitful year for the Fund.

She brings several years of experience in the climate change field, which should serve her well in her new role. Since October 2017, she has served as Climate Policy Advisor for the Walloon Regional Government's Ministry of Budget, Finances, Energy, Climate and Airports. From 2016-2017, she worked as climate and carbon market advisor at the Walloon Air and Climate Agency on climate finance, fluorinated greenhouse gases and the European Union emissions trading scheme (ETS, which is a pillar of EU climate policy). She has further provided policy advice on climate change, playing an active role as a national Belgian delegate to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in its international meetings. She has also served as Technical Advisor at the EUROCLIMA Programme of the European Commission.

Previously, she worked in Peru as a Programme Officer at the United Nations Development Programme from 2010-2015 on areas such as climate change, disaster risk management, the environment, democratic governance and poverty reduction. Bilgischer said she developed an "early passion for environmental science" that led her to study bio-engineering and then to have a second Master's degree in Management.

Regional governments in Belgium including the Brussels-Capital, Walloon and Flanders Regions have consistently pledged to the Adaptation Fund, contributing a total of nearly US\$ 25 million to the Fund since 2013. The Brussels-Capital Region's pledge of EUR 1.2 million to the Fund in 2013 was the first to a multilateral climate fund from a regional government. The collective involvement of local, regional and national governments is increasingly crucial in the urgent and global fight against climate change.



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The Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat sat down with Ms. Bilgischer in March to discuss her perspectives on the Fund.

Question: What do you like most about the Adaptation Fund and its work?

Answer: *Climate change is already severely impacting the most vulnerable communities in several countries and these impacts will last for decades. It is therefore critical to support adaptation initiatives. The Adaptation Fund is implementing concrete projects on the ground. For people around the world, those projects make a difference. The Fund is also special because of its pioneering Direct Access modality that has empowered to date 28 National Implementing Entities that have built their own adaptive capacities with the support of the Secretariat. As a result, countries have improved their access to climate finance.*

Q: With the Adaptation Fund's recent successes at COP23 last November in mobilizing record annual funding and Kyoto Protocol member Countries (CMP13) deciding the Fund 'shall serve the Paris Agreement', what do you see as the Fund's biggest positives and challenges going forward?

A: *During the last few COPs (Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC), country Parties have demonstrated their strong support for the Fund's continuing support to small-scale adaptation projects. The CMP decision shows that Parties want the Fund to continue to exist under the Paris Agreement and after 2020 when the Kyoto Protocol will no longer exist. This is a very positive message from Parties to the Fund.*

The Fund will continue to face challenges related to uncertainties of funding. Its revenues from the share of proceeds it receives for adaptation from the sale of Certified Emission Reduction credits issued under the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism projects have dramatically decreased since the demand in the carbon market dropped markedly several years ago. Therefore, it is crucial to mobilize additional funds -- including from innovative sources.

Q: We have seen a recent trend of subnational regional and local governments becoming more and more involved in the global effort to address climate change, both from donors' (including consistent regional government donations for the Fund from Belgium regions) and funding recipients' perspectives. As the Board representative for Belgium, how do you see the importance of action at the national level versus subnational level, and does the Fund already adequately meet the needs of subnational governments?

A: *The Regions of Belgium appreciate very much the work of the Fund towards the most vulnerable populations. We (the Regions of Belgium) also appreciate the idea of having Regions supporting each other; in this case the Walloon, Flemish and Brussels-Capital Regions are supporting the most vulnerable communities in developing countries around the world that face urgent challenges related to climate change adaptation. We also believe that climate change concerns all citizens and all levels*



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of institutions, including sub-national levels, and the support for climate action from both subnational and national governments is therefore critical.

ABOUT the ADAPTATION FUND

Since 2010, the Adaptation Fund has committed US\$ 462 million to support 73 countries, with nearly 5.5 million direct beneficiaries.

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