

I rise today on an amendment dealing with the Global Environment Facility. It is the primary financing mechanism for important environmental work around the world. It helps developing countries address environmental challenges that may impact the United States as well as those countries. And as the world's largest donor to the institution, our country plays a critical leadership role.

The projects of the GEF fall into four major categories, conserving bio-diversity, expanding clean energy production and its use, cleaning up international waters, and protecting its fisheries, and phasing out ozone depleting chemicals. All critical priorities for this country and citizens around the world.

Since 1991, the GEF has funded over 1,000 projects in 160 different countries. And it is not just the investment that the United States made. A key point I think that needs to be focused on here is that for every dollar spent by the United States the GEF leverages \$15 in funding from other sources.

I have a wide range of examples, but the committee is well aware of the good work; and I will conserve time by not going into that. But I do want to make the point that it is the United States as the largest shareholder that has a unique responsibility with this program. Two years ago, the Bush administration committed to increase its contribution to GEF for 4 years and to pay off our long-standing unpaid debt that was \$210 million in 3 years. This agreement served as a catalyst for other donor governments to also increase their donations.

Now, I appreciate and I referenced earlier on the floor the difficulty that this subcommittee has given the allocation that they were given. But that said, the subcommittee reported out a funding level of \$107 million with no arrearage payment. The amendment that I am offering here today would add \$13.2 million in order to at least fully fund the President's budget request of \$120.7 million and at least continue the commitment towards dealing with the arrearages even though it would put us behind schedule.

I appreciate this difficult situation the subcommittee is in. I am prepared to withdraw the amendment, but I would seek to ask either the Chair or the ranking member if there is some prospect that if we are able to work this through the process, if we might be able to continue meeting the commitment that the administration has made in the past to fund the arrearages.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. *Lowey*).

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, I applaud the spirit of the gentleman's amendment and regret that I cannot support it in this context. We have worked hard to bring a bill to the floor under a requirement to reduce the President's request by \$1.9 billion. And so in order to accomplish this, we were forced to make, as you know, many tough choices, and reducing funding for the Global Environmental Facility of the World Bank, unfortunately, was one of them.

I have always worked hard to get adequate funding for the GEF because I

believe it provides a vital source of funds for environmentally sound lending. The bill does provide \$107.5 million for the GEF, which is the amount of our annual contribution. As you know, we did not include the additional \$13 million requested for arrears and that is reflected in the funding levels of other banks as well.

It would be my hope that we could find a way to make up these arrears either in conference on this year's bill or next year. I know of the gentleman's commitment to GEF. I share that commitment. And I want to assure you of my intention to work towards this goal. I thank you for bringing this issue to the attention of my colleagues.

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. *Blumenauer*) for his dedication to environmental issues and raising the funding for the Global Environmental Facility today.

As my colleague knows, the bill before the House today is bipartisan, as the gentlewoman has indicated, and of course that means that we do not get everything we want here. Given the priorities of the President, the priorities of both sides of the House, we did cut funding for the Global Environmental Facility by \$13 million from the President's request.

But we did fund the entire regularly scheduled contribution of \$107.5 million to the GEF so that we do not go further into arrears.

Just so my colleague understands that the GEF was not the one that was targeted specifically. The International Development Association, or IDA, which we just discussed in the last amendment, the concessional arm of the World Bank was cut \$211 million from the administration's request.

So I appreciate my colleague raising the issue, and I appreciate his withdrawing the amendment and the bipartisan spirit within which the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. *Lowe* ) and I have worked during the course of the year, and I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I appreciate both, again, the difficult situation that the subcommittee was facing and the comments from my friend the Chair and the ranking member.

I will withdraw the amendment, Mr. Chairman. I would hope that we could continue to focus on trying to keep this commitment. I appreciate that there were a number of other areas that we simply had to shut the door on in terms of paying arrears where we were in arrears, but this I hope, if we get to the point where there are additional resources, bears special attention because of the global impact of these environmental programs, how they are targeted at some of the most desperately needy of countries and how this is an area, if we do not continue to make progress, we are going to slide back.

But I appreciate the work that has been done and look forward to working with my colleagues so that hopefully we will be able to restore it and gain the benefit of those important

investments.