



**The Global Environment Facility  
The 6<sup>th</sup> Biennial International Waters Conference  
Raising the Bar: 20 Years of GEF Transboundary Water Results**

**Science and Celebration  
International Waters Experts Celebrate 20 Years of GEF**

**Dubrovnik, Croatia, October 2011** – The conference of professionals dedicated to sustaining the world's transboundary water systems turned their attention from science to the celebration.

More than 300 participants involved in the Global Environment Facility gathered on the penultimate evening of its International Waters conference for a dinner to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the independent financial organization known as GEF.

The dinner was held at the Revelin Fortress in the old center of Dubrovnik, which has been designated a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Though originally built to provide a solid eastern defense for the city, the fortress was turned into an elegant dining hall high adorned in candlelight and white linen.

The dinner was part of the *Sixth GEF Biennial International Waters Conference*, a four-day event with the theme, *Raising the Bar: 20 Years of GEF International Waters Transboundary Results*.

“When we say ‘raising the bar,’ we mean raising the quality bar because everything else comes out of that,” said Andre Laperriere, GEF Deputy Chief Executive Officer and master of ceremonies for the evening. “That will require an extra effort. We will have to broaden our horizons, get out of our silos and look at the bigger picture and address it in a holistic manner.”

“Based on the two decades of success that we’ve had together, I look forward to the next two because I think it will be one notch higher,” he added.

The evening was mostly a celebration. It featured greetings including a welcome from Kadri Ozen of Coca-Cola Eurasia, a partner and corporate sponsor of the conference.

The main remarks of the night came from Wendy Watson-Wright, Assistant Director General of UNESCO and Executive Secretary of its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. She reiterated

her organization's commitment to work with GEF "for the sustainable management of international water bodies and the protection of the global environment."

In advance of significant environmental policy maker gatherings next year in France and Brazil, it is necessary to shine a light on the importance of water environments, she said.

"We need to convince policy makers that the ocean can provide a sources of sustainable development and create social and economic benefits to humanity," she said.

Nikola Dobroslavić, Prefect of Dubrovnik-Neretva County, struck a lighter note when he addressed dinner guests. He told the story of 15<sup>th</sup> Century attempts to bring water to Dubrovnik from a well 10 meters away from the town.

There were only two stipulations in the work contract, he said. The developer of the pipe line could not use subcontractors and as much water as went into pipe had to come out at the other end.

"So, zero losses," Dobroslavić said. "The dream of every manager and water supplier."

## PHOTO CREDITS

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## **ABOUT GEF**

The Global Environment Facility is an independent financial organization that provides grants to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to address global economic problems. It unites 182 member governments that work in partnership with 10 agencies, non-governmental organizations, international institutions and private companies. The partners are the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, The World Bank, African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Inter-American Development Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development and United Nations Industrial Development Organization. GEF-funded projects target six focal areas: biodiversity, climate change, land degradation, the ozone layer, persistent organic pollutants and international waters. Since it was founded in 1991, GEF has invested \$9.2 billion in grants, leveraged \$40 billion in co-financing. It has supported more than 2,700 projects in 168 countries.

## **ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL WATERS FOCAL AREA**

The GEF International Waters (IW) focal area targets transboundary water systems including river basins, lakes, groundwater and large marine ecosystems. Since its founding in 1991, the portfolio has comprised about 170 projects in more than 149 countries worldwide. IW grants have amounted to more than \$1.2 billion. The investment has led to \$7 billion in co-financing.

## **CONTACT**

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