

GEF-NGO CONSULTATION

June 5, 2006

Washington, DC

This report is a summary of the discussions held during the GEF-NGO Consultation meeting, which took place on June 5, 2006, in Washington DC.

The GEF-NGO Consultation meeting was chaired by Lucy Mulenkei, from the Indigenous Information Network (Kenya), representing the NGOs and Indigenous Peoples; and Ravi Sharma, Capacity Building Officer, Corporate Team, representing the GEF Secretariat.

Funke Oyewole, Team Leader, Corporate Affairs of the GEF Secretariat, opened the meeting, saying that the Secretariat was looking forward to the discussions of the day.

Ravi Sharma explained that the replenishment meeting was taking place at the same time, and thus the GEF CEO and Chairman, Leonard Good, could not join the meeting. He also described the agenda and items that the Council will be discussing in the following four days.

Funke Oyewole introduced the first item of the agenda: ***Action Plan to Respond to the Recommendations of the Independent GEF-NGO Network Review***. The document covers a lot of issues, one of which is the Action Plan for the future interaction of the NGOs with the GEF, and looks at the various opportunities for NGOs at the GEF. The background to this paper was the Review done to the NGO Network, presented to Council at its last meeting in November 2005, as an information document, which was discussed under Any Other Business. The three main recommendations of the Review are: a) lack of resources and capacity; b) the need to establish a close partnership between the Network and the Secretariat; and c) other support to build the Network. The paper presented to Council for this meeting focused on this last recommendation. On the Secretariat's side, we have been focusing on updating the database of accredited NGOs in the last months. The Review also pointed out that the GEF lacked a long-term engagement for a partnership with NGOs. Thus, one of the proposals presented to Council is to have a full-time NGO coordinator. The second proposal is the knowledge sharing initiative that would further link with the knowledge management to Council members. The third proposal includes building awareness at the country level. We have expectations, and thus are requesting funding for the Regional Focal Points to build awareness on GEF, linked to the support program for Focal Points. We will have to wait for the Council's reaction, to develop these proposals further.

Dorothy Manuel, from ZERO (Zimbabwe) said that the NGOs welcomed this document. It was very positive that we had the Review, as it resulted in this document. We hope we can move forward and translate this document into concrete actions. On the NGOs side, the next steps include: a) the MSP proposal for the Network; b) focus on the accreditation process for NGOs; c) finalizing the review of the Guidelines of the Network, and c) we look forward to working with the NGO coordinator.

Felipe Villagran, from MERO LAC (Mexico) pointed out the differences in the accreditation process. It seems there is a parallel system, with the Network on one side, and on the other the NGOs accessing to GEF funds.

Funke Oyewole agreed that the link is missing between NGOs participating at the country and at the policy level. The Regional Focal Points of the Network should close that gap. We look forward to that. As for resources, we have to be very clear in the terms for that. NGOs at the country level are the source of knowledge for the knowledge management effort.

Rajen Awotar, from Maudesco (Mauritius) said that there is a need for more linkages with Conventions NGOs. We need a strategy for this.

Felipe Villagran reiterated the issue on the list of accredited NGOs. We work hard, and it is very disappointing that the list is not updated.

Delfin Ganapin, Global Manager of the Small Grants Programme (SGP) mentioned the steps taken to strengthen the links with the Network: the SGP National Coordinators should support the Regional Focal Points; otherwise they do not receive ratings. They should take guidance from the Network. The new NGO Coordinator, when hired, should take the lead on this.

Randy Curtis, from The Nature Conservancy (US) raised the concern with the implementation of the Resource Allocation Framework (RAF), and its consequences for NGOs. The GEF Secretariat and the Network could monitor this in the first year of implementation.

Ravi Sharma agreed, and added that this was a very good suggestion.

Liliana Hisas, from Fundacion Ecologica Universal – FEU (US office) stressed the positive partnership established in the last months with the SGP. One of the immediate steps taken after the Review was sharing with the SGP the list of accredited NGOs. It is very positive to know what the SGP is doing to strengthen the partnership with the Network. Also, the Network started a joint project with the SGP, to produce a publication for the coming Assembly, focused on NGOs and CBOs experiences in GEF projects.

Hilary French, from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) explained the NGO participation in UNEP. Globally, and prior to each annual Governing Council meeting, UNEP organizes a Civil Society Forum. NGOs also participate at the Governing

Council's meetings, by presenting papers and voicing positions. At the regional level, we organize regional preparatory meetings where statements are agreed in the six regions, as an input to the global meeting. UNEP does not have a structure of Regional Focal Points. We could use regional meetings as forums. We could see how to invite the Regional Focal Points to UNEP's regional meetings.

Rajen Awotar welcomed the proposal.

Maryam Niamir-Fuller, Senior Technical Adviser in Land Degradation at the GEF-UNDP unit said that UNDP assisted the NGO Network on Desertification (RIOD) in developing a capacity building strategy.

Tim Geer, from WWF-International (Switzerland) suggested that a common accreditation process between UN bodies should be taken into account. As Delfin mentioned, NGOs should represent NGOs, and not the GEF, to the NGO community.

Juan Luis Merega, from Fundacion del Sur (Argentina) shared the experience of the RIOD network. Three levels of tension should be considered, when dealing with representation: a) what does the Network do? There is a tension between communication and representation; b) the formal or informal organization of the Network; and c) the tension between the global and regional / national aspects of the Network.

Barbara Bramble, from the National Wildlife Federation (US) said that there is yet another conflict to be added: being effective in communications and control of the information. The credibility of the Network will be invalidated if information is not shared.

Gary Allport, from Birdlife International (US) said that NGOs are not as combative as we used to be. We are rather in a more comfortable work situation.

Randy Curtis stressed again the concern on all these discussions being shipped away with the implementation of RAF. The GEF Secretariat and the Network should work together to ensure that the NGOs are involved in projects in GEF-4.

German Rocha, from Corporacion Pais Solidario (Colombia) said that the Network is a new organization, and it is still in a learning process.

Funke Oyewole said that it is clear for the GEF Secretariat that we have to work together. We have to first pass this first test with the document presented to the Council. Let's keep on working together.

Ravi Sharma explained the Medium-Sized Project being developed by the Climate Action Network (CAN).

Lucy Mulenkei presented the MSP being supported by the GEF, through UNEP, for the Indigenous Peoples.

Yoko Watanabe, Program Manager, Biodiversity of the GEF Secretariat, said that the GEF is looking forward to working with Indigenous Peoples in this MSP.

Juan Luis Merega stressed that the work and activities presented in these two MSPs are important. The GEF-NGO Network has done good work with little resources. The work should be focused on communication and lobbying activities. The networks are as important as its focal points.

German Rocha explained that the Network is developing a MSP proposal. The logical framework was submitted to UNEP, and is focused on increasing awareness of NGOs on GEF and active participation in Conventions CoPs. The proposal is still in a design stage.

The second item of the agenda was the ***Implementation of the Resource Allocation Framework***. Kiran Pandey, Environmental Economist, Operations & Business Strategy of the GEF Secretariat, introduced the issue by explaining the progress on the implementation of RAF. The steps taken included: a) finalizing the implementation and disclose the information; b) finishing the list of countries; and c) updating the GPI. We also developed guidelines to help Operational Focal Points identify the initial set of priority projects. There are ongoing sub-regional consultations on RAF.

Rex Horoi, from The Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific International (Fiji) requested further clarification on the implementation of RAF.

On the sub-regional consultations, German Rocha asked how these consultations will support our work with the Operational Focal Points; and how will NGOs improve the dialogue with the Operational Focal Points. He also requested NGOs to be involved in the 2-year review of the implementation of RAF. As capacity building projects are outside of RAF, he asked how NGOs can access to these funds.

Kiran Pandey explained that now that the replenishment is completed, the Secretariat can calculate the allocations. For those countries with individual allocations, countries will have to submit project for those amounts. The approval process for projects will remain the same –the Operational Focal Points will be the liaison with the GEF, and will have the responsibility for the endorsement letters for the projects. One key concern is the same issue raised by Randy Curtis: this is new, and we don't know how this play out. That is why monitoring is so important. If you have ideas, they are most welcomed. NGOs will have to discuss their involvement in the 2-year review with the Monitoring Office.

Ravi Sharma confirmed that Capacity Building projects will not fall under RAF.

Felipe Villagran said that the Operational Focal Points are like fishermen for funds. It is very unlikely that they will be willing to share GEF funds with NGOs.

Gary Allport commented on the guidelines sent to the Operational Focal Points, mentioning the deadline for responses by next September 15. The timeframe is tight, only giving three months to countries to plan and identify priority projects for the first 2-years. Moreover, there is not much consultation with NGOs. NGO participation in GEF projects will decline.

Liliana Hisas asked how the GEF Secretariat will ensure the enforcement of the public participation policy when countries are identifying their priority projects through these consultations at the country level. If there is no NGO participation when receiving the list of priority projects by September 15, what will the Secretariat do? We should not wait for the results of the 2-year review, as we have a clear opportunity now.

Delfin Ganapin explained how the RAF is impacting the SGP. We are negotiating with the governments to allocate additional funds for the SGP. Until September, it will be critical that NGOs request their governments to support the SGP.

Kiran Pandey responded to the questions raised, by explaining that the Operational Focal Points have to endorse the projects, but are not involved with project implementation. The September 15 deadline was controversial. This concern was also raised at the sub-regional consultations. To clarify: countries can re-endorse projects in the pipeline and endorse other climate change or biodiversity projects under consideration, to identify the priority projects. This is not a excluding process, in case countries don't submit their priority projects. Countries should spend 50% of their allocation in 2 years, which is the priority setting we are requesting. As for the adverse impact to NGOs, you can prepare and submit progress reports to Council. Otherwise, we will have to wait for the 2-year implementation review. Regarding the SGP, we are requesting countries not to endorse anything until they don't receive the final amount of their allocation.

Yabanex Batista, from The Nature Conservancy (US) asked about the NGOs projects that were not included in the Work Program that the Council will be reviewing at this meeting. What will happen with those projects?

Kiran Pandey said that this issue will have to be raised with the corresponding Implementing Agency.

Kristin McLaughlin, from UNEP, mentioned that the Implementing Agencies are also being impacted by resource constraints issues. If these NGO projects were not included in this Work Program, they will have to come back to the GEF, and projects would fall under RAF for the next Work Programs.

A presentation on the *Development Marketplace-Small Medium Sized Projects* (SMSP) initiative was the next item discussed. Joyita Mukherjee, from the World Bank-Development Marketplace, gave an update on the partnership between the GEF and the DM. The theme for the last DM was water and energy, and 12 projects that fitted into the global environmental aspects of the GEF were supported through the DM, for a total of \$2 million. These projects were processed through the same DM window. The remaining

contribution from the GEF will be allocated to the next DM, depending on the theme selected, which may be health.

Lee Zahnow, from WWF (US) said that NGOs were hoping for 2 separate windows.

Joyita Mukherjee explained that a separate window implies more processing for our team, as we would need different jurors. Administratively, it is a bigger burden for us.

Funke Oyewole explained that when the GEF contribution for the DM was approved by Council in November 2005, it was too close to the DM call for proposals deadline. For this year's DM, we can start a dialogue to see how to implement this.

Liliana Hisas supported the proposal. She also stressed the need to further develop the partnership between the GEF and the DM, as this first \$5 million dollar contribution was the pilot phase to expedite access to GEF funding for NGO projects, through the approved SMSP initiative. This is particularly important now, with the implementation of RAF. We welcome the partnership, and will work to further develop it.

Having worked in both sides of the discussions leading to this initiative –as an NGO and as the Secretariat— Yoko Watanabe highlighted the importance of this initiative. She also welcomed the successful results of the partnership.

Tim Geer summarized some pending issues as concrete NGO recommendations. There is a concrete need for:

1. Benchmarking NGO involvement in projects in GEF-3 as a way to monitor NGO involvement in projects in GEF-4, under RAF.
2. Coherence in the accreditation of NGOs between the GEF and its Implementing Agencies, and cross-recognition.
3. NGOs must be accredited to receive or partner in any non-excluded projects.
4. The Terms of Reference of the NGO Coordinator should ensure that he/she takes the lead in delivering these recommendations.

Hilary French mentioned that UNEP's criteria for accreditation of NGOs are based on the international scope of activities, so that the NGO acts as a bridge between the international and national levels.

Tim Geer reiterated that there is a need to encourage participation of NGOs in GEF by means of the access to projects through accreditation.

Funke Oyewole said that if the funding to hire an NGO Coordinator is approved by Council in the next days, we could have this person by September. Maybe this decision could be delayed until December, depending on the Council's discussions. However, 6 months after the appointment of the NGO Coordinator, this person should report back on the accreditation process.

The **Third GEF Assembly** was the following item presented. Funke Oyewole explained that the Assembly will take place on August 28-30, in South Africa. The associated meetings will be held on August 28, including an NGO Forum. There will also be round tables. All 176 participating countries will be represented. The provisional agenda prepared by the Secretariat was rejected by the United States. A notification on the Assembly was sent to all Focal Points and stakeholders. We expect NGOs to prepare an NGO Statement and to participate in the policy dialogue. The NGO Forum should narrow the themes further, to reflect the scope of work of the GEF. The Secretariat will be supporting recipient countries NGOs through a travel grant of around \$120,000. We will also provide interpretation, facilities and logistical support. To coordinate these activities, we need to set deadlines.

Tim Geer said that as an accredited NGO, he had not received the notification for the Assembly.

Funke Oyewole said that this notification was sent to the Regional Focal Points, and that she will look into the issue, to make sure that all interested parties can participate.

A presentation on the **Decentralized Small Medium Sized Projects initiate in Argentina** was the next item, by Juan Luis Merega, Fundacion del Sur (see Annex, with the presentation).

A Council member from the Pacific requested more information on the capacity building issue, as we are looking forward to other models for SIDS because of RAF.

Juan Luis Merega explained that once the proposal passes the first round of approval, the NGO participates of a capacity building workshop, with the purpose of further developing the proposal for the second round of review.

Khadija Razavi, from CENESTA (Iran) and Rajen Awotar, from Maudesco (Mauritius) made a joint intervention on behalf of the NGO Network on the documents **Financing Biosafety Activities and the Evaluation of the GEF support to Biosafety** (see Annex, with the presentation).

On behalf of the NGO Network, Salah Sahabi made an intervention on the **GEF Strategy to enhance engagement with the private sector** (see Annex, with the presentation).

Funke Oyewole said that the GEF hosted sub-regional consultations on RAF. Once the Council approves this document, we will be working with our colleagues to include this item in the next round of consultations.

Felipe Villagran requested further clarification on the SGP and the private sector involvement.

Delfin Ganapin said that the SGP received support from the private sector when we had mature products and country programs. We will have more lessons learnt for this

involvement. To maintain sustainability of projects, we need partnerships with the private sector.

The *Special Climate Change Funds* was the following item discussed, presented by Boni Biagini, Senior Climate Change Specialist of the GEF Secretariat. The adaptation program is evolving. For this Council meeting, 2 working papers are presented, with interesting ideas and an innovative approach. One of these papers is the LDCs Funds, which address the special needs of LDCs. There are 48 eligible countries. GEF was given the mandate to raise funds for NAPAs, all under preparation. CoP 9 gave further policy guidance for implementation. The innovative approach is that GEF rules do not apply for adaptation projects, as these projects address an impact. Also, these projects do not fall under RAF. What is applied to these adaptation projects are the additional costs. As for MSPs, the proposal includes raising the ceiling to \$2 million, projects can be reviewed on a rolling basis, and in a 2-step process, if a PDF-A is needed, otherwise it is a 1-step process. LDCs need these funds, and fast, while keeping the quality of the projects. We have raised \$84 million for implementation, of which \$75 million for NAPAs implementation. These are voluntary funds, which the GEF raises. We may have a pledge meeting with donors before CoP12.

Yacine Diagne, from ENDA (Senegal) said that sometimes it is difficult for NGOs to access to these funds. We participated in the NAPA process for francophone countries in Africa. Climate change is also linked to food security. In 2003, we organized four regional workshops.

Rajen Awotar asked how NGOs can access to these funds.

Boni Biagini explained that these projects can have capacity building components, as well as some components sub-contracted to NGOs for implementation. NGOs are eligible, but governments take the lead on NAPA implementation. It depends on national circumstances.

The last item discussed was the *Evaluation Office issues*. Claudio Volonte, Senior Evaluation Officer of the Monitoring Office, introduced the papers being presented to this Council meeting, which included: GEF Evaluation Office Progress Report 2006, Annual Performance Report 2005, GEF Country Portfolio Evaluation - Costa Rica (1992-2005), Four year work program and budget of the GEF Evaluation Office FY07-10 and Results in FY06, Proposed amendments to the GEF Instrument, and Proposed amendments to the GEF Council Rules and Procedures. The proposed changes in the Instrument reflect the independence of the Monitoring Office. There are 2 information documents on tracking Council decisions on evaluation issues. There is also the 4-year work program, a very important document.

Lisa Handy, from Conservation International (US) commented on the concern from NGOs with the implementation of RAF. She requested the Monitoring Office to develop a study on benchmarking NGO participation in GEF-3 to see how was the participation of NGOs in GEF-4, in the 2-year review of RAF.

German Rocha supported the proposal that the Fourth Overall Performance Study (OPS4) be developed by the Monitoring Office, and requested further clarification on the consultation with stakeholders, including NGOs, as it is not clear in the document. We would like NGOs to be also involved in the International Workshop on Evaluation, Environment and Sustainable Development to be held in 2008. Regarding the evaluation of the SGP, civil society voice should be heard. The document also mentions that independent consultants will be hired for the OPS4. NGOs should be taken into account for this. We also support the budget presented in the paper.

Claudio Volonte said that the papers are in the first stages now, and need further development, regarding the comment on NGO participation. As for the OPS4 consultations with stakeholders, we will replicate the consultations done for OPS3. The International Workshop is open to all who can contribute expertise to develop methodologies to generate new tools to evaluate the GEF. The Terms of Reference for the SGP evaluation needs to be developed. The RAF review is very high in the agenda. The 2-year review will focus on the evaluation of the process, not the results.

A Council member from the Pacific asked how the recommendations of the OPS are followed.

Claudio Volonte explained that the OPS is an input to the replenishment process. There is a management response. Some of the recommendations are taken and followed, other are not. The recommendations from OPS3 will be considered by OPS4.

Ravi Sharma thanked the participants for the concrete suggestions raised during the meeting to strengthen NGO participation in the GEF, including: RAF, SMSPs and the Decentralized program in Argentina, the SGP, the adaptation funds, and the monitoring issues. We do expect this dialogue to move forward and that contributions to Council are made. He thanked the Council members who joined the meeting.

Lucy Mullenkei also thanked the Council members present during the meeting. The work ahead is challenging, and we look forward to success and more participation of Indigenous Peoples.

The meeting was adjourned at 6 pm.

ANNEX

1. CASE STUDY PRESENTATION ON THE DECENTRALIZED SMALL MEDIUM-SIZED PROJECTS (SMSPs) PROGRAM IN ARGENTINA

By Juan Luis Meregá, Fundación del Sur

OVERALL CHARACTERISTICS

- Council approval in November, 2004.
- 3-years pilot program.
- Jointly implemented by the Government of Argentina, The World Bank, UNDP and UNEP.
- Simplified review process.
- Grants between \$50,000 and \$250,000 per project.

OBJECTIVES

- Financing of project proposals.
- Simplified model for submission and review of proposals.
- Improvement of the technical capacities of NGOs and local governments to access to GEF resources.
- Identification of best practices to replicate the pilot experience in other countries.

FOCAL AREAS

The following Focal Areas are eligible:

- Biodiversity
- Climate Change
- International Waters
- POPs
- Land Degradation

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

- The Program periodically calls for proposals.
- Targeted partners include:
 - Civil society organizations
 - Academic and research institutions
 - Local and Provincial Governments
- Double review system

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPOSALS

- Consistent with the GEF Operational Programs
- Consistent with the national priorities
- Innovative intervention approaches / models
- Tangible and sustainable results
- Incremental costs
- Participatory design

REVIEW SYSTEM

The system is based on a double review:

1. Proposals are submitted in a simplified format.
2. Pre-selection of the proposals.
3. Detailed Formulation (technical capacity and assistance).
4. Submission of final proposals.
5. Selection of proposals to be funded

FIRST CALL FOR PROPOSALS

- Announced in December 2005 - Deadline: February 28, 2006.
- 426 proposals were submitted
- Organizations submitting proposals

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Universities | 44% |
| NGOs | 35% |
| Local Governments | 21% |

Focal areas of the proposals submitted:

- Biodiversity 49%
- Climate Change 14%
- Land Degradation 14%
- POPs 9%
- International Waters 5%
- Biodiversity & Land Degradation 9%

ONGOING REVIEW

1. Eligibility Review:
 - Proponent
 - acreditación de personería
 - Focal area
 - Duration of the project
2. Review Criteria: compliance with:
 - GEF criteria (global threats and benefits)
 - National criteria (national priorities)
 - Technical criteria

Technical Criteria

- Global environmental benefits
- Sustainability (financial and environmental)
- Innovation
- Replicability
- Partners and beneficiaries
- Background and capacity of the work team
- Consistency among objectives, methodology and work plan

Review categories for each criteria

- Low (1-3)
- Medium (4-5)
- High (6-8)
- Excellent (9-10)

NEXT STEPS

- Pre-selection of 10-20 proposals
- Capacity-building workshops to further develop the proposals
- Technical assistance for the re-formulation of the proposals
- Submission of the re-formulated proposals
- Second review
- Selection of the projects to be funded

CONCLUSIONS

Positive Impacts:

- Broaden the scope of GEF partners, including new ones.
- Build capacities.
- Promote articulation and associative partnerships.
- Projects implemented.

For more information:

Juan Luis Merega: jlmerega@unq.edu.ar; fundasur@fundasur.org.ar

2. INTERVENTION –Financing Biosafety Activities and the Evaluation of the GEF support to Biosafety

With many thanks, distinguish GEF Secretariat, Implementing Agencies, and NGOs ladies and Gentlemen.

We went through this valuable evaluation job done by the Evaluation Office of GEF. We are going to raise our suggestions and our questions. This subject should be considered one of the most important issues that humanity has to deal with. If this issue is not taken seriously one day it could be the end of biodiversity. We are very grateful that GEF and the Office of Evaluation has taken very seriously this matter.

With your permission we are going page by page this will help us to don't be out of area under discussion.

“GEF NGO NETWORK RESPONSE TO COUNCIL DOCUMENTS”

- Financing Bio-safety Activities- Doc GEF/C.28/5
- Evaluation of the GEF support to Bio-safety- Doc GEF/ME/C.28/Inf.1

First of all the GEF NGO Network would wish to record its appreciation that several of our comments made on the issue (Doc GEF/C.27/12) during the November council

meeting have been duly considered. Hence our comments will be based on the council documents (Doc GEF/C.28/5) and (Doc GEF/ME/C.28/Inf.1) in front of the council while referring to the November council meeting document (Doc GEF/C.27/12)

The November Council document on the issue (Doc GEF/C.27/12) highlighted the GEF Strategy on Bio-safety. To save time we will as a reminder highlight those strategies that we consider pertinent at today's discussions. The document among others mentioned that the strategy was to:

- (a.) Assist countries to prepare for the entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol through the establishment of National Bio-safety Framework including strengthening of capacity, with a wide degree of stakeholder participation.
- (b.) Promoting information sharing/collaboration among countries of the region.

Under the Initial Bio-safety strategy the following projects were approved by council:

- (a.) A global project on the "Development of National Bio-safety Framework"(NBF) covering 120 countries.
- (b.) A global project on "Building Capacity" covering 139 countries.
- (c.) 12 demonstration projects.
- (d.) 2/3 Regional Centers of Excellence.

At the November Council meeting it was decided to request the office of the Monitoring and Evaluation (OME) to undertake an evaluation of the activities financed under the Initial Strategy. The evaluation was to focus on capacity development, including stakeholder involvement and regional collaboration, on progress achieved and whether the GEF support had been effective. The report of the OME office showed among others that:

- (a.) Increase in awareness of bio-safety issues has been created among key project participants namely Governments, private sectors and civil society.
- (b.) Dialogue & interaction have been instituted among Government institutions, academia and civil society.

However, in conclusion No4 (Ref Page 14) of document (GEF/C.28/5) it is written in black & white that "Awareness raising, participation efforts by different stakeholders have not been as broad as required by the Cartagena Protocol and as advised in the GEF project document.

May be one of the important reason can be that we generally forget that the real stakeholders are not decision makers, are not experts, are not researchers and local government are not even the NGOs! In fact the real stakeholders are the farmers, pastoralists etc..

However, the question is, in this very valuable evaluation what is the percentage of local communities involved in the process?

Our comments:

- We maintained that hardly any awareness raising and effective participation of civil society/NGOs took place in almost all countries which benefited GEF funding for the projects. Besides, in the same conclusion (conclusion No4) that “Stakeholder participation/representation and involvement were highly variable” at the National Coordination Committees(NCC).
- As per our information in the majority of countries concerned genuine, independent NGO/civil society groups were never made aware about the existence of the NCCs nor their participation and involvement requested. It might be that only certain so called NGOs- the Government NGOs (GONGOS) were invited to form part of the NCCs. We view this shortcoming as extremely serious as it undermines the very basis of the Protocol which clearly calls for inclusive participation of all stakeholders in a spirit of transparency and democracy and public awareness. We need not re-emphasize the importance of civil society, NGOs, consumer groups for such a vital activity which concerns the whole population. We therefore request council and the secretariat to ensure that such is not the case in future.
- We call for the council and the secretariat to ensure that in future Institutions/Governments given GEF funds scrupulously abide by the terms and conditionalities of GEF.
- We therefore fully support and approve the contents of the proposed “Evaluation format matrix” at page 7 of the document under consideration.
- We further call for the quick implementation of the key Elements as mentioned at Annex: A (Existing guidance from the COP) page 8/9 and the Decision VIII/18 on “Guidance to the financial mechanism”(Ref page 9/10).
- We also fully agree with the conclusion No8 (Page 16) and recommendation No3 (Page 17) i.e “The GEF should continue to emphasize awareness raising and public participation issues, including support to the Bio-safety Clearing House”.

Conclusion:

- We would wish to get more information about the 12 Demonstration Projects & the Regional Centers of Excellence, their location, contact address etc and their accessibility to civil society/NGOs?
- That all capacity building initiatives include civil society, NGOs, consumer reps. A one sided approach will serve no purpose.
- That the proposed Monitoring evaluation matrix be fully integrated within project concepts and their full compliance ensured.\

Our question, suggestions and comments;

Para foreword evaluation document;

In the 18 countries visited and interviewed could we know the mechanism and methodology of your evaluation with civil society and local communities specially farmers?

The random sample was decided with which criteria and through which organization in the countries?

Biosafety process is more than a report and socio-economic evaluation process. We can't proceed with the same methodology used by a simple evaluation with normal questionnaire; do you agree that it necessitate adopting a very adequate methodology for?

The issue of LMOs can be in the future a success or an irreversible human disaster. In 50 years from now if there is a failure who will be responsible?

Sometimes our memory is short, a group of researchers and multinational peoples few years ago *“has told us we will fight poverty and hunger with our new product and you will see no any more lack of food in the planet”* the products were nothing else than pesticides and chemicals. Decision makers believed, researchers believed, extensionists imposed it to the farmers and a big disaster. And today we set up a Convention to wipe out these chemicals, however (it is not the right place and time for opening this issue here) nobody is here to take the responsibility of this disaster for the whole of humanity. Today water is polluted, soil is polluted, the health is more or less destroyed and the more amazing things is the same developed countries that spread these products, today they have set up a very severe procedure and standard when we developing countries want to export our products with the very complicated pest residue procedure!!!

That is our fear and our concerns for the future. Who will be responsible this time if irreversible damage has happened?

At the beginning of your valuable evaluation you mentioned that biotechnology is as old as civilization. But you pass over something; the old civilization did the natural change and did not change the very deep nature of the crops.

We have a question; can you tell us how to bring to an end to the paradox that we see, from one part we are investing nearly all the budget of GEF for the Convention of Biodiversity, for preserving the biodiversity. For example the Americas were the central origin for potato and corn, Middle East was consider the central origin for cereal etc... On the other hand we are trying through Biosafety and clearing house mechanism to promote the biotechnology which has the potential to eliminate biodiversity?

Living Modified Organisms have something to do directly with the biodiversity and cultural diversity of local communities of each region of the world. We can consider them, as their property right. We have to be honest with each other and with them. We are manipulating in an irreversibly manner their seeds and their identity. We have to be honest with them when we do our evaluation. We have to tell them that we are going to manipulate your seeds and we are going to colonize you and make you dependent on multinational industries and your research centers which produce GMOs, we are going to destroy your biodiversity and you will have to buy from us the seeds and so on and so forth. And then state that we have been honest and transparent with them. It is only then that we can consider your evaluation a very transparent one.

Some time we have to be very careful with unknown technology that causes irreversible damages.

Some time we have to react very strictly with certain research and do not sacrifice humanity and its biodiversity for the benefit of a group of multinationals and of researchers.

If a country loses its food identity, its biodiversity its independence, is lost. Let's not encourage the elimination of small farmers and biodiversity of the world.

If we are really looking for poverty alleviation and hunger---still in this world there is enough food. We should rather work more on the issue of better distribution of food. We

should work on the issue of releasing developing and poor countries from their debt trap and let them use their land and water for the crop that can feed them and their populations and not using their land and water for producing fancy crops for feeding developed countries supermarkets and industries like cotton, banana, coffee etc...

When we interview the decision makers of the developing countries they give you the following argument: we need this money for our debts and so on. But please could we try to be honest for one second.

Do these funds really go for poverty alleviation of the grassroots or they go most of the time for buying obsolete weapons and so on from developed countries. Why we are not following some of the countries of Latin America and abolishing our budget of armament for the needs of our development. When we have resolved all these as well the question of corruption and not found the solution for poverty alleviation and reach our millennium development goals, then we can try to find other solutions such as biotechnology etc.

Why not for a while following the same way of Switzerland and Zambia as a country and IUCN as an organization putting moratorium for unknown technology till we have the certainty?

Page 4, recommendation 6;

We should also talk more transparently about the multinationals and their fundamental role that they are playing in the issue of Biosafety.

Page 5, 2.2 Evaluation of...

A part from country driven priorities we should also take into account community priorities.

Page 8, 3.3;

We strongly suggest adding in our evaluation process in addition of safe transfer, handling and use of LMO, referendum and moratorium.

We have a question in the last part of the evaluation, what will happen to the countries which are not taking in account the NBF and BCH and already spread their LMOs and contaminate while nobody in the country is aware on that?

Page 13, 5.2; suggestion:

Regional and subregional, at the last line we should add transfer or not transfer of LMOs across borders this should be expressed if we want to have a balanced and honest evaluation.

There is a para that express in the regional and subregional work with 800 people. May we ask what was the degree of transparency of the public awareness and capacity building in the field visit?

Example of Mali and cotton.

5. Question;

In this Regional collaboration and harmonization and coordination. When we go through the evaluation process we do not have the impression of an neutral evaluation ---we have the feeling that from the first step the goals and target is the acceptance of the LMOs- we do not having the impression of they have been told that could be in the future very negatives and ambiguous aspects and specially irreversible regarding their biodiversity and regarding their dependence to the big multinational industries.?

Being aware of the very different stages of biosafety capacity and implementation of the Cartagena Protocol in the developing countries, it cannot be a top priority of the strategy to harmonize the regulatory frameworks but it must be the first priority to build them at all in the countries of a region. How can some been harmonized which is not yet existing in many countries? Furthermore, most regions of the world do not have appropriate, democratic organizations which can claim that they have the legitimate right to harmonize regulatory structures of their member countries?

Page 14, Page 19, 7.1

As your evaluation has been done with a great precision could it be possible to explain us, if the degree of risk assessment and risk management has been explained at how much percentage. This process of LMOs can be considered a most dangerous of the process of humanity life and, biodiversity, food security and life; we really don't know the impact in the future. We are responsible for the world that we have to leave for our next generation; we are only the custodian of the world?

Page 20, Para 1;

We suggest that while you proposing a roster of expert in parallel we propose a roster of local community experts of agriculture. This will help a partnership and transparency with the real stakeholders of the seeds.

Page 23;

Regarding Food Feed and Processing,

-unfortunately despite all the effort of GEF and other Organisation profit still the main factor in this world;

-unfortunately despite all the improvement of the technologies the most of our foods are going toward unhealthy and junk food;

-unfortunately with all means we are not using the food product in a balance way, we are consuming and destroying 80% of the food production for 25% of the population of the world and 20% of it for the rest of the population of the planet;

-unfortunately today many of our developing countries are importing GMOs in the country without transparency and ethic in regards of their society;

Do you think it is enough to have legislation or we should have institutions for the implementation of this legislation with the involvement of the real stakeholders?

5.2;

Conclusion,

We agree hundred percent for the national legislation in relation with LMOs, but we have a question how can this happen with the proper mechanism for the involvement of civil society especially farmers?

Page 26, 9.1;

We need explanation for:

Art C: “this includes general notes, moratoriums and a variety of other non standards notification.

IUCN and Switzerland and Zambia have put moratorium, this means non standard notification?”

What ever is not accepted by the multinational industries are considered non standard or we have not understand very well the meaning of the phrase?

At the end we thank M&E Office for this valuable work and we hope in the future we will have a deeper evaluation and this time we need to have a very strong evaluation and assessment regarding the pillar of this debate means multinational with the full participation of the different stakeholders.

We can expose some experience regarding LMOs for GM cotton set to invade West Africa

The rationale of the project is not to implement the Biosafety Protocol and to ensure biosafety but to aid the private sector (mainly

Monsanto) in introducing Bt cotton smoothly into the West African states.

Although no biosafety regulatory structures are being build up in these countries the private sector has started to test Bt cotton in these countries (eg. para 29) and now fears that the investments could be in vain because of the missing biosafety structures.

Implementing a biosafety project under these economic pressure means that in the case of doubts over the safety, the economic considerations will override the ecologic and health concerns.

- The language and spirit of the project proposal is biased towards the promotion of GMOs and does not seem to be very sensitive towards the needs of an independent biosafety system. The text gives raise for this interpretation when it for example on page 1 speaks of "opportunities and PERCEIVED risks". It also misinterprets the Cartagena Protocol when it says that the National Authorities under the Protocol must balance opportunities and risks - as it is the practice in the USA. The Cartagena Protocol does not oblige countries to perform risk-benefit analyses but to weight the risks of GMOs against the risks of non-GMOs as a basis for their decisions. When it comes to the participation of stakeholders it is disturbing that the only name of a regional nongovernmental organization that is mentioned is the "Burkina Biotech Association", other names seem not to be known to the project authors.

On the other hand, the biotech organisation Crop Life should be a major project partner. The involvement of those stakeholders in project which activities should regulated - and maybe restrict - the activities of this project partner is not acceptable, conflicts of interest and undue influence on the project are almost certain.

- the project seems to be closely linked to the USAID-led biotechnology projects in west Africa. The linkage is obvious through the use of key words like "enabling environment", "science-based", the linkage between IPR and biosafety issues and the overall approach to not see biosafety as a stand-alone issue to regulate the introduction of GMOs but as "enabling tool" to fasten their introduction. We cannot see that a biosafety project in close cooperation with the biotechnology projects of the USA - which has always fought the Cartagena Protocol and is still a non-party - can contribute significantly to biosafety in the region.

We thank you Mr. Chairman for giving us the opportunity to share our concerns & hope they will be entertained.

3. INTERVENTION --GEF Strategy to enhance engagement with the private sector.

By Salah Sahabi, ARCE (Algeria)

It seems to us that the document as a whole constitutes a first initiative, on in this day when we are celebrating the world environment day and we give to it consequently a particular attention. Nevertheless, this document does not clearly highlight the methods of financing criteria in a simple way, as well as, these criteria seem also to be less known by the private sector, in particular, in the developing countries, because of the level of expertise and knowledge which is very different from a country to another.

We are very happy to have the assurance that the GEF decides to continue to encourage and to bring its financial support to ensure a friendly environment. However, our principal concern is of knowing which finally will take benefit from this operation?. Companies in certain countries have openly expressed their attention to insert in their strategies the component related to the environmental protection, but this initiative remains very limited, and if no regional or international legislation aiming to oblige these companies to contribute on the clean development mechanism is taken, the probability of seeing this initiative crowned by a success remains very weak. We are wondering if the GEF has a concrete strategy so that it can ensure the sensitizing of the actors and decision makers in this sector in order to associate them in this action which we estimate of great importance. For that, we wish the GEF will organize in collaboration with the governments, some national or/and regional meetings for sensitizing all the partners.

On a global scale, which mechanisms will be undertaken to ensure the participation of the private sector and even a public one in this process?, while, the principal objective is to ensure a clean environment, and so, we would for that to have the certainty that this operation succeed regarding to the ambitions expressed in this document, but what we are fearing on, is the results will be compromised by the pollutant sectors (if we refer mainly to the climate change domain) which still remain active and which continues to neglect in their strategies the component related to the protection of the climate.

We support in the end, strongly the idea of the representation of the organizations of the private sector at the GEF council, to allow them expressing their opinions, and even to meet with the GEF and its implementing agencies to consider their concerns and to finally guarantee with them a permanent dialogue. We will also wish to know if a monitoring and evaluation process will be also set up by the GEF for the follow-up of the

related projects. In the end, we strongly support this action and we recommend to the GEF to deeply invests on.

*

*

*