

32nd LDCF/SCCF Council
June 23, 2022
Hilton McLean, Tysons Corner, Virginia

Opening of the Meeting
Remarks by

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GEF CEO and Chairperson

Transcript

I want to thank everybody at today's 32nd LDCF/SCCF meeting, which is the final LDCF/SCCF meeting for GEF-7.

I would like to extend my special thanks to my co-Chair, Ambassador Feturi, whose long history of engagement with the GEF and the LDCF and SCCF has provided valuable perspectives during the GEF-8 LDCF/SCCF strategy development process.

Dear friends, today the focus of this Council meeting is adaptation to climate change.

Our ability to meet the 1.5 degree target is by no means certain, and in fact the latest IPCC Sixth Assessment Report states that this target is very likely to be exceeded.

Missing the 1.5 degree target has extremely grave consequences for communities across the planet: countries with populations living below the poverty line; fragile communities living on marginal lands; and, for low-lying islands, their very existence is at threat.

We are already witnessing a wide range of adverse impacts.

Adaptation, in this context, is crucial now, and will only continue to be so into the future.

It is in this context that I would like to thank you all for your active and constructive engagement during the recently concluded strategy development process for the LDCF and SCCF for GEF-8.

We will be seeking your endorsement of this strategy today.

As you all know, we have a bold, innovative, and ambitious strategy that clearly articulates the value-addition for the LDCF and the SCCF.

We have heard from both donors and recipients around the strategy and its innovations, especially the new dedicated window for adaptation for LOSIDS [Large Oceanic Small Island Developing States], and a separate window for innovation, technology transfer, and yes of course, something that is very much embedded, which is the private sector engagement, both under the SCCF.

And yes, of course, as the CEO and Chairperson of this Council, I am super happy about the multiple support through many different processes, conversations, and statements that we have received.

But, we need to appreciate this in a meaningful manner and scaled-up, particularly in terms of predictable funding for both funds.

After much consideration, we decided to hold the pledging event for these two funds in the near future, most probably we will be promoting to do this at Sharm el-Sheik COP27.

Now let me focus and go on a little bit on the aspects of today's meeting.

As you probably have seen in the documents that were posted, we are bringing to your attention a very ambitious work program for approval, with projects for a total LDCF request of \$72.4 million.

With approval of this work program, I am pleased to say that all 47 LDCs, or 100 percent of the LDCs, will have received LDCF support.

A very unique feature of this work program is the inclusion of one global project for all LDCs, and three regional projects, two focused in Africa and one on Pacific LDC LOSIDS.

The Great Green Wall regional adaptation project in Africa demonstrates excellent collaboration between us and the GCF under the long-term vision.

Both the regional project in the Pacific and the global project are designed to help pool public and private resources to channel funding to resilient and sustainable development and -yes, of course - nature-based solutions, with the LDCF grant playing a catalytic role in this context.

These are being implemented by the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, as well.

Now I want to step back and give a very short snapshot of what we've been able to do and achieve in GEF-7.

Thanks again to your generous support, we are able to announce impressive results.

Projects approved in GEF-7, including the work program presented today, will deliver direct adaptation benefits to over 21 million people, of which 50 percent are female.

The projects will bring over 3.2 million hectares of land under climate-resilient management.

Almost 900 policies and plans will be mainstreamed in terms of climate adaptation and climate resilience.

And nearly 700,000 people will be trained on identifying and managing climate risks and adaptation measures.

I would like to highlight the example of the Benin project shared in the AMR, where 72 percent of all people being trained in improved agricultural practices - which are mainly women - the women's incomes, in the context of this region, increased by 30% compared to the start of the project.

Most importantly, building on the successful LDCF programming in GEF-7, we are ready to do much more to support climate adaptation in GEF-8.

The business plan for fiscal year 2023 and the budget for the LDCF and SCCF presents our vision to kickstart the GEF-8 with strong programming for both funds, enhanced country engagement, and yes of course, something that donor nations are strongly recommending, is the visibility, the higher visibility of what we do.

Also, I would like to make my sincere thanks to Ms. Madeleine Diouf.

She is the LDC Chair, who has been a very strong supporter of the LDCF and also provided keen insights in terms of guidance with the new strategy.

Her leadership is impressive and admirable.

I got a chance to visit her country Senegal last month to see an LDCF project.

I was in Dakar not long ago, and I was so proud to see these LDCF projects, and I want to share some photos that I took over there.

This is an LDCF project that works in strengthening resilient and productive landscapes in central Senegal.

As I was saying a couple of days ago in my introductory remarks, I was extremely impressed by the work of the FAO, the Government of Senegal –particularly the Ministry of the Environment.

I want to stop just one second here: I really get impressed when I don't know if I'm talking with an official from the Ministry of Agriculture or Environment.

This is an element that constantly comes to us very strongly.

The agenda from Environment and the agenda from Agriculture are very different.

And here I was confronted with the best of both worlds.

The officials from the Ministry of Environment in Senegal were leading this initiative, working with FAO in terms of climate adaptation in the drylands.

As I said, this project aimed for dealing with climate adaptation and climate resilience in very dry lands.

As I just said the other day, they are in the frontlines of the expansion of deserts and droughts.

Here you can see, I took this photo, and this is a very good photo of what we are doing.

Two things here are very important.

On the right-hand side there is a fence there.

On the right-hand side you see the landscape overgrazed by livestock.

The impact of climate change will make these lands unbearable.

No production may be there.

On the other side of the fence, you see the project, where the improved management of pastures - through innovative techniques - has generated the possibility to cope with drought and climate change.

Yes of course, over there you see not just the GEF, you see the Small Grants [Programme], you see the international cooperation NGOs, all together working in ways that can guarantee us that these landscapes would be managed in a way that people can cope with a changing climate.

And yes of course, many things that were done there, were done through women.

Another very important element is the farmers school concept; which is very impressive.

Here, the experts and technicians are training trainers to train all the people on how they can do agriculture and livestock development in the context of climate change.

I was extremely impressed by the work that this concept that the farmers school is doing at the very basic of what we do and want to see.

And it is super impressive.

Probably, Madeleine can share with us a little bit more on what they do.

And this is a good example of the things that the GEF does.

Once more, the GEF and the agencies, and this, you know is a very important partnership.

We are changing the lives of people at the village level.

Unfortunately, we are not changing the lives of people at the landscape/seascape level.

This is the challenge for us.

Working in the Sahel nations, supporting the Great Green Wall is as important as working in Central America, where definitely land degradation, climate change, and insecurities have become this very toxic combination that makes people to migrate to the north.

So, I came out very well impressed by what I saw on the ground.

Yes, of course, this year, I will be encouraging some Council members to join us on some of the field visits with the agencies.

Also, I think that during the Council meeting, we should have the opportunity to give the floor to the agencies, so they can tell us some of the very interesting things that they do.

I think that this is an innovative idea that I would like to explore with you all, because there's a lot of very interesting possibilities for Council members to exchange with the agencies.

They are all around us, they endure 3-4 days, and we are not able to bring that into some of the exchanges that we do, and this is something that I would put to your consideration.

I came out of Dakar, Senegal, central Senegal, with a lot of hope and optimism.

It was great to see this baobab tree in the sunset.

And with this, I would like to close my welcoming remarks for this 32nd LDCF/SCCF [council meeting].

And I would like to pass it now to my co-Chair for his welcoming remarks.

Thank you so much.