



## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COUNCIL'S DISCUSSIONS

### 66th GEF COUNCIL MEETING

February 5 – 9, 2024, Washington D.C.

The following is a brief record prepared by the GEF Secretariat of comments, understandings, and clarifications made by Council Members. These points are supplemental to the Joint Summary of the Chair, which records the decisions agreed by the Council. The full video of the Council Meeting can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/GEFSecretariat>

#### ***Agenda Item 1            Opening of the Meeting***

1. The CEO and Chairperson of the GEF, Carlos Manuel Rodriguez opened the 66<sup>th</sup> GEF Council meeting.
2. Mr. Dawda Badgie of the Gambia, Elected Chairperson, was unable to arrive on time due to air flight delays.
3. For video recording see:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTJJV1TqTFA&list=PL3rC5AoFPemVAXU0ereh4pM9dVKaXc7dO>

#### ***Agenda Item 2            Adoption of the Agenda***

4. The Secretariat stated that dates for the 69<sup>th</sup> and the 70<sup>th</sup> would be considered under Other Business.
5. The Agenda was adopted.
6. For video recording please see as from minute 14:00.

#### ***Agenda Item 3            The GEF Monitoring Report 2023***

7. The Secretariat presented the document on the results achieved by projects with financing from the GEF Trust Fund over the past year and provided an overview of operational performance against the GEF-8 Results Measurement Framework. The Council members appreciated such high numbers for how the GEF delivers environmental results and benefits people across the focal areas. The Council also praised that the report includes the data, narratives and examples that spell out how these results are achieved and the recently launched GEF Geospatial Platform, as a tool to demonstrate localized co-benefits, and

enhanced engagement of the GEF Secretariat with countries and agencies toward higher efficiency and effectiveness.

8. Some Council members asked about the reasons behind some of the results both the positive and negative ones; what are the biggest challenges facing implementation. The issue of Agency concentration was mentioned as a continuing concern.

9. The information paper on grievance cases was raised and explanations sought as to why there is a rise just before the Council meeting. Some Council Members expressed concern about the limited level of co-financing materialized reported during the latest fiscal year, even if higher than a year ago. They also indicated that the timely submission project Terminal Evaluations was important, as a tool for learning and accountability, as is also the case for Mid-Term Reviews.

10. In response, the GEF Secretariat indicated its intention to continue its engagement with agencies and conduct more analyses around co-financing matters, as well as to promote prompt submission of Mid-Term Reviews and Terminal Evaluations.

11. Some noted the significant increase in the share of projects that have received a first disbursement within 18 months and sought assurance that these disbursements do signal the start of actual programming like others we are concerned about the decline in some indicators such as completed projects with a timely terminal evaluation.

12. Other Council members stressed that the GEF and the other funds must really do their utmost to work closely together with the IFIs and MDBs and other funds to mobilize funding.

13. For details please see: :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTJJV1TqTFA&list=PL3rC5AoFPemVAXU0ereh4pM9dVKaXc7dO>  
Minute 15:15 (presentation) | **26:36 (Council comments)**

#### ***Agenda Item 04. Work Program for GEF Trust Fund***

14. The Secretariat presented the second largest work program in the history of the GEF requesting a total of \$840 million from the GEF trust fund and \$76.1 million in associated Agency fees for a total Work Program of \$916.1 million. It contains an indicative \$7.53 billion in co-financing, which means that each dollar provided by the GEF is matched by \$8.9 in co-financing provided by other sources. This brings GEF-8 programming to almost 50% at the 38% timeline of the 8th cycle.

15. The Council appreciated the second largest WP ever. It also appreciated that priority had been given to SIDS and LDCs. Some comments were made concerning the distribution of the funds to different regions and agencies. Concerns were also raised on Agency and focal area distribution where GEF-8 aspirations were not yet met.

16. Council appreciated that the work program cover note includes a section on policy coherence which is considered very important, and asked if there will be a section in the monitoring report on how projects and programs contribute to policy coherence.

17. Council members commented on the various IPs and specific projects of greater interest to them. They also mentioned the issue of Agency concentration needing further attention. They further highlighted the need to attract more participation from the private sector. One noted the decline in overall quality of the projects while others mentioned concerns about some projects. Some noted the need to increase co-financing levels; others asked about the low levels of SIDS participation, and another suggested more focus on Indigenous peoples and local communities to support their efforts to benefit women and girls.

18. Several Council members welcomed the progress being made on the NGI window. They also stressed the high level of funds programmed for biodiversity.

19. For video recording please see :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTJJV1TqTFA&list=PL3rC5AoFPemVAXU0ereh4pM9dVKaXc7dO>

Minute 1:43:00 (presentation) | 2:01:51 (Council comments)

#### **Agenda Item 05. Streamlining the GEF project Cycle**

20. The Secretariat introduced the revised document and explained that the changes had been sent by email as consultations revealed that some aspects needed further work before they could be approved by the Council. The Secretariat recalled that the GEF-8 Replenishment Policy Recommendations include a decision to explore areas for streamlining the GEF project cycle, with an objective of reducing transaction costs and facilitating faster access to GEF resources by countries. Therefore, this document presents initial proposed changes to GEF policy, guidelines and practices aimed at streamlining and simplification; and potential additional measures that are under review, to be developed further.

21. Council members expressed a wide range of comments and questions that allowed the Secretariat to further explain the contents of the Council document. Some developing Council Members, supported by a developed Council Member, made particular mention of the need to ensure that midterm reviews are mandatory for MSPs as these allow for any necessary corrections in the execution of projects.

22. An increase in project management costs was requested to bring them in line with rising costs across the world. Several Council members mentioned a request made in previous Council meetings that OFP should be made aware of the actions taken in the project approval process. The Secretariat mentioned that it would study in what way the Portal could be used for that purpose.

23. There was a suggestion to establish an *Ad Hoc* Working Group to study further streamlining measures for Council consideration at its 67<sup>th</sup> meeting. This was supported and approved. Constituencies agreed to propose the names of individuals that would serve on this Working Group.

24. An amended draft decision was distributed and approved.

25. For video recording please see :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pw2X2xHbH6Q&list=PL3rC5AoFPemVAXU0ereh4pM9dVkaXc7dO&index=2> Start of video (presentation) | 5:00 (Council comments)

#### **Agenda Item 06. UNDP: 2023 Third Party Review of Minimum Fiduciary Standards**

26. The Secretariat introduced the final report of the independent Third-Party Review of compliance by UNDP with the GEF Policy on Minimum Fiduciary Standards for 2023 (the “Review”), undertaken by an independent Third-Party Reviewer (Mr. John Fitzsimon, the “Reviewer”). The Secretariat agreed with the Reviewer that the special measures are no longer required. Mr. John Fitzsimon mentioned some salient points of his review.

27. Council members made many comments and suggestions. These included maintaining monitoring of separation between implementing and execution functions. UNDP explained the characteristics of its own policies on separation of functions and how it complies with the GEF policy in the matter to avoid the inherent contradictions between the two, plus the special needs in specific cases, in particular the fiduciary capacity of executing partners.

28. One Council member stated that special measures should continue in force because the process is good, but results cannot be achieved in short period of time.

29. The decision was adopted.

30. For video recording please see:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pw2X2xHbH6Q&list=PL3rC5AoFPemVAXU0ereh4pM9dVKaXc7dO&index=2> 1:36:00 (presentation) | 1:45:48 (Council comments)

#### ***Agenda Item 07. Tracking and Measuring Socio-economic Co-benefits from GEF Investments***

31. The Secretariat introduced the item recalling that under the Healthy Planet, Healthy People framework, the GEF adopted in GEF-8 both whole of society and inclusive approaches, and committed to work toward improving the tracking of socio-economic co-benefits and added that the document presents how GEF financing supports socio-economic co-benefits and outlines steps to improve their tracking.

32. The Secretariat said it had identified several possible steps in the lead up to GEF 9 to strengthen its capacity to capture and track socioeconomic co-benefits. First identifying a small number of standard indicators that would provide an aggregate view of the GEF’s contribution to socioeconomic co-benefits. Second, exploring practical use of cases of geospatial analysis as a way to highlight changes in the socioeconomic context. Third, better capturing the results for local communities, for young people, for indigenous peoples. Fourth, continuing to leverage further qualitative and narrative reporting to better demonstrate how benefits help achieve global environmental benefits. And fifth, to continue ensuring an appropriate consideration of socioeconomic co-benefits as reflected in GEF’s results framework at the design stage.

33. The Council welcomed the paper and its proposals and supported the draft decision. Some comments referred to the measuring quantitative and qualitative benefits while not adding a significant burden to the projects as this has a high cost. The Council supported further work by the GEF to improve data capture and monitoring for IPLC groups and coordination with other funds. These elements help to ensure that sustainability and durability of GEF investments beyond project closure. A Council member suggested that indicators related to climate change and resilience are included to measure the contributions from GEF investments across focal areas towards building resilience and strength and adaptation. Another suggestion was to track capacity building of executing agencies.

34. For video recording please see:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pw2X2xHbH6Q&list=PL3rC5AoFPemVAXU0ereh4pM9dVKaXc7dO&index=2>

2:13:10 (presentation) | 2:20:14 (Council comments)

**Agenda Item 08. Identifying a Risk Appetite for GEF Investments**

35. The Secretariat introduced the document recalling that it responds to the IEO's recommendation from 2021 to "continuously monitor the risk across the GEF portfolio. The GEF Council, together with the GEF Secretariat and STAP, should, based on such assessment, identify an acceptable risk tolerance". The Secretariat also recalled that following the discussion at its 65<sup>th</sup> meeting it agreed to create a Working Group on Risk Appetite. It was composed of the GEF Secretariat, STAP and Council Members from the Constituencies of the UK; Australia, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea; Brazil, Colombia and Ecuador; and India, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The document reflects the results of its deliberations from October to December 2023.

36. The purpose of this paper is to articulate the risk appetite for the whole GEF portfolio along three risk dimensions: context, innovation and execution. A risk appetite for the GEF offers opportunities to enhance the achievement of outcomes, to both seek higher rewards and address key challenges faced by countries. It seeks to ensure that the GEF's strategic objectives and intended results address risk effectively to enable transformational change. It helps to promote a shared understanding between Council, GEF Secretariat, Agencies and countries on the acceptable risk levels. This includes identifying areas where higher than average risk levels may need to be encouraged.

37. The Working group stressed that it was not addressing potential risks of projects doing harm as that is covered by safeguards. Rather it sought to find a shared understanding on risk to the achievement of project outcomes, including identification of areas where higher than average risk levels may be encouraged to achieve greater global environmental benefits. Reporting to the Council will be done through the Annual Monitoring Report.

38. The Council welcomed the report noting it is a starting point to be calibrated over time. Council Members asked several questions including on how this will be made operational, the need to keeping a prudent approach; that risk should align with the circumstances of each country; consistency of risk evaluation across the partnership; the link to the IEO evaluation. The Secretariat provided response to the comments saying risk will be operationalized through the work program and the mid-term reviews and will be reported to Council through the AMR.

39. For video recording please see :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1h7bm0KzxnA&list=PL3rC5AoFPemVAXU0ereh4pM9dVKaXc7dO&index=5> 11:30 (presentation, STAP) | 24:36 (Council comments)

**Agenda Item 09. Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation: GEF Support to Drylands Countries and Management Response**

40. The IEO Director first presented the 20 years anniversary report of the IEO. He highlighted the books and guidelines produced by the IEO; the workshop on evaluation at the nexus of environment and

development, as well as online training and its own events at the GEF Assembly, UNFCCC CoP 28 and other international events.

41. The IEO then introduced the document related to the agenda item stressing that drylands are areas where environmental and social trade-offs can be quite consequential and that this strategic country cluster evaluation (SCCE) examines responses of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) to environmental challenges under acute circumstances.

42. The Secretariat introduced its management response stating its agreement with the IEO evaluation analysis, findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

43. Council members supported the IEO recommendations and adopted the document. Some Council members highlighted that the GEF needs to find the right balance between generating environmental benefits, while at the same time supporting communities to achieve socio-economic benefits. Others supported including a stronger focus on water scarcity and droughts, including a strategy, in the IEO list of recommendations while one Council member encouraged the GEF to focus more on private sector involvement in drylands.

44. One Council member commented its understanding on recommendation 2, which is related to including land tenure security and conflict resolution in projects in drought-affected countries, that it should be carried out without forgetting that issues related to these topics, land tenure, and access rights, fall within the sovereignty of states over their territories, and are a part of each country's internal policies and legal frameworks.

45. For video recording please see :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xY9TajH0Kg&list=PL3rC5AoFPemVAXU0ereh4pM9dVKaXc7dO&index=4>

Start of video (presentation) | 41:59 (Council comments)

#### ***Agenda Item 10. Evaluation of Community Based Approaches at the GEF and Management Response***

46. The IEO introduced the document stating that, while not a core objective of the GEF, this subject has been seen with increasing frequency since GEF-4 till the present replenishment cycle. The IEO explained that Climate Change Adaptation strategy has included a whole of society approach and that several GEF policies foster inclusion and prevention of harm to stakeholders and the environment.

47. The CEO highlighted the cost effectiveness of community-based approaches (CBA); he noted the cross support of the SGP and the CBA approaches; he thanked countries and agencies for pooling limited resources to promote this approach; he stressed that CBAs help the GEF to achieve the sustainability it seeks from its projects; he finally noted that all developing countries are in the same bracket when looking at socioeconomic challenges.

48. The Secretariat introduced the management response that values the important attention of communitycentered approaches for natural resource management, including approaches to devolve decision-making power and extending financial and technical resources to communities and natural resource users. Further, the Secretariat appreciated the Evaluation's reasoning that its policies provide requirements that all GEF-financed activities, at a minimum, inform or consult with communities regarding their activities and acknowledged that, considering the wide range of GEF financed activities,

these policies do not stipulate that all GEF projects apply a design that centers communities in project activities.

49. The Council welcomed the report and supported its recommendations. Among the comments were a proposal to expand the CBA approach beyond small grants and environmental conservation to encompass other project types and focal areas, including climate change mitigation, chemicals and waste, and international waters. Another Council member advocated for cultural considerations to be taken into account by the GEF to ensure that socio-economic benefits align with cultural preferences.

50. Some Council Members underscored the trade-off associated with community-based approaches. While these approaches are recognized for their effectiveness and sustainability, they also incur higher costs and are more time-consuming. Given the ongoing discussions on streamlining GEF procedures, there is a clear need for additional guidance on how to address this trade-off.

51. Other Council members highlighted recommendation 2, which calls for the development of guidance for community-based approaches (CBAs) within the framework of GEF projects and emphasized the significance of decentralizing responsibility and financial resources from the GEF to the local level and communities, considering it a crucial objective for the discussions surrounding GEF-9. They also stressed the importance of establishing a results framework with indicators for CBAs.

52. Lastly, the Council mentioned that discussions for GEF-9 should incorporate the CBA approach, emphasizing a whole-of-society approach and urging International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to integrate community-based approaches into the design of their projects.

53. For video recording please see: :  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xY9TajH0Kg&list=PL3rC5AoFPemVAXU0ereh4pM9dVKaXc7dO&index=4> 1:15:20 (presentation) | 1:40:58 (Council comments)

***Agenda Item 11. Learning from Challenges in GEF projects and Management Response***

***Agenda Item 12. Evaluation of GEF Support to Climate Information and Early Warning Systems and Management Response***

54. Items 11 and 12 were considered together.

55. The IEO presented the first document stressing that learning can be done from successes and failures, the second being more difficult to gauge. The report concentrates on projects that did not achieve the expected results. The study looked at underperforming projects analyzing the factors that contribute to underperformance, examined the risk mitigation and adaptive management measures and provided insight on how the GEF can enhance its role as a learning organization.

56. The IEO presented the second report that was initiated as an LDCF/SCCF evaluation and later realized that these issues have become very important for the GEF Trust Fund, plus the multi-trust-fund projects. The definition used was that these combined systems collect, analyze, interpret and disseminate information about climate patterns and trends to provide timely warning of hazards. The IEO mentioned that this evaluation aimed to understand how projects funded by the GEF Trust Fund, LDCF, and SCCF have incorporated CIEWS into their programming strategies and seeks to provide evidence on the performance of these interventions through an assessment of their relevance, results, and sustainability, with an overarching objective to inform future GEF programming on CIEWS by offering valuable insights

into successful areas and identifying aspects that require additional focus for achieving sustainable outcomes.

57. The Secretariat introduced its management response to the report on learning from challenges and agreed with its findings, lessons, conclusions, and recommendation. It stressed that the report comes at an opportune time when the GEF Secretariat is in the process of rolling out a new Council approved strategy for Knowledge Management and Learning across the partnership, and that the report offers an important perspective on a portfolio approach to understanding and addressing challenges faced by projects during implementation.

58. The Secretariat then introduced the management response to the report on climate information and early warning systems welcoming the evaluation and expressing its broad agreement with its findings, recommendations, and conclusions, including areas of partial agreement.

59. The Council welcomed the reports and expressed a variety of comments and questions that were answered by the IEO and Secretariat.

60. On the Learning from Challenges Evaluation some Council members emphasized the significance of monitoring and reporting as opportunities for learning, rather than mere compliance measures. They invited agencies and focal points to emulate the GEF's example as one of the top learning institutions. Other Council members encouraged the GEF to embrace the possibility of failure, as the Council supports higher risk-taking, while others stressed the importance of a learning strategy involving diverse agencies and countries and highlighted the crucial role of country ownership for project success.

61. On the Climate Information and Early Warning Systems Evaluation some Council members highlighted the need for clarification regarding the GEF's role in climate information and early warning systems, particularly considering the presence of numerous other agencies working on disaster risk reduction. They emphasized the importance of donor coordination and the clarification of mandates between the GEF and other agencies, especially in light of initiatives such as Early Warnings for All.

62. Other Council members encouraged GEF agencies to align their efforts with regional climate and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) strategies and further emphasized the importance of tailoring early warning information to the specific needs of recipients, particularly focusing on the last mile communication.

63. One Council Member stressed the importance of shifting the GEF's focus from merely providing early warning information to promoting early actions during disaster events and others recommended the incorporation of traditional knowledge and community-led innovative approaches in project design to address emerging changes and threats.

64. A critical finding highlighted by several members was the insufficient attention given to women and vulnerable groups in reducing their vulnerability, an issue not addressed in the management response.

65. During discussions, Council members commented at the Secretariat's partial agreement with IEO recommendations. The Secretariat replied that partial agreement does not mean disagreement and these recommendations are being followed. It also clarified that these recommendations were already built-in across the entire GEF portfolio, mainly in the LDCF/SCCF, yet only partially in the GEF TF.



66. For video recording please see:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xY9TajH0Kg&list=PL3rC5AoFPemVAXU0ereh4pM9dVKaXc7dO&index=4> 2:32:45 (2 items presented together) | 3:09:33 (Council comments)

**Agenda Item 13. Report of the Chairperson of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel**

67. For video recording please see:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGRxJB2bdIE&list=PL3rC5AoFPemVAXU0ereh4pM9dVKaXc7dO&index=7> 17:05 (presentation) | 1:16:57 (Council comments)

**Agenda Item 14. Gap Analysis of GEF Funded Activity and Engagement in Fragility, Conflict, and Violence affected states (FCS).**

68. The Secretariat introduced the document recalling that it had been introduced as an information paper at the 64<sup>th</sup> Council meeting and was now up for discussion at the request of a Council Member. During the GEF 8 replenishment negotiations there were questions on whether there was a need for a specific policy response by the GEF in fragile and conflict affected States. In the policy recommendations the Secretariat was requested to undertake an analysis of activity and engagement of the GEF and its agencies in such states.

69. The purpose of the gap analysis was, first, to provide a broad mapping exercise of practical operational policies, manuals, guidelines on FCS within the GEF agencies and in select other environmental funds, and second, to identify areas where the GEF may need to adjust its approach and guidance. The paper concludes that in general that the GEF's policy framework is comprehensive and appropriate for work in FCS, while there are some areas for further work. Thus, the Secretariat will develop voluntary guidance for GEF projects in FCS countries and to share lessons learned.

70. The Council welcomed the report, asked some questions and suggested some ideas on the topic including the view that this is mostly an issue for Agencies to address. A draft decision was amended and adopted that requests the Secretariat to proceed with the proposed actions.

71. For video recording please see:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1h7bm0KzxnA&list=PL3rC5AoFPemVAXU0ereh4pM9dVKaXc7dO&index=5> 56:10 (presentation) | 1:02:23 (Council comments)

**Agenda Item 15. Gap Analysis of GEF Policies and Key Social Inclusion Issues**

72. The Secretariat introduced the document on this issue recalling that this was presented as an information paper during the 64<sup>th</sup> Council meeting and has been brought to this meeting for discussion at the request of a Council Member. The paper responds to the request of GEF 8 participants, and follows the agreement and timetable set forth in the GEF 8 policy recommendations, to carry out an analysis of existing policies and guidelines and to identify potential areas of further work. The analysis covered four topics: people marginalized by virtue of their sexual orientation or gender identity and provisions protecting the rights of LGBTQ Plus persons; youth as effective change makers; disability inclusion; and child protection.

73. The paper confirms that the GEF policies on environmental and social environmental and social safeguards, gender equality and stakeholder engagement include provisions that promote social inclusion and consideration of a range, a range of social risks and impacts. The paper provides some potential areas for further consideration in the context of the ongoing GEF reform and opportunities in the lead up to GEF-9.

74. The Council welcomed the report, made constructive suggestions and comments including that this issue should not be a vehicle for affecting the cultural and social values of the countries. A working group on gender was also proposed. The CIF representative stressed its willingness to share its experience on this issue. A draft decision was amended and adopted.

75. For video recording please see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1h7bm0KzxnA&list=PL3rC5AoFPemVAXU0ereh4pM9dVKaXc7dO&index=5> 1:30:57 (presentation) | 1:36:35 (Council comments)

#### **Agenda Item 16. Relations with Conventions & Other International Institutions**

76. The Council heard statements from UNFCCC Executive Secretary Mr Simon Stiell in video format; from Mr. Miguel de Serpa Soares, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel, in video format; Mr. Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary, Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions in virtual format; Ms. Monika Stankiewicz, Executive Secretary, Minamata Convention on Mercury, present in the room; Mr. David Cooper, Acting Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity, present in the room and Ms. Andrea Meza, Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), in virtual format.

77. Mr. Stiell reviewed the outcomes of the CoP 28 and how these are relevant to the GEF. Mr. De Serpa Soares spoke of the status of the BBNJ agreement and cooperation with the GEF. Mr. Payet spoke about the results of the triple CoP of Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm as well as linkages with other processes such as CBD, UNFCCC and the Montreal Protocol. Ms. Stankiewicz reported on the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the parties of the Minamata Convention. Mr. Cooper reported on the outcomes of CoP 15 and the road to CoP 16 later in 2024. Ms. Meza spoke about the results of CRIC 21, about the implementation of some strategic decisions as well as some issues of interest to the work with the GEF.

78. The Council welcomed the interventions and the information provided and made supportive comments on each of them including the role of the GEF and its collaboration with other environmental funds. They also asked a few questions that were answered by the guest speakers who were present.

79. Finally, the Secretariat report on Relations with Conventions and other international institutions was tabled and the decision was adopted without comment.

80. For video recording please see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGRxJB2bdIE&list=PL3rC5AoFPemVAXU0ereh4pM9dVKaXc7dO&index=7> 1:58:27 (presentation) | 2:59:03 (Council comments)

#### **Agenda Item 17. Initial guidelines for enabling activities and BBNJ ratification support project**

81. The Secretariat introduced the item explaining the background and the need for at least 60 ratifications for the agreement to enter into force. The Secretariat explained the activities for which

support has been requested and recalled the information provided to the Council as well as the actions taken at the 64<sup>th</sup> Council. The Secretariat explained the guidelines that have been prepared for the support requested.

82. The Council welcomed the report and the information provided, expressed its satisfaction at the approval of the agreement and recognized its significance for biodiversity in the oceans. Council members expressed their commitment to the agreement and encouraged support to be available swiftly so that it may come into force soon.

83. The Secretariat replied that it was ready to go with the agencies that can help countries and highlighted cooperation with DOALOS.

84. For video recording please see :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1zcuz2ul00&list=PL3rC5AoFPemVAXU0ereh4pM9dVKaXc7dO&index=8> 0:26 (presentation) | 9:58 (Council comments)

**Agenda Item 18. Amendments to the Rules of Procedure for the GEF Council**

85. The Secretariat presented the item recalling the history and report of the *Ad Hoc* Working group on Governance that had proposed the amendments at the 62<sup>nd</sup> Council meeting. Consideration of these amendments were brought to the 66<sup>th</sup> meeting following the approval at the 7<sup>th</sup> GEF Assembly of the amendments to the Instrument, as these were necessary before the amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Council could be considered.

86. The Secretariat also explained the content of the document and highlighted the most notable changes, First, the duration of the mandate of the Co-Chair that was extended to cover a full year. Second, based on comments received, paragraph 16 that aims at ensuring that the broad partnership is invited to every Council. Third, paragraph 26 that introduces a new element that refers to timing of information and circulation of policy documents.

87. The Swiss Council member, whose predecessor chaired the Working Group, further clarified the discussions held in the group and the reasoning behind the proposed amendments. One Council Member proposed a minor change that was accepted. The amended decision was adopted.

88. For video recording please see:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1zcuz2ul00&list=PL3rC5AoFPemVAXU0ereh4pM9dVKaXc7dO&index=8> 27:19 (presentation) | 33:40 (Council comments)

**Agenda Item 19. Report of the Selection and Review Committee**

89. This item was discussed in Executive Session.

90. The Council approved the appointment of Geeta Batra as the new IEO Director.

91. The SRC proposed that Carlos Manuel Rodriguez be reappointed as GEF CEO. Constituencies have time till the end of March to send any comments to the SRC. The issue will be decided at the 67<sup>th</sup> Council.

**Agenda Item 20.            Other business**

92.     Ms. Rita Zaghoul, Director of HAC Secretariat, was introduced and invited to take the floor.

93.     The Council decided that the 69<sup>th</sup> meeting will take place in presence in Washington, DC the week of June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025; and that the 70<sup>th</sup> Council meeting will take place virtually the week of December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

94.     For video recording please see :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1zcuz2ul00&list=PL3rC5AoFPemVAXU0ereh4pM9dVKaXc7dO&index=8> Starting at 50:28 see Pending decisions on:

51:13 (update) | 52:10 – Adoption of Revisions / Amendments on Agenda Item 5

52:54 (update) | 53:49 (Council comments): Agenda Item 14 & Agenda Item 15

1:05:30 (presentation) | 1:14:54 (Council comments) Agenda Item 20. Other Business: