

Ministerial Roundtable – Current Status (issues/venues)

*What is the current status of the roundtable*

At its fifty-fifth session, the U.N. General Assembly agreed to organize the 10-year review of progress in the implementation of UNCED as the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

The GEF and other international organizations were invited to participate fully in the 10-year review “in order to reflect their experiences and lessons learned as well as to provide ideas and proposals for the way forward for further implementation of Agenda 21 in relevant areas.”

At its meeting in May 2001, the GEF Council fully supported the active participation of the GEF in the Summit and its preparations, and approved the special initiatives proposed by the CEO/Chairman, including the Roundtable of Ministers.

The GEF Secretariat met with the Secretariat of the WSSD in August 2001 and fully briefed them on the proposals approved by the Council. The Secretariat has welcomed the GEF contribution to the preparatory process for the WSSD.

The GEF is uniquely placed to invite Ministers of Development Cooperation/Finance together with Ministers of Environment to discuss matters concerning financing for environmental sustainability.

*Main issues for discussion*

The main issue of discussion will be innovative sources of financing for environmental sustainability. The goal is to identify means of financial support, *outside of official development assistance*, that could be mobilized to support developing country efforts to achieve sustainable development. The roundtable is to be convened at the ministerial level to ensure that the recommendations of the roundtable will be both politically feasible and will benefit from the support of a broad-based group of key decision makers. The recommendations will be presented to the preparatory process for the World Summit with a view to influencing any recommendations that might be forthcoming from the summit on long-term financing and later on to the Summit itself in Johannesburg.

*How will the proposed roundtable add value to the financing for development discussions expected to conclude in Mexico in March next year?*

My hope is that the roundtable will build upon the work that has been undertaken to prepare for the International Conference on Financing for Development. In particular, the Conference’s work on Global Public Goods recognizes the need for financing for environmental protection and discussions have identified the need for financing beyond ODA and the strengthening of public-private cooperation. The roundtable will provide an opportunity to focus on some key proposals that might best serve to advance the general principles to be agreed at the Mexico meeting.

Furthermore, I would propose that the first meeting of the Roundtable be convened in Mexico in conjunction with the Conference to ensure that the roundtable is fully consistent and supportive of the work of the Conference.

*What is the schedule of the meetings?*

My preliminary thinking is to recommend to the co-Chairs convening the first meeting in connection with the High Level UN Meeting on Financing for Development in Mexico, March 18-22, 2002, and the second meeting in connection with the fourth WSSD preparatory committee meeting to be convened at the Ministerial level in Indonesia, May 27-June 7, 2002.