

**FIRST MEETING ON THE  
GEF PROGRAMMING STRATEGY ON ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE FOR THE LEAST  
DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FUND AND SPECIAL CLIMATE CHANGE FUND AND OPERATIONAL  
IMPROVEMENTS: JULY 2022 TO JUNE 2026  
CHAIR'S SUMMARY**

The first meeting on the GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the Least Developed Countries Fund and Special Climate Change Fund and Operational Improvements: July 2022-June 2026 was held virtually on October 19, 2021. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Carlos Manuel Rodriguez Echandi, CEO and Chairperson of the GEF.

Contributing Participants were joined by non-donor recipient participants representing the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Group; regional observers for Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and Caribbean, and Small Island Developing States (SIDS); observers from the GEF Agencies, GEF CSO network; and a representative from the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

Mr. Rodriguez opened the meeting by welcoming all participants. He highlighted the urgency of adaptation action, and how it has become even more crucial since the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed additional pressure on vulnerable countries with limited capacity that were already facing adverse consequences of climate change. In this context, the GEF CEO emphasized the need for a strong GEF-8 climate adaptation strategy to support transformational adaptation action to enable the vulnerable poor to thrive, and to enable blue, green, and resilient recovery in the context of complex and interconnected change. Therefore, the need for these two funds has heightened to an unprecedented level.

Mr. Nigel Topping, High Level Champion, UNFCCC COP 26, in his video message, highlighted the increasing need for climate adaptation finance. He commended the GEF's catalytic role in supporting the climate adaptation actions of the most vulnerable countries through the deployment of LDCF and SCCF and encouraged the GEF to be bold and ambitious. He also encouraged the GEF to aim for scale and transformative change; and leverage partnership, both public and private sectors; and engage non-state actors, including cities and grassroots institutions.

HE Sonam Wangdi, Chair, LDC Group, in his video message, mentioned about the recently concluded Thimphu Call for Ambition and Action and highlighted its concern on the current state of the climate finance. He underscored the importance of GEF-8 LDCF/SCCF strategies to lead towards achieving the LDC 2050 Vision and the need to reflect actual needs and priorities of the LDCs and their vulnerable communities. He mentioned that LDCs need an estimated US\$98 billion per annum until 2030, and conveyed the expectation of the LDC GROUP that a minimum of USD one billion would be delivered through LDCF during the GEF-8 period.

Mr. Rodriguez highlighted that against the scientific evidence of unprecedented scale and impacts of climate change, the GEF-8 climate adaptation strategy aims to catalyze ambitious transformational adaptation action, building on strong partnerships for innovation and adopting a whole of society approach which ensures integration and inclusion. The GEF CEO reiterated his vision for the GEF to be a leader in helping countries achieve global climate adaptation goals. He explained that this means: (1) The GEF being a central player in the Healthy Planet, Healthy People approach towards a green, blue, and resilient recovery; 2. The GEF being uniquely placed to narrow the adaptation and finance gaps; and, 3. The GEF being committed to contribute to Paris Agreement and other international goals.

### ***Program Evaluation of LDCF and SCCF***

The GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) presented the findings of the program evaluations of LDCF and SCCF and highlighted the overall relevance of both funds to country priorities and meeting countries' adaptation needs. The presentation underscored effectiveness and efficiency of both funds; however, it noted the adverse effect from lack of funding particularly for SCCF. Performance on gender by the LDCF portfolio has improved over time, with gaps, and also noted that the private sector engagement is limited in the LDCF and more evident in the SCCF.

Participants received the IEO presentation favorably and provided comments. Many countries underscored the importance of climate change adaptation for LDCs and expressed their appreciation to the GEF's support through LDCF in this regard, while several donor countries have mentioned their continuous support towards LDCF including additional contribution to the fund. Some participants shared their views that SCCF is an important fund that can provide support for non-LDC SIDS and other developing countries that have committed towards climate adaptation goals but are struggling with limited capacity and resource availability. Participants also expressed the importance of private sector engagement support being tailored to the unique contexts of the target countries SCCF was highlighted for its effectiveness in addressing unmet demand for technology transfer, innovation, and private sector engagement in LDCs and non-LDCs. Participants emphasized that in addition to the availability, predictability is also major hurdle for both LDCF and SCCF. One participant encouraged others to become more active partners of the funds, and called on the GEF Secretariat to continue further strengthening efforts in showcasing the two funds. Finally, policy coherence amongst different environmental mandates, such as biodiversity and climate, as well as between international and domestic policies were also highlighted in the response from the participants.

### ***Programming Priorities***

The GEF Secretariat presented strategic positioning of the two funds, thematic and priority areas, and options for resource mobilization. Participants acknowledged and supported the

goal of the Programming Strategy and provided overall support to the Programming Directions for both LDCF and SCCF.

With regards to LDCF, participants supported proposed priority themes and areas, and commended GEF Secretariat for presenting well thought-out interventions to address key vulnerability and adaptation needs of the LDCs. Several participants welcomed inclusion of priority area on the innovative and private sector engagement and noted the role of LDCF in providing grant-based funding to catalyze innovation and private sector engagement to deliver adaptation solutions in LDCs. Similarly, participants also welcomed proposal to foster partnership and whole-of-the society approach that would encourage locally led adaptation for enhancing ownership for sustainable adaptation outcomes.

On SCCF, participants acknowledged and some welcomed the proposal to focus on supporting the adaptation needs of the SIDS and strengthening innovation and private sector engagement. Most participants proposed to continue discussion on the proposal, fully cognizant about the climate adaptation needs and gaps of the SIDS.

In addition, several participants commented on the importance of seeking synergies and complementarity with other funds, including with international humanitarian aid that are attributable to climate induced disaster such as floods, droughts, typhoon etc. Participants also welcomed the continued efforts of the GEF in operationalizing *Long-Term Vision on Complementarity* with the GCF through this proposed strategy.

### ***Operational Improvements for LDCF and SCCF***

Participants welcomed the presentation on operational improvement for LDCF and SCCF. The discussion centered around the proposed options for resource mobilization, recognizing the need to balance the flexibilities for donor countries with predictability of resource flow to recipient countries.

For the LDCF, most participants expressed a preference on the option of moving to multi-year pledging (Option 3) while maintaining the possibility of intermittent contributions, while one participant expressed its preference to explore moving towards the replenishment model (Option 1). Generally, the participants expressed strong support to contribute to LDCF.

For the SCCF, one participant, who is the sole contributor to the SCCF, commented that its support will be discontinued if other donors do not come forward. One participant also rejected the option of maintaining status quo (Option 2), which would ultimately result in suspending the fund (Option 4). Some participants expressed preference for Option 3 (provide focused support in line with GEF's advantage), and one requested the GEF Secretariat to provide additional clarification on the specifics for this option. Participants recognized the lack of support for the SCCF and several called for greater donor contribution to the SCCF.

Some participants also expressed support for the proposed Dedicated Programs on (i) Communications and Visibility Enhancement to respond to the council meetings; (ii) Outreach and

Capacity Support for LDC Planning and Programming; and (iii) Organizational Learning and Coordination to share the collections of climate change adaptation experiences and lessons learned.

***Next steps***

Participants were requested to submit written comments on the Programming Strategy document by November 16, 2021.

The following timeline was also proposed for next steps:

- The second meeting is proposed to take place either fully virtually (potentially on February 2, 2022) or in person, back-to-back with the third GEF replenishment meeting, subject to confirmation of the third meeting date.
- The third meeting was proposed to take place in person, back-to-back with the final and fourth GEF replenishment meeting, subject to confirmation of the fourth meeting date (and possibly March 17, 2022).

Participants were requested to provide their feedback on the above points by November 16, 2021. The GEF Secretariat also informed the participants about the organization of a ministerial LDCF/SCCF pledging meeting on November 9, 2021, at the 26<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties in Glasgow.

The GEF Secretariat will circulate the Chair's Summary of this meeting by November 3, 2021.