

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GEF RETREAT

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE GEF RETREAT

October 26, 2008 – New York

1. A GEF retreat was hosted by Mr. Ad Melkert (Associate Administrator, UNDP) on October 26, 2008, in New York. Ms. Katherine Sierra (Vice-President, Sustainable Development Network, The World Bank), Mr. Achim Steiner (Under Secretary General and Executive Director, UNEP), and Ms. Monique Barbut (Chairperson/CEO, GEF) were in attendance.

2. The agenda for the meeting is attached. Discussion ranged over the following three main topics:

- (a) Vision for the GEF;
- (b) Future roles within the GEF partnership; and
- (c) GEF-5 replenishment.

3. It was agreed that the retreat proceeds in the nature of “brainstorming” with informal and constructive discussions. The retreat, everyone agreed, provided a good opportunity to reflect on the history of the GEF partnership and look at the big picture in the context of the rapidly changing political and financial environment and consider the role of the GEF, before embarking on the next replenishment.

Vision for the GEF

4. There was a common recognition that the GEF business model (partnership, platform of cooperation and dialogue between the main multilateral agencies from both the UN and the MDB, instrument to ensure an integrated approach to major environmental issues, main financial mechanism of the major multilateral environmental agreements) remains relevant.

5. Participants agreed that the GEF will continue to have an important catalytic and transformational role by supporting, through investments, capacity building and scientific assessments, innovative technologies and approaches, environment-friendly policies and seed investment to lift barriers to achieving global environmental benefits. Although there were different opinions on the shape it would take, participants shared the view that the GEF should be an important player in the post-2012 climate change architecture, and anticipated a due process (including, but not limited to OPS-4, GEF Council deliberations, and guidance from COPs, among which the UNFCCC) that would determine the future financial architecture. They also agreed that it could strengthen its role in the management of chemicals, if donors are willing to provide additional resources for that purpose.

6. Participants expressed different views on the best ways of supporting environmental innovation in the private sector. They also discussed the challenge of developing a coherent approach to financing adaptation to climate change.

7. There was an exchange of views with regard to the GEF exploring ways of broadening its funding base beyond traditional ODA budgets from current donor countries.

Future roles within the GEF partnership

8. Participants discussed in depth their vision of the respective roles of the Secretariat and the Implementing Agencies in the GEF partnership. The IAs also expressed their commitment to maintaining a strong systemic engagement with the GEF Secretariat on strategy and policy development.

9. There was a common understanding that the Secretariat should focus on the strategic and results framework, while the Agencies work with the stakeholders to develop and implement programs and projects. There were discussions on the appropriate role of the Secretariat with regard to: country-level programming (particularly in the context of the RAF), communication to the public and the monitoring of GEF projects.

10. There was agreement on further strengthening the integration of GEF programming into country development strategies, but a difference of views on how to achieve this.

11. There was an exchange of views as to whether there was a need and how the legal framework under which the GEF Secretariat operates should be amended.

12. Participants agreed that important steps had been taken towards reforming the project cycle, however there was a need to handle the perception of high cost of doing business with the GEF. There was a discussion on the possibility of tailoring GEF processes to the Agencies' internal approval procedures. There was an agreement between the Secretariat and the Agencies to work together to further streamline business processes.

13. Finally, Participants recognized the high expectations from some recipient countries as regards a more direct access to GEF funding. The possibility to include new Agencies, depending on the level of the GEF-5 replenishment, taking into account the experience with 10 agencies, was discussed. Participants also exchanged views on the feasibility in the future of providing direct access for national agencies to GEF resources through a limited pilot window.

GEF-5 replenishment

14. Participants generally supported the objective of obtaining a strong replenishment for the GEF that would reverse the trend of declining real replenishments.

15. They also agreed on the need for a flexible approach should the RAF be expanded to cover all the focal areas of the GEF, and a strong collaboration between the Secretariat and the Agencies through the replenishment process for GEF-5.

16. Participants concluded the meeting by agreeing to meet again regularly to discuss strategic issues as they arise and keep the GEF partnership relevant and alive to the challenges of the global environment.

<p style="text-align: center;">PROPOSED AGENDA OF THE GEF RETREAT New York City, UN Millennium Hotel, Riverview Room (28th Floor East Side) October, 26 2008</p>
--

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 9:00 A.M. | Breakfast buffet |
| 9:15 A.M. | Welcome – Ad Melkert |
| 9:20 A.M. | Introduction – Monique Barbut |
| 9:30 A.M. | Vision for the GEF |
| 11:00 A.M. | <i>Coffee break</i> |
| 11:15 A.M. | Future Roles within the GEF partnership |
| 1:00 P.M. | <i>Lunch</i> |
| 2:00 P.M. | GEF-5 Replenishment |
| 3:45 P.M. | <i>Coffee break</i> |
| 4:00 P.M. | Follow-up to the retreat |
| 5:00 P.M. | Close of retreat |