

GEF/C.8/11
August 30, 1996

GEF Council
October 8 - 10, 1996

Agenda Item 11

REVIEW OF GEF VOLUNTARY FUND

RECOMMENDED DRAFT COUNCIL DECISION

The Council reviewed the experience with the GEF Voluntary Fund over the past twelve months described in Document GEF/C.8/11. Recognizing the valuable contribution to the work of the Council provided by the NGO Consultations, the Council agrees that the GEF administrative budget be used to finance the costs of two NGO consultations in connection with the regular Council meetings. The remaining funds, as well as additional contributions to, the Voluntary Fund should be used to finance the costs of GEF-related regional consultations to be convened in recipient countries.

INTRODUCTION

1. At its July 1995 meeting the Council approved the establishment of the GEF Voluntary Fund in accordance with the administrative arrangements described in document GEF/C.5/11. It specified that apart from the NGO consultations at the time of regular Council meetings, the Voluntary Fund's resources could be used for regional and/or subregional consultations. The Council also provided that the Voluntary Fund would be reviewed at the second regular Council Meeting in 1996.
2. Table 1 summarizes contributions and expenses as of August 31, 1996. It is followed by concluding remarks and recommendations.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXPENDITURES

TABLE 1: GEF VOLUNTARY FUND - STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

SEPT. 1, 1995 - AUG. 31, 1996

Contributions		Expenditures			
			Oct. 95	Apr. 96	Others
GEF Admin Budget	50,000	NGO Consultation			
Australia	10,000				
Australia	23,763	Travel	34,000	29,700	
Canada	5,000	Contractual Services (food)	1,139	1,346	
Denmark	10,000	Translation	3,600	3,600	
Norway	5,000	NGO participation in Regional CBD meetings (Central & Eastern Europe)			5,000
MacArthur Foundation	10,000				
Honoraria					
Mohamed El-Ashry	3,500				
San Frankhauser	700		38,739	34,646	5,000
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS	117,963	TOTAL EXPENDITURES		78,385	
FUND BALANCE AT THE END OF THE PERIOD				39,578	

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3. A large number of letters were sent by the CEO to governments, NGOs, and private foundations inviting them to contribute to the Voluntary Fund. In addition, a number of follow-up phone calls were made. Only four governments and one private foundation responded positively (see Table 1) and their contributions are truly appreciated. Their contributions enabled the GEF to convene the second NGO consultation in conjunction with the April 1996 Council Meeting.

4. It should be noted that a number of governments responded that, while they strongly support NGO consultations, they were unable to contribute additional funds beyond those used for the replenishment of the GEF.

5. Clearly, the effort made to raise such funds is time consuming, disproportionate to the amount needed, and sometimes embarrassing. At the same time, the NGO consultations have shown that they provide valuable inputs to the work of the Council, the Implementing Agencies, and the Secretariat. In addition, as Table 1 shows, the bulk of the consultations' costs support travel and subsistence of NGOs from recipient countries.

6. It is recommended that the GEF administrative budget be used to finance the costs of two NGO consultations in Washington per year. Remaining funds as well as additional contributions to the Voluntary Fund, would be used to finance the costs of GEF-related regional consultations to be convened in recipient countries.