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UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN (GEAP)

BACKGROUND ON THE GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN (GEAP)

1. The Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP) was approved at the 47th GEF Council in November 2014¹. Following this decision, the GEF Secretariat has taken a number of steps to implement the actions as agreed and outlined in the GEAP.
2. The GEF Secretariat shared the first Progress Report on the Implementation of the GEAP at the 48th GEF Council meeting in June 2015. The Council noted good progress and supported further implementation of the GEAP. The report noted that the GEF Secretariat should provide progress reports on the implementation of the GEAP on an annual basis. Considering the momentum and good progress that we have achieved during the past 4 months, we are providing a brief update on the implementation. The GEF Secretariat, in coordination with the GEF Agencies and other partners, has further advanced implementation of agreed actions for FY15, and started implementation of the FY16 activities in line with the GEAP work plan. This brief is not meant to be a comprehensive progress report (this will be done in June 2016 as planned), but rather a highlight of notable deliverables during the last 4 months.

Capacity Development

3. As part of the GEF Secretariat's commitment to enhance staff's capacity to facilitate the work on gender mainstreaming, the GEF Secretariat hired a gender expert in April 2015. The GEF Secretariat has moved forward with a number of key activities related to capacity development, including the following:
 - (a) **A Gender and Social Issues Workstream**, consisting of several GEF Secretariat staff with different expertise was launched in June 2015. The workstream will facilitate GEF's efforts to deliver on the commitments made under the policies, guidelines, and action plans related to gender, indigenous peoples, and other social issues, in close cooperation among the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies, relevant Conventions Secretariats, and other partners.
 - (b) **Gender Capacity Staff Assessment** was organized and concluded in August 2015. This exercise pointed to strong support across the Secretariat for gender mainstreaming, including a high level of motivation and importance placed by staff on gender and other social issues in relation to the GEF strategy and focal area work. It points to, among others, specific needs for training in the area of gender tools and methodologies, in addition to needs for tailored technical training for staff on gender issues related to GEF focal areas. The survey responses are being compiled and assessed, and the GEF management with support from the Gender and Social issues Workstream is in preparation of a concrete plan for internal capacity development on priority issues.

¹ GEF, Gender Equality Action Plan, GEF/C.47/09.Rev.01, October 2014

- (c) **Support to GEF Operational Focal Points and other partners:** The GEF Council stressed the need to also improve support to the GEF Operational Focal Points, Convention Focal Points, and other partners on the ground in implementing the GEAP. As an initial step, the GEF Secretariat has utilized existing mechanisms, including the Extended Constituency Workshops (ECWs) at the sub-regional level and National Dialogue Initiatives at the country level to introduce and raise awareness on the GEF policy and action plan on gender equality, and promote their application to GEF projects. In the last four months, the GEF Secretariat has conducted gender mainstreaming sessions as part of the ECWs (including in Africa, Central Asia, Europe, and Pacific regions) and updated the presentation materials on gender, which has helped improve communication and awareness raising.

Coordination

4. The GEF Inter-Agency Working Group on gender, now renamed as **GEF Gender Partnership**, is formally operational with active participation of all GEF Agencies, concerned Conventions' Secretariats, and other experts. The need to establish an Inter-Agency Working Group on gender was recognized as part of the development of the GEAP, and appreciated and supported by the GEF Council and partners.

- (a) **Regular Meetings:** The GEF Secretariat has organized and facilitated one face-to-face initial meeting at the margin of the GEF Council meeting in June 2015, and two virtual meetings during in July and August 2015, which representatives of several organizations formally formed the working group, including staff from each GEF Agency, relevant MEA Secretariats, as well as representatives from GEF Independent Evaluation Office, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Network, and the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group (IPAG). The group was renamed to the GEF Gender Partnership (GGP), in recognition of the need to broaden the scope and membership beyond the inter-agency so as to best leverage the wide range of skills and experiences on gender equality and women's empowerment from partner institutions and organizations, including gender focal points of other relevant CSOs, UN Agencies, and financial institutions (e.g. the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Climate Investment Fund (CIF)).
- (b) **Finalization of Terms of Reference and Workplan:** The GEF Secretariat facilitated the development of the formal Terms of Reference among the GGP members, which was adopted in July 2015. The members agreed that the main objective of the GGP is not only to implement the GEAP, but also to serve as a platform for iterative consultations, coordination and knowledge sharing to accelerate the GEF Secretariat's and the respective partner organizations' efforts to mainstream gender equality and empower women within the broader context of sustainable development. A detailed workplan of the GGP was also prepared and approved by GGP members in August 2015. Specific short term priorities include the following were agreed, and sub-working groups are being established

to help move these related but distinct areas of work in a collaborative and effective manner.

- (i) Develop a guideline document to mainstream gender in the GEF project cycle;
- (ii) Further develop and strengthen the Results Based Monitoring (RBM) framework for gender mainstreaming across the corporate and GEF focal area levels, including considerations of marker system, as part of the broader GEF RBM framework; and
- (iii) Improve the knowledge base and communication on gender as related to GEF strategy, programme and project portfolio, in line with the GEF Knowledge Management framework.

5. The GEF Secretariat has continued close communication and initiated meetings with other finance mechanisms, including the GCF and CIF to explore opportunities for greater collaboration and synergy in harmonizing approaches and reporting frameworks for gender equality mainstreaming and outcomes. The GEF Secretariat has also met and developed strong relationship with the newly designated gender experts of the Rio Conventions, including CBD, UNCCD, and UNFCCC, and actively supporting the renewed effort to harmonize gender mainstreaming efforts across the Conventions.

Gender Mainstreaming in Projects and Programmes

6. The GEAP has committed to strengthen mainstreaming gender in all programs and projects, while initially focusing its efforts on key programs and projects that could generate significant results for gender equality and women's empowerment to contribute to achieving the goals of global environmental benefits. With the updated project templates² that require to clearly state gender consideration and appropriate approaches, the GEF Secretariat's program staff are closely working with the GEF Agencies and partners to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment issues are adequately considered in all GEF projects. Further, the GEF gender expert is working closely on the Integrated Approach Pilots (IAPs) and key Programmatic Approaches (PAs) with the staff of the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies, and partners to ensure that gender dimensions are appropriately reflected in the development of the projects. As a result, each IAP and key PA will have a consolidated plan and relevant set of metrics for monitoring gender-specific outcomes.

² Project Information Form (PIF) and CEO Endorsement Request Form includes specific section to describe gender consideration and relevant approaches