
**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COUNCIL'S DISCUSSIONS
49TH GEF COUNCIL MEETING
OCTOBER 20 – 22, 2015, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

The following is a record prepared by the GEF Secretariat of comments, understandings, and clarifications made by Council Members. These points are supplemental to the Joint Summary of the Chairs, which records the decisions agreed by the Council.

Agenda Item 1 Opening of the Meeting

1. CEO and Chairperson of the GEF, Naoko Ishii, opened the 49th Council Meeting with remarks highlighting how environmental sustainability has moved to the center stage of global policy discussions. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) clearly recognize that the health of the global commons is essential in achieving development ambitions. The recent World Bank/ IMF Annual Meetings in Lima also paid significant attention to climate finance. As a catalyzer of climate actions, the GEF is now moving forward to showcase solid achievements at the upcoming Paris COP21. The CEO explained that the GEF Secretariat's internal reorganization is now largely complete and that it has strengthened the Secretariat's ability to deliver the GEF-6 strategies and priorities in a more effective and integrated manner.

Agenda Item 4 Relations with the Conventions and Other International Institutions

2. Richard Kinley, Deputy Executive Secretary, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), addressed the GEF Council on GEF's role in climate finance. In regard to the climate finance architecture, Kinley highlighted five ways in which the GEF can be most useful: (i) GEF should showcase its actions and success stories in climate finance to strengthen confidence between Parties; (ii) GEF should continue to support countries with the preparation and implementation of their intended nationally determined contributions (iNDCs) – noting that GEF has already supported one third of submitted iNDCs; (iii) GEF should strengthen its support for capacity building; (iv) building on GEF's existing support for technology transfer, in collaboration with the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN) and the UNFCCC technology mechanism, GEF should continue to ensure coherence; and (v) GEF should continue to serve the Convention on LDCF and the SCCF, as these funds have proven their effectiveness and capability to be deployed immediately and accessible in the most vulnerable countries.

3. Kinley thanked the GEF for its significant efforts towards ensuring complementarity in climate finance and stressed the critical role of the GEF towards the post-2020 period. The GEF Secretariat confirmed that the GEF continues to pursue complementarity vis-a-vis other climate funds, by piloting and innovating technology and business models and by serving multiple conventions through integrated and systemic approaches; and will continue to explore strategic discussion with the Green Climate Fund on, among others, project pipelines, policy and procedures harmonization, and capacity building.

Agenda Item 5 Report of the Chairperson of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP)

4. The Council welcomed STAP's report on black carbon, including its ongoing work on green chemistry, Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ), and socio-economic impacts of protected areas. The Council voiced support for STAP's contributions to the Integrated Approach Pilots (IAPs) and to integrating knowledge management (KM) at the project level. STAP updated the Council on its work on indicators for the IAPs and links to the SDGs, planning for resilience in complex socio-ecological systems, and efforts to advance an open-data policy for the GEF.

Agenda Item 6 Future Directions on Accreditation

5. Council Members appreciated the Council Document, stating that it served as a strong basis for discussion. Several Council Members emphasized that the Council's decision on accreditation should not be rushed and agreed with the paper's suggestion that more analysis was needed so that the Council could make a well-informed decision.

6. In terms of the GEF's business model, several Council Members emphasized that the Council should base its discussion on accreditation around a clearer view as to what type of partnership the GEF should be. There was broad agreement that further analysis was needed to help the Council identify whether there was a strong rationale for additional accreditations as well as to better understand the related risks and trade-offs for the GEF. The analysis should not merely concern itself with the number of Agencies and each Agency share of resources, but with information on how the current partnership is functioning.

7. Council Members offered several issues and questions for further analysis including: Gap Analysis: a mapping exercise should be conducted and the 2007 Council Document on Agency comparative advantage updated; Integrated Approaches: need to get a better understanding of which Agencies have the right attributes and skills for developing and implementing this type of programmatic approaches; Recipient Country Viewpoints and Needs: it would be important to get a better understanding of the viewpoints of recipient countries; Transaction Costs: whether and how the increasingly complex partnership is also increasing transaction costs for the partnership and the countries.

8. The IEO explained that it could start some early analytical work, for delivery at the June 2016 Council Meeting, that would provide information for additional analysis. It noted that the APR includes performance reviews of Agencies' completed projects and that the analytical elements needed for OPS-6 would be completed in 2017.

9. Several Council members emphasized the benefits of accrediting more national institutions, noting that this would be particularly important in countries with small allocations that often face difficulties in convincing international agencies to undertake projects in those countries.

10. Two constituencies in the Pacific region commented that their region was not sufficiently covered. They noted that a regional organization is working to build its capacity so that it will be in a position to apply for accreditation if the process is reopened.

11. Some Council Members emphasized that it would be important to monitor Agency performance on an on-going basis and that accreditation "should not be taken as a given."

Agenda Item 7 Semi-Annual Evaluation Report October 2015 and Management Response

15. The IEO presented its semi-annual evaluation report updating the Council on the status of its reorganization and on two recently completed evaluations – (i) a joint impact evaluation with UNDP on Agenda Item 9; and (ii) the Morocco Country Portfolio Evaluation. In addition, the IEO presented ongoing work, including evaluations to be completed by the next Council meeting such as the Annual Performance Report (which will focus on tracking tools in 2015 and gender in 2016), CSO Network Evaluation, Tajikistan Country Portfolio Evaluation, and the LDCF/SCCF Evaluation. The IEO is also continuing its work on updating the Monitoring and Evaluation policy. These and upcoming evaluations will form the basis for OPS-6.

Agenda Item 8 Knowledge Management Needs Assessment

18. The IEO presented results of the recent KM Needs Assessment which included high response rates to the survey conducted. It demonstrated overall satisfaction and use of evaluations, despite a limited dissemination strategy predominantly through the IEO website. The IEO also presented the knowledge needs expressed by different stakeholders which included distilling lessons from different evaluations, and providing insights into integrated approaches. The IEO presented methodologies and technologies for data availability and use, such as cloud computing and geospatial technologies.

17. The IEO committed to advancing their website platform as well as to working closer with

the GEF Secretariat and other partners through the implementation of the evaluations. The IEO will also further strengthen its dissemination practices, and will work closely with the UN and other international financial institutions on methodologies for evaluating the SDGs.

Agenda Item 9 Impact Evaluation of GEF Support to Protected Areas and Protected Area Systems

19. The IEO presented the recently completed Impact Evaluation of GEF Support to PAs and PA systems, undertaken jointly with UNDP IEO. The evaluation reported that GEF support has made a difference in slowing down forest cover loss and strengthening capacities, particularly in countries that received long-term GEF support directed towards government agencies at a national scale. Among the highlighted recommendations were the necessity of giving attention to (i) the risk of unequal distribution of the costs and benefits of GEF support to local communities, (ii) coordination with other sectors, especially those that do not directly deal with environmental issues, but affect the environmental outcomes that GEF seeks to impact, and (iii) streamlining the project monitoring and reporting requirements through the combined use of geospatial technologies, partnerships with national and global research institutions, and the use of globally meaningful and locally useful monitoring tools.

20. The Council thanked the IEO for a comprehensive and innovative evaluation, and adopted all five recommendations. Several Council members pointed out it is especially important to learn more about how broader adoption takes place from GEF's long and in-depth experience, and to track the sustainability of benefits resulting from GEF support. The Council requested that the results of the evaluation be widely disseminated, particularly to the countries, as one way to build political support for biodiversity conservation.

Agenda Item 10 Panel Discussion on the Amazon

21. Tom Lovejoy, an internationally renowned scientist, Amazon expert and former Chair of STAP, and Cristian Samper, Colombian native and CEO of the Wildlife Conservation Society, were invited to participate in a panel discussion on ecosystem management in the Amazon, in the light of the Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program presented to Council for approval. Dr. Lovejoy presented a video, *Flying Rivers*, featuring the role of the Amazon in the regional and global hydrological cycle, and emphasized the need to manage the Amazon, a global environment biome, as a single integrated ecosystem. He highlighted the importance of GEF support in bringing together Brazil, Colombia and Peru, which together encompass 83% of the Amazon, to collaborate on this strategic program. Dr. Samper presented a vision of the Amazon basin, highlighting the fact that 14% of the Amazon is a wetland system in which 33 million people live, their livelihoods inextricably linked to the watersheds and tributaries as well as the Amazon's rich biodiversity. He noted the importance of paying attention to three growing

threats: land use change, the effects of proposed dam constructions, and the impacts of climate change.

22. The Council thanked the GEF for convening the panel and for supporting the regional collaboration between Brazil, Colombia and Peru, highlighting the GEF's role at the forefront of fighting climate change and protecting biodiversity, and the positive effects the program can have on neighboring countries. Brazil and Colombia also highlighted the ongoing collaboration between them and Peru at the vice-ministerial, technical and diplomatic levels on this issue, which they hope to build on in the future.

Agenda Item 11 Annual Monitoring Review (AMR) FY15: Part I

23. The Council welcomed the AMR with its results-oriented approach. Several Council Members expressed their appreciation for the AMR's reporting on cumulative achievements of expected results of GEF-6 corporate targets and the fact that, at this stage of GEF-6, some of these projected targets are well under way.

24. Some Council Members, noting the variations between certain agencies with respect to the time elapsed between CEO endorsement and first disbursement of their respective project portfolio, requested more in-depth analysis for these variances be reflected in future AMRs.

25. Recognizing the increase in the stock of overdue projects, the Council requested the Secretariat work with agencies and countries to implement the GEF Project Cancellation Policy.

Agenda Item 12 Work Program

26. The Council welcomed the Work Program and noted the high demand for climate change mitigation projects in anticipation of UNFCCC COP21.

27. Regarding the Non-Grant Instrument (NGI), the Council was pleased that these projects are gaining traction and that there are more proposals being reviewed. Some Council members noted that NGIs should not only be offered to the private sector, but should also be available for the public sector.

28. On the Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program, the Council emphasized the importance of conducting consultations with local communities, including local CSO representatives and Indigenous Peoples' representatives. Some Council Members noted that this program should keep the door open for other countries who may want to join the program. The program may want to address issues of coordination and how lessons learned from other projects implemented in the area are taken into account. Some Council members noted that there should be a balance over time between Programmatic Approaches and single country projects.

Agenda Item 13 *Update on the Preparation of Integrated Approach Pilots (IAPs)*

29. Representatives of the Lead Agencies for each IAP briefed the Council on progress since approval of the Program Framework Documents (FPDs). The briefing covered, amongst others, engagement with countries to launch design of child projects, engagement with partners at different levels (regional/national), events and meetings organized to establish common frameworks and to foster coherence and consistency at program level, emerging challenges and opportunities unique to each IAP, and indicative timeline for delivery of child projects in accordance with program commitment deadlines.

30. The Council expressed support for the IAPs, and appreciation for the report and briefing. As requested by the Council, GEF Secretariat confirmed that a consolidated progress report covering the IAPs will be presented to the Council at each Council Meeting.

Agenda Item 15 *Report of the Selection and Review Committee*

31. The Council expressed congratulations to Naoko Ishii on her reappointment as CEO and Chairperson for a second four-year term. The Council expressed its recognition and appreciation for achievements accomplished so far and reaffirmed their support for the strategic directions for the coming years.

Agenda Item 14 *Other business*

32. The Council discussed the issue of child projects being circulated to the Council for review and requested a decision by mail that amends the Council decision on document GEF/C.47/07, *Improving the GEF Project Cycle*.

33. The Council confirmed the dates for the meeting to take place in May 2017. The Council requested that the Secretariat try to propose dates that would allow the period between meetings to be more balanced in order to provide sufficient time for preparation.