

60th GEF Council Meeting
June 14 - 18, 2021
Virtual Meeting

Agenda Item 17

**STRENGTHENING CONSULTATIONS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY:
PROPOSED TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION AT THE CONSULTATIONS PRIOR TO THE
61ST GEF COUNCIL MEETING**

Recommended Council Decision

The Council, having considered Document GEF/C.60/07, Strengthening Consultations with Civil Society: Proposed Topic for Discussion at the Consultations Prior to the 61st GEF Council Meeting, selects the following topic to be addressed as part of the Council Consultations with Civil Society: ***Engaging Young people in promoting GEF's mission: Youth-led solutions to the planet's environmental crisis***

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INTRODUCTION

1. In November of 2017, at its 53rd meeting, the Council approved an Updated Vision to Enhance Civil Society Engagement with the GEF (Updated Vision).¹ The Updated Vision includes a revised set of objectives and principles as an overall guide to engage with civil society. At an operational level, the document focuses, in particular, on certain key aspects that relate to the enhancement of this engagement during GEF Council meetings, guidance for civil society participation at the GEF Assembly, and the Country Support Programme.
2. Regarding participation of civil society in Council and Consultations, as per the Updated Vision, the Council will invite CSOs to present on specific topics during the Consultations with CSOs intended to highlight the experiences of local CSOs during project implementation while also seeking to align with the Council Meeting Agenda.
3. Further the Updated Vision states that “(t)o allow for adequate preparation, the GEF Council will select Consultation Meeting topics around 6 months (or one meeting) before each Consultation Meeting, as appropriate, recognizing that topics can be updated within the 6-month period in light of new circumstances and needs that may arise.”

SELECTED TOPICS IN PAST GEF CONSULTATIONS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

4. The following are the topics selected and addressed in past Consultations with Civil Society and IPLC²:
5. The first topic selected by Council, following the adoption of the Updated vision for the GEF Council Consultations with Civil Society Organizations on the day prior to the 55th GEF Council meeting (December 2018) was: *Connecting Environmental Impact and Gender Equality*.
6. Council selected: *Plastic Pollution: How Do We Tame This Menace? Solutions from Civil Society Organizations, Government, and the Private Sector* to be addressed at the GEF Consultations preceding the 56th Council meeting in June 2019,
7. For the GEF Consultations in December 2019 prior to the 57th Council, the topic selected was: *Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade: A Civil Society Perspective*.
8. The 58th GEF Council meeting was held virtually due to the COVID19 pandemic in June 2020 and the GEF Consultations with CSOs on the selected topic of the *Application of Traditional Knowledge by Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities, Stewards of the Global*

¹ GEF (Global Environment Facility). 2017. “Updated Vision to Enhance Civil Society Engagement with the GEF.” GEF/C.53/10/Rev.01, November 30. Agenda Item 08.53rd GEF Council Meeting, held in Washington, DC. Available at www.thegef.org/sites/default/files/council-meeting-documents/EN_GEF.C.53.10.Rev_.01_CS0_Vision_0.pdf.

² For more information about past consultations please see Council document GEF/C.59/Inf.08: [Progress Report on the Updated Vision to Enhance Civil Society Engagement with the GEF](#)

Environment was postponed to and conducted on December 4th, 2020 in connection with the 59th GEF Council.

9. For the 60th Council to be held in June 2021, the Council selected the topic of Enhancing Climate Resilience and the Role of Civil Society, Local Communities, and Indigenous Peoples and the GEF Secretariat is working with the GEF CSO Network, the Small Grants Programme (SGP) and the GEF Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group (IPAG) with active participation from the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) in the organization of those Consultations.

PROPOSED TOPIC FOR GEF CONSULTATIONS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY PRIOR TO THE 61ST COUNCIL MEETING

10. This paper proposes *Engaging the Youth in Promoting GEF's mission: Youth-led Advocacy and Solutions to the Planet's Environmental Crisis* for Council to consider as the topic to be addressed at the GEF Consultations with civil society preceding the 61st Council meeting in December 2021. The Council may select either this topic or any new topic of their preference to be discussed in these Consultations.

11. The proposed topic has been consulted and agreed with the GEF CSO Network and IPAG and focuses on a matter that is relevant to the future of the GEF and to the GEF-8 vision where the youth and youth-led civil society and indigenous peoples and local communities organizations can contribute with their views and expertise to the achievement of GEF-8's ambition and beyond.

Engaging young people in promoting GEF's mission: Youth-led advocacy and solutions to the planet's environmental crisis

12. The Youth (defined by the UN as persons between the ages of 15 and 24) constitute around 18% of the total world's population. Young people have been traditionally absent from decision-making, whereas most of those decisions will affect their lives for many years to come. Many young people around the world, and in developing countries in particular, confront great challenges and risks which disproportionately affect young women and girls, such as poor access to education, to water, healthcare or work, as well as conflict and forced migration. Rural youth in particular are also suffering the effects of climate change, floods, and other natural disasters. As stated by the UN Youth Strategy 2030 "the way in which the shifting demographics in the world are leveraged, and how young people navigate their transition into adulthood, are critical for the progress of humankind and the health of the planet."³

13. Understanding that the current state of the environment puts their future at stake, young people have decided to take an active role in advocating with governments, the private sector, and the public for urgent solutions to the environmental crisis. The global movement

³ United Nations, Youth 2030: Working with and for Young people. https://5d962978-9e17-4b96-91be-93983605fae8.filesusr.com/ugd/b1d674_9f63445fc59a41b6bb50cbd4f800922b.pdf

against climate change led by young activists in many countries around the world has been well publicized and covered by the media. In addition, there are other lesser-known efforts pioneered by young local leaders and indigenous youth advocates that have mobilized their peers and introduced positive changes in their own communities and which deserve equal attention.

14. The GEF engages a wide range of actors in all its operations: from the formulation of strategies, policies and guidelines to consultations and direct participation in project identification, design, execution and monitoring and evaluation. The GEF has increasingly strengthened the engagement of civil society, including indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLC), women and youth through the Country Support Program, the civil society forums at the GEF Assemblies, the biannual GEF Council meetings and the Pre-Council Consultations with civil society and IPLC. In recent years, the GEF Secretariat has made efforts to include youth organizations as one of the key actors in these activities and events.

15. During the GEF-6 and GEF-7 Expanded Constituency Workshops (ECW) of the Country Support Program (CSP), the GEF Secretariat conducted dedicated sessions to address engagement with civil society and IPLCs and engaged all participants (OFPs, CSOs, Agencies and others) in a dialogue to identify challenges and opportunities of stakeholder engagement in the GEF at the country, regional and global levels. During these ECWs, participants acknowledged the need for a more active engagement of the Youth and for the GEF to provide more opportunities to engage young people and youth-led organizations as agents of change in achieving the GEF's mission.

16. Therefore, it's proposed that the GEF Consultations with civil society and IPLC programmed for December 2021 prior to the 61st GEF Council meeting focus on engaging youth and addressing the role of young people as advocates, leaders and innovators in solutions to the environmental challenges that our planet faces. Thus, it's proposed that for those Consultations, the GEF invites young activists, indigenous youth representatives and youth-led groups (CSOs and CBOs, women and IPLC groups) to share experiences from around the world including environmental advocacy at the local, regional and global levels, and actions and innovative strategies to address climate change, biodiversity loss, chemical pollution and other environmental challenges. It is expected that these consultations can lay the groundwork and provide innovative ideas for a more comprehensive approach to engaging youth as a key stakeholder to achieve the GEF's mission.

CSO AND IPLC ENGAGEMENT PRIOR TO THE 62ND GEF COUNCIL MEETING

17. The 62nd GEF Council meeting is scheduled back to back with the 7th GEF Assembly the week of May 22nd, 2022 and will follow the conclusion of the GEF-8 Replenishment process. As it has been customary in past GEF Assemblies, the GEF Secretariat together with the CSO Network, SGP, IPAG and other partners will organize a Civil Society Forum to address topics of relevance for civil society in the context of the GEF's new cycle and beyond.