



Global Environment Facility

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CONCLUSIONS OF THE GEF HEADS OF AGENCIES MEETING

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March 11, 1999
Washington, D.C.

1. The meeting of the GEF Heads of Agencies was hosted by Mr. James D. Wolfensohn (President, The World Bank) on March 11, 1999, in Washington, D.C. Mr. James Gustave Speth (Administrator, UNDP), Mr. Klaus Topfer (Executive Director, UNEP), and Mr. Mohamed T. El-Ashry (Chairman/Chief Executive Officer, GEF) were in attendance.
2. The agenda for the meeting is attached. Emphasis was placed on: (i) interagency cooperation and collaboration, particularly at the country level; (ii) mainstreaming/ complementarity of the global environment and Implementing Agencies' own activities; and (iii) expanded opportunities for Executing Agencies.
3. The Chairman/CEO briefed the Heads of Agencies on the state of the GEF – its new replenishment, commitment of resources, First Assembly in New Delhi, and relations with the Conventions. The Heads of Agencies acknowledged that the new replenishment is a major accomplishment in a tight fiscal environment and welcomed it as a vote of confidence in the GEF. They noted with satisfaction the significant progress that has been made by the GEF since their last meeting in its operations, in its organization and management, and in its relations with the Conventions.
4. The Heads of Agencies underscored the central importance of interagency cooperation and collaboration. While pleased with progress so far, they agreed that there is a need for further strengthening of such cooperation and partnerships, particularly at the country level. In this regard:
 - a) They called on their field staff and Executive Coordinators to coordinate with one another at a very early stage in the development of project proposals and pipelines, and to simultaneously share such information with the Secretariat.
 - b) They agreed to expand their cooperation both on the GEF and on the broader environmental sustainability front in a few pilot countries (3-5), and to examine the results at next year's meeting.
 - c) Recognizing that the issues of land and water degradation are crucial to Africa's sustainable development, they agreed to develop a coordinated "action program" to address these issues through the GEF, the three agencies, and others. The World Bank agreed to take the lead in convening a meeting to elaborate such initiative.

5. There was considerable discussion on how the collective actions and projects of the GEF ultimately lead to a measurable impact in global environment improvement, particularly in the areas of biodiversity and climate change. They agreed that this calls for both “scaling up” and wide “replicability” of GEF efforts through larger cooperative projects as well as new partnerships, particularly with the private sector. They also supported the proposed “strategic partnerships” between their individual agencies and the GEF. These include renewable energy (with the Bank), global environmental assessments (with UNEP), and capacity building (with UNDP).

6. The Heads of Agencies reemphasized their commitment to mainstreaming the global environment in their own agencies’ agenda and to assuring complementarity between their agencies’ own efforts and the work of the GEF. The CEO welcomed the spirit of cooperation with the Secretariat as the agencies prepare their action plans for submission to Council later this month.

7. There was agreement that the transition to sustainable development and the protection of the global environment are issues for all people which call for broad-based, holistic actions across a wide range of national, regional, and international institutions. In this regard, the Heads of Agencies supported the efforts to expand opportunities for the four Regional Development Banks (African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and Inter-American Development Bank) in executing GEF projects along the line of agreements reached at the Interagency Consultation in London in early March which respect the basic institutional architecture of the GEF and to ensure accountability to Council for project preparation under the stewardship of the Implementing Agencies.