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GEF Council Meeting
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Washington, D.C.

Agenda Item 12

RELATIONS WITH THE CONVENTIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Recommended Council Decision

The Council, having considered document GEF/C.45/06, *Relations with the Conventions and Other International Institutions*, welcomed the report and requested the GEF network to continue to work with recipient countries to reflect the guidance and national priorities in their GEF programming and activities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This document provides the Council with an update on the activities of the GEF in relation to the following multilateral environmental conventions: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (the Stockholm Convention), and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (the Montreal Protocol). The document also provides information on relations between the GEF Secretariat and other international conventions and institutions.

Highlights reported include:

- (a) Updates on ratifications of various CBD protocols, submission of national reports, and the GEF Secretariat's participation in CBD related events;
- (b) A brief summary of progress on National Communications and Biennial Update Reports and GEF reports submitted to the UNFCCC and its subsidiary bodies. An update on developments concerning the Green Climate Fund. A description of UNFCCC related meetings attended and issues discussed;
- (c) A report of the GEF Secretariat's participation in the UNCCD COP11 in Namibia and other Convention-related events, as well as the status of the MOU between the Secretariat and UNCCD;
- (d) A report on the progress of international negotiations for a legally-binding instrument on Mercury (the Minamata Convention on Mercury);
- (e) A summary of decisions taken and projects approved by the Adaptation Fund Board at its 21st meeting;
- (f) A summary on the status of ratifications, submission of national reports of the Montreal Protocol and of the Stockholm Convention, as well as related events;
- (g) A brief report on the GEF Secretariat's participation in events of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), as well as in various meetings on international waters issues.

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INTRODUCTION

1. This document reports on developments of interest to the GEF, occurring since the 44th GEF Council meeting in June 2013 in the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (the Stockholm Convention), the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (the Montreal Protocol). The report also provides information on the GEF Secretariat's relations with other conventions and institutions.

CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (CBD)

Ratification

2. For the Nagoya – Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety: Luxembourg deposited its instrument of ratification on May 14, 2013; Mongolia deposited its instrument of ratification on May 21, 2013; Germany deposited its instrument of ratification on August 27, 2013; and Cambodia acceded to the Protocol on August 30, 2013.

3. For the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefits Sharing (ABS): Honduras ratified the Protocol on August 12, 2013.

4. During the reporting period, 92 Parties to the Convention have signed the Nagoya Protocol on ABS.

5. The list of signatories and ratifications can be found on the CBD website:
<http://www.cbd.int/abs/nagoya-protocol/signatories/>

National Reporting

6. As of September 2013, 177 countries submitted the final version of their fourth national reports for the CBD, and 5 have submitted a substantially advanced draft. The total number of submissions is 181.

7. As of September 2013, 150 Parties submitted their second national reports for the Cartagena Protocol.

Meetings and Events

8. The GEF Secretariat helped to organize, in close collaboration with the CBD Secretariat, a meeting of the Liaison Group of the Biodiversity-Related Conventions (BLG) on September 2-3, 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Swiss government provided financial and logistical support to the meeting, which focused on the relationship between members of the BLG and the GEF, including how to facilitate access to GEF funding by harnessing synergies among BLG members. This BLG meeting in Geneva responded to a decision previously taken at the informal meeting of the BLG, held on January 23, 2013 on the margins of IPBES-1 in Bonn, Germany. At

the informal meeting in Bonn, participants had noted that additional funding for activities of biodiversity-related conventions other than CBD may be obtained from the GEF, if the activities contribute to the achievement of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi targets. Participants had agreed that a joint approach by the conventions may facilitate such access to funding, and further work in this regard would be discussed at the next meeting of the BLG. The BLG meeting in Geneva also constituted a response to a request of the GEF Council for the GEF Secretariat to organize a meeting of Biodiversity-related conventions with the CBD Secretariat.

9. At the BLG meeting, the GEF Secretariat presented the latest draft of the GEF-6 programming directions, with emphasis on the draft biodiversity focal area strategy. In presenting the ten programs of this strategy, grouped under four objectives¹, the GEF Secretariat noted how they contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and its Aichi targets, as well as to the implementation of other biodiversity-related conventions. It was also noted that pertinent GEF support is not limited to the biodiversity focal area strategy as such, but includes contributions from the international waters and the land degradation focal area strategies, as well as from the sustainable forest management strategy. In addition, several of the proposed Signature Programs would also provide significant support, notably the ones on the Amazon basin, on commodities, on rebuilding global fisheries (“50 in 10”), and on sustainability and resilience for food security in sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, it was noted that considerable resources provided to support adaptation projects from the GEF benefit objectives of the Ramsar Convention.

10. During the BLG meeting, representatives of biodiversity-related conventions other than the CBD expressed their appreciation for the various entry points for accessing funds provided in the draft GEF-6 programming directions, and invited the GEF Secretariat to explicitly recognize, in future strategy drafts, the potential synergies with (and contributions to) the implementation of those other conventions. Participants also invited the GEF Secretariat to identify, in future drafts of the GEF-6 programming directions, the inclusive nature of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 as an entry point for highlighting the programmatic synergies among biodiversity-related conventions. This could also facilitate the inclusion of pertinent activities in revised National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs). In this regard, participants emphasized the importance of a well-coordinated national process to identify priority projects for GEF funding during GEF-6.

11. As an important element in establishing a closer working relationship with the GEF, participants of the BLG meeting noted that it could be useful to put arrangements in place to communicate pertinent recommendations of other biodiversity-related conventions to the GEF in a well-coordinated and effective manner. In this regard, the CBD Secretariat suggested possible arrangements going forward and participants agreed to further explore their feasibility with a

¹ Improve sustainability of protected area systems; reduce threats to biodiversity; sustainable use of biodiversity; and mainstream conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity into production sectors.

view to preparing a proposal for consideration by the Fifth meeting of the Working Group on Review of Implementation of the CBD (WGRI-5) and COP12.

Joint Activities

12. The GEF Secretariat continues to collaborate with the consulting firm contracted by the CBD Secretariat to conduct the 4th assessment of the effectiveness of the financial mechanism. As of September 2013, the GEF Secretariat has provided project data from the GEF project database and held one meeting with the firm.

13. Objective five of the GEF-5 biodiversity strategy is focused on providing support to countries to revise their NBSAP in order to respond to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. To date, 95% of GEF-eligible Parties have received support or are finalizing proposals to present to the GEF to revise their NBSAPs. The GEF will continue to focus on reaching 100% of countries prior to the end of GEF-5. Countries that are unable to present a proposal in GEF-5 due to extenuating circumstances will be able to do so in GEF-6.

UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Ratification

14. From June 2013 until September 2013 there were no additional countries becoming Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

National reporting/National Communications

15. The following is the total number of national communications submitted from non-Annex I Parties, as of September, 2013:

- (a) Initial national communications: 145
- (b) Second national communications: 91
- (c) Third national communications: 4
- (d) Fourth national communications: 1
- (e) Fifth national communications: 1

16. Full details of reports submitted are available on the UNFCCC website:

http://unfccc.int/national_reports/non-annex_i_natcom/submitted_natcom/items/653.php

Reporting to COP

17. On August 2, 2013, the GEF Secretariat officially submitted its report to the Nineteenth Conference of the Parties (COP19) to the UNFCCC. This report describes GEF's response to COP18 decisions and a summary of achievements of the GEF during the reporting period from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013. The report also contains the GEF responses to several conclusions of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation at its thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth sessions (SBI

37 and SBI 38, respectively). This report is available on the UNFCCC website:
<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/03.pdf>.

18. The GEF report to COP19 includes information on GEF's support for the preparation and/or implementation of Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs), highlighting projects in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Tunisia. More information on the GEF's support for NAMAs is available in the GEF report to COP19 officially submitted to the UNFCCC Secretariat.

19. The GEF Secretariat submitted its entry to the NAMA Registry prototype developed by the UNFCCC. This entry included information on support availability and access to the GEF resources. The UNFCCC Secretariat informed that by October 2013, the portal is expected to have public access.

20. Upon GEF Council approval, the GEF Secretariat will submit a report to the thirty-ninth session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI39), through the UNFCCC Secretariat on the status of National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (non-Annex I Parties). This report will also contain information on the resources which have been approved by the GEF for the preparation of biennial update reports (BURs) for non-Annex I Parties (See Table 1).

Table 1: Status of request for resources for Biennial Update Reports

Party	Agency	Date of Project Technical Clearance by GEF Secretariat (MM/DD/YYYY)	Date of Approval by GEF Council/GEF CEO (MM/DD/YYYY)
1. Bosnia-Herzegovina	UNDP	08/22/2013	in process
2. Costa Rica	UNDP	09/17/2013	in process
3. Ecuador	UNDP	07/22/2013	09/05/2013
4. El Salvador	UNDP	09/12/2013	in process
5. Jamaica	UNDP	07/22/2013	09/05/2013
6. Malaysia	UNDP	05/09/2013	09/05/2013
7. Namibia	UNDP	08/29/2013	in process
8. Paraguay	UNDP	07/29/2013	09/05/2013
9. Peru	UNDP	09/17/2013	in process

Party	Agency	Date of Project Technical Clearance by GEF Secretariat (MM/DD/YYYY)	Date of Approval by GEF Council/GEF CEO (MM/DD/YYYY)
10. Serbia	UNDP	09/17/2013	in process
11. Thailand	UNDP	05/13/2013	09/05/2013
12. Yemen	UNDP	07/22/2013	09/05/2013

21. The report to COP19 submitted by the GEF Secretariat to the UNFCCC Secretariat includes an annual update on the “Implementation of the Poznan Strategic Program and its Long Term implementation Program on Technology Transfer,” upon GEF Council approval. The report is available on the UNFCCC website:

<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2013/cop19/eng/03.pdf>

22. The GEF Secretariat submitted to the UNFCCC Secretariat an Addendum to its report to COP19, focused on the GEF consultation with the Climate Technology Center and Network.

Meetings and Events

23. During the reporting period, the GEF Secretariat participated in the following meetings:

- (a) The Asia and the Pacific regional workshop on promoting international collaboration to facilitate preparation, submission and implementation of NAMAs, held on August 13–15, 2013 in Singapore;
- (b) The Fifth Meeting of the Standing Committee on Finance, held on August 27–30, 2013 in Bonn, Germany;
- (c) The second meeting of the Advisory Board of the Climate Technology Centre and Network, held on September 9–11, 2013 in Bonn, Germany, and;
- (d) The Tenth Meeting of the Reconstituted Consultative Group of Experts held on 19-20 September, 2013 in Bonn, Germany.

24. The STAP member of the Adaptation team represented the GEF Secretariat at the Adaptation Committee workshop on the monitoring and evaluation of adaptation held on September 9–11, 2013 in Nadi, Fiji.

25. The GEF Secretariat will participate in UNFCCC COP19 to be held in Warsaw, Poland, between November 11 and December 22, 2013. GEF’s planned activities during the COP include the following side events: High Level Forum on Synergies for Global Environmental Benefits; Adaptation Practitioners Days, and; NAP, Challenges and Opportunities for Climate-Resilient Development.

Update on the Green Climate Fund (GCF)

26. The GEF Secretariat continued to support the Interim Secretariat of the GCF. In preparation for the fourth meeting of the GCF Board, held in June 2013 in Songdo, Republic of Korea, and the fifth meeting held in October 2013 in Paris, the GEF Secretariat provided substantial technical input towards a number of documents related to the business model framework of the Fund, particularly on access modalities, results-based management and resource allocation. The GEF Secretariat also continued to lead the work on readiness and preparatory support, including its support towards the organization of a workshop on readiness held in July 2013 in Barbados.

UN CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (UNCCD)

Ratification

27. From May 2013 until September 2013 there were no additional countries becoming Parties to the UNCCD.

Reporting

28. The GEF Secretariat successfully completed and received approval by Council for its report to the 11th Session of the Conference of Parties to the UNCCD (COP11) scheduled from September 16-27, 2013 in Windhoek, Namibia. This was the fourth report prepared by the GEF to the COP in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the UNCCD and the GEF. It was also the second time that the GEF reported since the GEF Instrument was amended to list the UNCCD among the Conventions for which the GEF serves as a financial mechanism. The report was submitted to the UNCCD Secretariat in July 2013, with translated versions in French and Spanish.

29. The report covered the period from July 2011 to June 2013, which coincided with the second and third full years of GEF-5. This period has seen major progress and achievements with respect to GEF's role in general as financial mechanism of the UNCCD, and more specifically in relation to GEF activities in the Land Degradation Focal Area (LDFA). With the LDFA portfolio having a significant number of projects covering a range of geographies, agro-ecologies, and thematic issues, the potential for achieving transformational impact through sustainable land management is now high for all affected regions. This presents a solid basis for the GEF and the UNCCD to strengthen collaboration for actions and innovations to more effectively monitor global environmental benefits and impacts at scale. This context also demands targeted investments to scale-up the achievements beyond project sites.

Decisions of COP

30. At the time of preparation of this report, the COP11 was still deliberating its decision on *Collaboration with the Global Environment Facility*. Details of the decision and the GEF's response will be included in the next report to Council on GEF and UNCCD relations.

Meetings and Events

31. During the reporting period, the GEF Secretariat participated in the following meetings:
- (a) National Action Program (NAP) Alignment Workshop for the Caribbean sub-Region – Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, August 13-15, 2013: This workshop was intended to help Caribbean countries toward meeting their obligation of aligning their NAPs to the UNCCD 10-Year Strategic Plan. The GEF Secretariat's participation was considered from two perspectives: first, to help clarify expectations of GEF financing for NAP alignment; and second, to understand emerging priorities in the sub-region for implementation of aligned NAPs during the period 2014-2018, which coincides with the Sixth GEF Replenishment Phase. The three-day workshop was hosted by the Environmental Management Authority, which serves as national focal point for the Convention, with 7 of the 15 countries in the sub-region represented. A separate session was dedicated to discussing the GEF financing for enabling activities and emerging opportunities to strengthen implementation of the Convention in the context of GEF-6.
 - (b) UNCCD COP11 – Windhoek, Namibia, September 16-27, 2013: The GEF Secretariat's delegation, headed by the CEO and Chairperson Dr. Naoko Ishii, included five staff from the Natural Resources team and one from the External Affairs team. The delegation organized several important sessions to facilitate dialogue and engagement with country Parties, including topics in the context of GEF-6 replenishment. In addition, consultative meetings were held with various recipient country delegations to provide feedback on the status of GEF-5 programming and opportunities for GEF-6. Highlights of GEF activities include the following:
 - (i) The CEO participated in the High Level Segment, in which she delivered a keynote address as part of round table 3 of the interactive dialogue sessions. The CEO called on countries to break silos and embrace systemic solutions in tackling the pressing global environmental issues in cooperation with other conventions. She reiterated GEF's unique role to bring about this cooperation and assured eligible countries of a strong GEF support in this endeavor. During the high level segment, the CEO also met with the Executive Secretary-designate Mme. Monique Barbut to congratulate her on the appointment and discuss future opportunities to strengthen cooperation between the GEF and the UNCCD.
 - (ii) The GEF delegation participated in the Plenary Session of the COP on Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). The open dialogue session was on the theme: "Resource mobilization to support the implementation of the UNCCD through building effective partnerships between national and international actors." The GEF Secretariat's contribution was focused on options for CSOs to harness resources of the GEF, which was well

received by the Parties. Many participants noted the progress made with respect to documentation, procedures, and communication.

- (iii) The GEF Secretariat and the GEF Agencies organize 12 side events to showcase achievements, share lessons, and discuss opportunities from investing in sustainable land management. A full-day was dedicated to sessions in the Rio Conventions Pavilion on the ongoing GEF-6 replenishment, which included presentations on the proposed strategies for the LDFA and the SFM/REDD-plus incentive mechanism. In addition, a session was held on the proposed program on “Fostering Sustainability and Resilience for Food Security in Africa,” with statement from the GEF CEO and a presentation from the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA).
 - (iv) The GEF Secretariat also participated in activities organized by the UNCCD Secretariat, including one on the Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal of the UNCCD, for which the GEF is exploring linkages to its own knowledge management strategy and activities. The GEF and UNCCD Secretariat also jointly supported a full-day session on Gender and Drylands in the Rio Conventions Pavilion, which attracted a very large audience.
 - (v) During contact deliberations, the GEF Secretariat’s delegation was on hand to provide clarifications and respond to questions on the GEF role and mandate as a financial mechanism of the UNCCD.
- (c) The 12th Session of the Committee on Review of Implementation of the Convention (CRIC-12) – Windhoek, Namibia, September 26-27, 2013: The GEF Secretariat presented its report to the COP during CRIC12, which was well received by the Parties. With respect to the GEF’s support to implementation, the following important milestones were highlighted:
- (i) During the period under reporting, the GEF invested US\$ 655 million in projects addressing Sustainable Land Management (SLM), leveraging US\$ 2.47 billion from other sources. The total GEF grant is the double of the amount in the previous report to COP, and was possible because of the progress being made by affected country Parties to harness GEF resources under other focal areas (biodiversity, climate chance, international waters, and the incentive mechanism for sustainable forest management) to combat land degradation with multiple benefits. The co-financing amount constitutes further evidence of the catalytic nature of the GEF financing for SLM.
 - (ii) In addition to focal area windows, many countries are also strengthening SLM investments through projects financed under Climate Change Adaptation funds hosted by the GEF. This includes \$181.2 million from

the Least Developed Countries Fund, \$56.8 million from the Special Climate Change Fund, and \$123.7 million from the Adaptation Fund. This is further evidence of the growing effort by affected country Parties to strengthen synergies with climate change.

- (iii) From the total US\$324 million allocated to countries for the Land Degradation Focal Area under the System for a Transparent Allocation of Resources, US\$245.8 million (76%) has been utilized to-date. Progress in utilizing the focal area allocation has exceeded 70% in all regions, with the Central and Eastern Europe region showing the highest at 80%, and Africa and Asia following at 76%. This could signal that full utilization of the country allocations will be achieved by the end of GEF-5, particularly for sustainable land management.
- (iv) A total of 65 countries in Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean have programmed LDFA resources for SLM, utilizing US\$126.7 million (63%) for 87 single-country projects. In addition, 101 out of 144 eligible countries have requested GEF resources for Enabling Activities amounting to \$8.49 million. 70% of this amount was targeted for alignment of National Action Programs with the UNCCD 10-Year Strategy and Action Plan, and 30% for Reporting and Review Process.

STOCKHOLM CONVENTION ON PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS

Ratification

32. From May 2013 until September 2013, no new countries have acceded or ratified the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. The status of ratifications can be retrieved on the Stockholm Convention website:

<http://chm.pops.int/Countries>StatusofRatifications/tabid/252/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

National reporting

33. Article 7 of the Stockholm Convention states that each Party shall develop and endeavor to carry out a plan for the implementation of its obligations under the Stockholm Convention, which needs to be transmitted to the Conference of the Parties within two years of the date on which this Convention enters into force. Article 7 also calls for a review and update of the plan on a periodic basis and in a manner specified by the Conference of the Parties. The National Implementation Plans (NIPs) submitted online can be retrieved on the Stockholm Convention website: <http://chm.pops.int/Implementation/NIPs/Overview/tabid/565/Default.aspx>. As of September 2013, 162 countries have submitted their initial NIPs to the Stockholm Convention Secretariat, and 16 countries have transmitted their second NIPs.

Meetings and events

34. At the invitation of the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the GEF Secretariat participated in the regional workshop to enhance synergies among the three conventions in the Arab region. In this workshop, which took place from in Nairobi, Kenya, on September 10-12, 2013, the GEF Secretariat presented the progress on the GEF Chemicals strategy for GEF-5 and the proposed draft Chemicals and Waste strategy for GEF-6.

Progress on Mercury Negotiations (the Minamata Convention on Mercury)

35. From June 2013 until September 2013, the GEF Secretariat had two teleconferences with the interim secretariat of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to prepare for the Diplomatic Conference on the Minamata Convention on Mercury. The two secretariats enhanced their coordination and cooperation through discussion of important issues, including draft resolutions on financial arrangements and initial guidelines for enabling activities and pre-ratification projects.

36. The Conference of Plenipotentiaries (Diplomatic Conference) on the Minamata Convention on Mercury will be held in Kumamoto and Minamata, Japan, on October 9-11, 2013. The Conference will be preceded by an open-ended intergovernmental preparatory meeting on October 7-8, 2013. At the Diplomatic Conference, the text of the Convention, which was agreed at the fifth Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC5) in January 2013, will be presented for adoption and opened for signature. The Conference will also discuss and adopt resolutions on arrangements in the interim period and financial arrangements.

37. In preparation for the Diplomatic Conference, the Informal Strategic Dialogue was held under the auspices of the Government of Sweden, in Stockholm, Sweden, on June 4-5, 2013. The GEF Secretariat attended the Dialogue and participated in the discussion on the financial mechanism under the Convention.

38. At the invitation of the Global Mercury Partnership, the GEF Secretariat attended the second global forum on artisanal and small scale gold mining in Lima, Peru, on 4-5 September, 2013, and participated in the discussions on financing the phase-out of mercury.

Other Events Related to Chemicals

39. The GEF Secretariat participated in the Fourth Latin America and Caribbean regional meeting on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, held in Mexico City, Mexico, on August 19-22, 2013.

40. In February 2013, the 27th Governing Council (decision 27/12) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) decided to adopt an integrated approach for financing chemicals and waste. The decision invites the GEF, in the context of the Sixth Replenishment process, to revise its focal area structure and strategy in order to address the agenda on chemicals and wastes, as well as to consider ways of further strengthening its relations with the conventions it serves as a financial mechanism.

41. At the invitation of UNEP, the GEF Secretariat attended the country-led meeting on Integrated Approach to Financing Sound Management of Chemicals and Wastes, held in Bangkok, Thailand, on August 27-30, 2013. At the meeting, the GEF Secretariat participated in the discussions and provided clarifications on chemicals activities that fall under the GEF mandate.

42. The GEF Secretariat participated in the Fourth Latin America and Caribbean regional meeting on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, held in Mexico City, Mexico, on August 19-22, 2013.

MONTREAL PROTOCOL ON SUBSTANCES THAT DEPLETE THE OZONE LAYER

Meetings and events

43. The GEF Secretariat participated in the 33rd Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol, held in Bangkok, Thailand, on June 24-28, 2013, and the 70th meeting of the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund which was held back-to-back with the OEWG.

INTERNATIONAL WATERS

44. The GEF Secretariat attended the Inter-sessional workshops of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group, held at the UN Headquarters in New York, on May 2-7, 2012. The objective was to improve the understanding of the issues and to clarify key questions as an input to the work of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group. In line with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the GEF-5 strategies of the International Waters and Biodiversity focal areas, the workshops focused on understanding measures such as area-based management tools and marine protected areas. It was noted that the GEF program on Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ) is still the only major initiative in the High Seas. During the meeting, countries and partners referred to different aspects of the GEF's program as sound examples to build on.

45. During the 67th meeting of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), August 18-22, 2012, the GEF Secretariat participated in the Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group **on Marine Biodiversity Beyond Areas of National Jurisdiction** to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction, and to consider a way towards the UNGA making a decision on biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction, including a possible "instrument".

46. The meeting was attended by over 250 representatives from governments, intergovernmental organizations (including Regional Fisheries Management Organizations), and Non-Governmental Organizations. The GEF Secretariat and its partners held several sessions regarding the status and evolution of the Sustainable Fisheries Management and Biodiversity Conservation in ABNJ Program and its four projects. The program promotes efficient and sustainable management of fisheries resources and biodiversity conservation in the ABNJ. In addition, it helps UN member states to better fulfill their obligations under UNCLOS, in

particular Articles 116 to 119 on conservation and management of the living resources of the high seas and other relevant articles. Participants expressed their appreciation of the program's focus and the technical issues it addresses.

47. The GEF Secretariat participated in the International Waters Science Conference held in Bangkok, Thailand, on September 24-26, 2012. The conference provided a forum to enhance the use of science and engage the science community in the GEF International Waters (IW) portfolio through knowledge synthesis and sharing. The aim of the conference was to improve the measurement and delivery of results, to inform the portfolio of new developments and emerging issues from relevant fields, and to help set the science-based agenda for the IW portfolio. The conference built on findings from the GEF-funded International Waters Science project and discussed the IW project's needs for targeted science-based inputs. It also highlighted science-based results and technological innovations achieved by the projects in the GEF IW portfolio over the past 20 years. The conference facilitated interactions between experts concerned with the science and management of different water body types² and provided inputs to the formulation of the GEF-6 International Waters strategy.

48. The GEF Secretariat participated in the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties (MOP6) to the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), in Rome, Italy, on November 28-30, 2012. Approximately 330 participants, representing Parties and non-Parties from the UNECE region and other parts of the world, as well as intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, attended MOP6. On November 30, 2012, the MOP adopted several decisions and a new program of work that marked a turning point in the globalization of the Convention.

49. The GEF Secretariat participated in the World Water Day celebrations and High Level Forum, held in The Hague, Netherlands, on March 22, 2013. World Water Day is held annually as a means to focus attention on the importance of freshwater resources and advocating for their sustainable management. The year 2013 marked a particularly relevant theme for the GEF as it celebrated the International Year of Water Cooperation.

50. The GEF Secretariat participated in the signing event of the Benguela Large marine Ecosystem Current Convention (BCC), in Benguela, Angola, on March 18, 2013. The signing marked the establishment of the first multi-lateral Commission in the world to be based on the Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) approach to ocean governance. The BCC thus becomes a permanent inter-governmental institution through which Angola, Namibia and South Africa will collaborate in promoting the long-term conservation, protection, rehabilitation, enhancement and sustainable use of the Benguela Current LME.

51. This event was preceded by the GEF-funded Fifth Regional Consultation on Groundwater Governance hosted by the Hague Institute for Global Justice in The Hague,

² River basins, lake basins, aquifer systems, large marine ecosystems (LMEs), coasts and open oceans.

Netherlands, on March 19-21, 2013. This consultation was funded through the GEF global project on Groundwater Governance: A Global Framework for Action. It also included a half-day roundtable on Public and Private Sector Cooperation titled: Working Hand in Hand for Groundwater Governance. The meeting was hosted by the UNESCO International Hydrological Programme (IHP), in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), under the patronage of the national Commission of UNESCO in the Netherlands, and the Netherlands' Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment. The meeting also had support from the UNESCO-WMO International Groundwater Resources Assessment Center (IGRAC). The next steps agreed are to develop a synthesis from all thematic papers and regional consultations and develop a global diagnostic report. This will form a basis for a process towards a global Vision and Framework for Action on Groundwater.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Adaptation Fund Board

52. The Adaptation Fund Board met once during the reporting period. The 21st meeting was held in Bonn, Germany, on July 3-4, 2013. The meeting was preceded by meetings of the Project and Programme Review Committee (PPRC) and the Ethics and Finance Committee (EFC) on July 1-2, 2013. The twenty-second meeting of the Board will be held on October 31- November 1, 2013, in Bonn, Germany, and will be reported upon to the 46th Council meeting.

Accreditation Decisions

53. At its 21st meeting, the Board accredited the second Regional Implementing Entity (RIE): the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS).

Project Approvals

54. This meeting was the first Board meeting in which proposals from National Implementing Entities (NIEs) outnumbered those from Multilateral Implementing Entities (MIEs). The Board endorsed two project concepts submitted by the South African NIE, the National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), and approved respective project formulation grants. A UNDP program document submitted on behalf of the Government of Mali with a budget of US\$ 8.5 million was found to meet technical criteria, but as funds were not available for new MIE projects it was placed in the pipeline. Thus, the pipeline had a total of eight technically cleared projects/programs. Following new funds received through generous contributions from the Government of Sweden and the Government of the Brussels-Capital Region of Belgium, the Board was able to approve inter-sessionally, on September 12, 2013, the first MIE program from the pipeline, thereby reducing it to seven projects. The approved program, implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Guatemala, is titled "Climate change resilient production landscapes and socio-economic networks advanced in Guatemala," and amounts to \$5.43 million.

Resources

55. The Board has approved 29 project/programs for funding to the end of the reporting period, amounting to \$190 million.

Other Decisions

56. The Board moved ahead on codifying environmental and social safeguards. While environmental and social considerations have already been a prominent theme in project review, the purpose is to strengthen and streamline their application. Based on the draft environmental and social safeguards policy, developed with the assistance of the Washington College of Law at American University, a public call for comments was opened. The Secretariat continued working for the 22nd meeting of the Board, on the environmental and social safeguards policy, on a proposal to operationalize it, and on options on how the accreditation process could be modified to ensure that the implementing entities have the ability to put the policy in practice.

57. The Adaptation Fund Board also requested the Fund's Secretariat to draft a readiness program for the national and regional implementing entities it accredits, and through which it channels climate adaptation funds. The readiness program will focus on activities and materials that will strengthen the institutional capacity of these entities to effectively design, propose, implement and evaluate climate adaptation projects and programs with a view to long-term sustainability. The Board was planned to consider this draft program at its 22nd meeting.

58. Following a process initiated by the Trustee (the World Bank) before the 20th meeting, the Board decided to approve anti-terrorism related amendments to the standard legal agreement. Following a proposal made by one of its members, the Board also discussed the need to ensure visibility of the Fund in all projects and programs it funds, deciding also to both encourage current projects to improve the Fund's visibility and consider inter-sessionally including language to the same effect in the standard legal agreement.

59. The Board approved a policy on project/program delays and extension procedures, and a plan to improve the Fund's results tracking system, both prepared by the Secretariat. In addition, the Board continued discussions on future evaluation arrangements of its still young project portfolio, and decided to request the Fund's Secretariat to prepare options in this regard for the March 2014 meeting. In the 21st meeting, the Board discussed a draft report to the Conference of Parties serving as the Meeting of Parties of the Kyoto Protocol (CMP). Following circulation of a revised version by the Secretariat, the Board approved the report inter-sessionally on August 7, 2013.

60. During the 21st meeting, the Board engaged in a dialogue with civil society organizations chaired by the independent Adaptation Fund NGO Network. The Network also organized back-to-back with the Board meeting a separate NGO conference on adaptation, with invited speakers from several NGOs based in developing countries as well as other organizations such as Transparency International and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI).

61. The 23rd meeting of the Board will take place in Bonn, Germany, on March 18-21, 2014.

Collaborative Partnership on Forests

62. The GEF Secretariat participated in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) meeting, held in Rome, Italy, in June 2-3, 2013. The CPF is a voluntary arrangement among 14 international organizations and secretariats with substantial programs on forests. One of the main objectives of the CPF is to support the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and its member countries. The CPF's mission is to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forest and strengthen long-term political commitment to this end. The CPF provides major inputs to the UNFF and other important international forest dialogues, including the conventions on climate change, biodiversity and desertification. It produces joint statements and papers on key forest issues on the international agenda. The statements can be found on the CPF website: <http://www.cpfweb.org/>