



# Global Environment Facility

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GEF Council  
May 9-11, 2000

## CONCLUSIONS OF THE GEF HEADS OF AGENCIES MEETING

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**March 9, 2000 – New York**

1. The meeting of the GEF Heads of Agencies was hosted by Mr. Mark Malloch-Brown (Administrator, UNDP) on March 9, 2000, in New York. Mr. James D. Wolfensohn (President, The World Bank), Mr. Klaus Topfer (Executive Director, UNEP), and Mr. Mohamed T. El-Ashry (Chairman/CEO, GEF) were in attendance (Mr. Topfer participated via video conferencing from Nairobi).
2. The agenda for the meeting is attached. Emphasis was placed on:
  - (i) stocktaking of previous meeting decisions;
  - (ii) driving for on-the-ground results; and
  - (iii) streamlining processing of projects and enhancing responsiveness to recipient countries.
3. The Chairman/CEO briefed the Heads of Agencies on the status of "effectiveness" of the last replenishment, arrears, and commitment of resources. The Heads of Agencies viewed the accomplishments of the GEF in such a short time with a great sense of satisfaction. They acknowledged the collective efforts of the staff of the Implementing Agencies and the Secretariat in this regard.
4. The Heads of Agencies signed a letter to Council Members recommending, after consultation with Council, that Mr. El-Ashry be reappointed as CEO/Chairman of the facility at the May Council meeting for a three-year term starting July 12, 2000.
5. The Heads of Agencies noted the good progress on the Strategic Partnerships that were entered into individually between the GEF and the three agencies last year and asked for regular updates at future meetings. It was agreed that the Strategic Partnerships also offer an opportunity for further collaboration between the Implementing Agencies. One example is in the area of renewable energy which is addressed in the strategic partnerships with UNEP and the World Bank. It was suggested that the dialogue between Uganda and the Bank on this issue provides an opportunity for such collaboration.
6. The Heads of Agencies welcomed the efforts towards interagency cooperation and collaboration at the country level as evidenced by the 11 joint projects or project concepts that have been prepared since last year's meeting. They called for further expansion of such efforts in the months ahead. In this regard, they also welcomed the opportunity for further collaboration presented by the "programmatic approach" for country assistance that is being developed by the GEF. There was strong support for the programmatic approach and the effort to integrate the GEF in country strategies and for the GEF to play a catalytic role in national programs of action.

7. While “pleased with the preamble, they were looking for tangible results” on the Africa land and water initiative. It was felt that some confusion has arisen regarding the thrust of the initiative as outlined in last year’s meeting minutes. It was clarified that the intent is for the action program to be that of the agencies and the GEF and not just the GEF with the agencies participating as Implementing Agencies. In other words, what is being called for is a coordinated effort that involves the agencies own contemplated activities with their own resources as well as GEF activities to be implemented by the three agencies. Staff are requested to urgently complete an action program at the meeting planned for Nairobi in May.

8. There was considerable discussion and full support for added emphasis on ensuring quality implementation of, and achievement of results from, GEF actions. Resources for these efforts should come from a combination of freeing up internal staff capacity (see #9 below) and additional resources for project supervision. The Heads of Agencies called on their staff to work closely with the Secretariat towards the timely completion and implementation of the system.

9. In addition, there was strong agreement on the need for further simplification and streamlining of project preparation and approval processes, as well as for enhanced responsiveness to recipient countries. Concerns raised by countries about delays and responsiveness of the Implementing Agencies, and by the Implementing Agencies about complexities introduced by the Secretariat staff, must be addressed head on. The CEO will chair a session at the planned retreat for “Driving for Results” in June where all administrative issues and procedures by the agencies (field and headquarters) and Secretariat should be candidly discussed and resolved in a timely manner.

10. It was also agreed that the GEF and its partners should expeditiously develop an electronic information and portfolio tracking system whereby all stakeholders can view the status of a proposal or a project from proposed concept to implementation. The meeting strongly recommends that the GEF Council at its May meeting approves the necessary funds to launch such a system based on a proposal to be prepared by the Secretariat in close collaboration with the Implementing Agencies, and taking in consideration on-going work such as under the GEF-UNEP Strategic Partnership.

11. The Heads of Agencies welcomed further efforts for expanded opportunities for executing agencies based on positive experience gained with the Regional Development Banks. They cautioned, however, that such expansions should not undermine the tripartite arrangement and partnership between the three Implementing Agencies and the GEF.

12. Under Other Business, information was exchanged on the “Millennium Assessment” where UNEP will act as the Implementing Agency, the Bank’s “Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund,” the upcoming “World Water Forum” in the Hague, and the next round of negotiations for a POPs Convention.



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## Agenda

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Heads of Agencies Meeting

March 9, 2000 - New York

Stocktaking: replenishment, arrears, commitment of resources, strategic partnerships

Progress on heads of Agencies earlier decisions:

Interagency cooperation at the country level

Africa land and water initiative

Drive for results: balancing project quality at entry with high quality implementation

Other business