

GEF Council consultations with Civil Society Organizations Meeting – 23 May 2011

IMF Headquarters 1, Washington DC

SUMMARY REPORT

A GEF Council-CSO consultation was organized on 23 May 2011 prior to the 40th GEF Council and was attended by more than 100 participants encompassing representatives from civil society, GEF Council members, GEF Agencies and GEF Secretariat. The highlights of the main discussions and panels are summarized below:

CSO Dialogue with Monique Barbut, GEF CEO

Moderator : Faizal Parish, Central Focal Point, GEF NGO Network

In her opening remarks and subsequent dialogue, Monique Barbut reiterated the important role of CSOs in GEF programme and implementation and the importance of the dialogue between the stakeholders. She welcomed the input from the IPs community and confirmed GEF's commitment to develop GEF's policy on IPs in a participatory manner within the next 12 months and. She highlighted GEF's new funding cycle and reforms to widen CSO's access to GEF resources with the possibility of the Council endorsing the broadening of GEF Agencies including the option for an NGOs to act as a future GEF Project Agency. On Environmental and Social Safeguards, she welcomed CSOs input in enhancing the policy but cautioned that flexibility should be maintained to enable new agencies to join the GEF family. In the dialogue, a range of constraints and challenges faced by GEF and the GEF NGO network in bringing together the diverse CSOs together via the GEF programme, projects and activities. She reiterated the Commitment of the GEF Secretariat to support the work of the Network and announced a grant of US\$50,000 to support the work of the network in enhancing the function of the network and outreach to civil society. She hoped that with the support from the GEF Secretariat the Network could enhance outreach and communication to members as well as other CSOs.

SESSION 1: ENHANCING CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION IN GEF

Panel 1 – GEF and Agency experience in engaging Indigenous Peoples

Moderator : Johnson Cerda, GEF NGO Network Indigenous Peoples Focal Point (IPFP) Americas

Panel: Yoko Watanabe, Focal point on Indigenous peoples, GEFSEC, Thomas Pesek, Liaison Officer, IFAD, Charles McNeill, Senior Environmental Manager, UNDP , Yibin Xiang, Programme Officer, CBD Secretariat, Carlos Perafan, Social Development Lead Specialist, IDB

In this panel, three GEF agencies and the CBD Secretariat shared their experience and lessons learned in dealing with empowering indigenous peoples and incorporating them into their programmes. They put forward several recommendations to GEF including aligning the policy with existing UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as well as the policies of various agencies developed over the past 10 years; to focus on programmatic/operational aspects of the policy, to ensure a budget for development and implementation of the policy and establish mechanisms to monitor implementation.

Panel 2 – Proposed options for inclusion in a GEF policy on indigenous peoples

Moderator : Herminia Minnie Degawan, Int. Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forests, Philippines/GEF NGO Network IPFP Asia.

Panel: **Gustavo Fonseca**, *Head of Natural Resources Team, GEFSEC*, **Onel Masardule**, *CIMA, Panama*, **Jennifer Rubis**, *International Alliance of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples of the Tropical Forest (IAITPTF)*, **Vital Bambanze**, *UN Expert mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous people (EMRIP)*.

In this panel, three representatives of indigenous Peoples raised the key issues, challenges and opportunities in relation to indigenous peoples that GEF should take into consideration in the development of the GEF's Policy on Indigenous Peoples. 10 essential elements were recommended for inclusion in the policy including Operationalization of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and other relevant international obligations and emerging instruments; recognition of rights to lands, territories and resources; full and effective participation of indigenous peoples, subject to their free, prior, informed consent; recognition of and respect for indigenous knowledge; recognition & respect of indigenous and traditional socio-political systems; inclusion of provisions for promoting the equitable sharing of benefits; full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in the work of the GEF; provisions for a grievance mechanism, monitoring and evaluation. A proposal was made for a consultation process to ensure effective engagement of IP groups. The GEFSEC representative emphasised the importance of a pragmatic process and IPs roles and input in developing the policy. He also mentioned that GEFSEC would work to secure financial resources to support the process.

SESSION 2: ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS

Panel 3 – Environmental and Social Safeguards

Moderator : **Gunter Mitlacher**, *German Forum on Environment and Development /RFP Europe*

Panel: **Ramesh Ramankutty**, *Head of Operations and Business Strategy, GEFSEC*, **Helen Tugendhat**, *Policy Manager, Forest Peoples Programme*, **Stephen Lintner**, *World Bank*, **Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim**, *Indigenous peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee (IPACC)*

The panel explored the value and effectiveness of the GEF's proposed environmental and social safeguards that will be applied to all existing GEF agencies as well as those that may be admitted through the proposed broadening of agencies. Options for further strengthening of the safeguards from the perspectives of CSOs, IPs, GEF agencies and GEF Sec were explored. From the CSOs' perspective, the draft policy was developed without sufficient prior study or proper consultation and key areas including monitoring of implementation and enforcement, grievance mechanism, social impact assessment need to be revisited. The proposed GEF Gender policy was discussed and supported.

SESSION 3: GEF AND CSOS' 20 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP

Panel 4 : CSO engagement and participation in GEF : Then and Now

Moderator : **Rex Horoi**, *Executive Director, The Foundation of the People of the South Pacific International (FPSI), Fiji/RFP Pacific*

Panel : **Faizal Parish**, *Central Focal Point, GEF NGO Network*, **Herve Lefevre**, *WWF-US*, **Ravi Sharma**, *Principal Officer, CBD Secretariat*, **Heidy Valle Opsina**, *Conservation Fellow, RARE Colombia*, **Danielius Pivorionas**, *GEFSEC*,

The panel discussed the history of CSO engagement and participation in GEF for the last 20 years from the perspective and views from CSOs and the GEF Secretariat as well as exploring visions and challenges for the future. The importance of engagement of civil society in the implementation of the CBD was reviewed and a case study on community based approaches to conservation was presented. The panel also explored ways to enhance the civil society role and engagement in GEF, including a call for updating and proper promotion of the GEF Public Involvement Policy. In terms of future vision it was hoped that Future GEF programmes would be more community-centred and emphasise the empowerment of communities as the stewards of the environment.

Closing

In his closing remarks, Faizal Parish, Central Focal Point of the GEF NGO Network highlighted the importance of the commitment of the GEF CEO to further strengthen the role of CSOs to work with GEF Secretariat and agencies and as well as develop a GEF Policy on Indigenous peoples for presentation to the GEF Council in Spring 2012. He pointed out that the discussion had showcased the variety of existing policies in GEF Agencies and under the CBD on Indigenous Peoples policies that can form a basis of GEF's own policy. The panel on Options for the IP policy as presented by Indigenous Peoples' representatives highlighted 10 key elements for inclusion in a GEF IP policy. He emphasised the need for a cautionary approach to the proposed Environmental and Social Safeguard Policy, and urged GEF to allow further consultation and refinement of the policy. He called for all to work together to enhance the engagement of civil society in the future development and implementation of GEF programmes.

