

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COUNCIL'S DISCUSSIONS
29TH LDCF/SCCF COUNCIL MEETING
DECEMBER 11, 2020, VIRTUAL MEETING

The following is a record prepared by the GEF Secretariat of comments and clarifications of key points made by Council Members. This record is supplemental to the Summary of the Chair, which records the decisions agreed upon by the Council.

Agenda Item 1 Opening of the Meeting

1. The 29th meeting of the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) Council was opened by Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chairperson. In his opening remarks, Mr. Rodriguez highlighted the critical importance of climate adaptation and resilience and underscored the role of LDCF and SCCF to deliver transformative outcomes.
2. The CEO also emphasized how the LDCF and SCCF are supporting multiple dimensions of resilience-building, particularly in the COVID context. He emphasized the LDCF and SCCF are continuing to focus on the systemic challenges and nature-based solutions; mobilize domestic finance; as well as test and scale-up innovative financing models. He also stressed the importance of engagement with the private sector. The CEO further highlighted how the current global context requires collaboration to ensure a recovery that is green and climate resilient, including in complementarity with the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund.
3. Mr. Rodriguez welcomed the Independent Evaluation Office's (IEO's) 2020 Program Evaluation of the LDCF, which confirmed the LDCF's relevance, comparative advantages, and ability to delivery results, in the evolving global climate finance architecture.
4. The CEO concluded by expressing his appreciation of all donors to the LDCF and SCCF.

Agenda Item 3: Work Program of the Least Developed Countries Fund

5. The Council welcomed and expressed its support for the proposed Work Program for the LDCF, commending efforts made by the GEF Secretariat and partners in support of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) during the pandemic. The Council also acknowledged efforts made towards considering impacts and opportunities regarding the COVID pandemic in the current Work Program. A few Council members further welcomed emphasis of this current Work

Program on African LDCs and acknowledged progress on the incorporation of gender issues into the projects.

6. The Council noted the good progress made by the LDCF and highlighted its importance, with potential to play an increased role in the climate finance architecture.

7. Several Council members expressed concern about the significant share of projects from UNDP. The GEF Secretariat noted the progress made in diversifying Agency involvement in the LDCF and SCCF during GEF-7 and reiterated its ongoing commitment to further diversify Agency distribution.

8. A few Council members noted their appreciation that 17 LDCs have already reached the current resource cap under the GEF-7 and encouraged GEF Secretariat to support all eligible countries in accessing the LDCF in this cycle.

9. Several Council members highlighted that lack of predictable long-term financing is undermining efficiency of the LDCF. Members who are currently providing financial support on a multi-year basis urged others to do the same.

10. Council members welcomed GEF Secretariat efforts to coordinate closely with the GCF on specific projects. The GEF CEO indicated the GEF and GCF are developing long-term strategy to further strengthen complementarity among the Funds and will update the council on progress. The CEO also mentioned the active and strategic engagement with the Adaptation Fund.

11. Several Council members welcomed inclusion of the decision text on UNDP projects added to the GEF Work Program to also be included as a part of the LDCF Work Program decision.

Agenda Item 4: Annual Monitoring Review of the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund

12. The Council welcomed the Annual Monitoring Review. Several members expressed satisfaction with the ratings of the projects in the portfolio, conveyed appreciation for the geographic distribution of LDCs supported, and requested the Secretariat to work towards more projects gaining a highly satisfactory rating. The Secretariat welcomed the reactions and conveyed it will continue work with partners to strengthen the impacts of LDCF projects.

13. The Council conveyed appreciation for the advances made to strengthen gender considerations in the LDCF portfolio and encouraged continued strengthening of gender integration. The Secretariat indicated it will continue to brief the Council about the progress made on gender integration.

14. Several Council members highlighted the importance of strengthening private sector engagement in the LDCF and SCCF. A Council member conveyed appreciation for the progress

being made by the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation and the importance of blended finance for adaptation.

15. A Council member noted that although all SIDS are highly vulnerable to climate change, many are not eligible for LDCF, and suggested that more SCCF funding be committed to support non-LDC SIDS.

16. Council members also emphasized the need for LDCF to set targets for adaptation impact, as well as more actively communicate the impacts of LDCF projects. The Secretariat shared that due to the voluntary nature and uncertainty and unpredictability associated with LDCF and SCCF funding, it is difficult to set an impact target, and it will continue to consistently update the Council on results.

Agenda Item 5 Progress Report of the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund

17. The Council conveyed appreciation for the progress being made by the LDCF and SCCF. In doing so, several Council members highlighted the importance of the GEF Secretariat and countries further enhancing the visibility of these Funds and their achievements.

Agenda Item 6 2020 Update: Program Evaluation of the Least Developed Countries Fund

18. The Council welcomed the LDCF Evaluation Report, took note the findings, and adopted recommendations and management responses.

19. A Council member expressed concern about low gender rating in the Terminal Evaluation Reports. The GEF Secretariat explained that projects considered during the timeframe of this evaluation were approved prior to adoption of Gender Equality Policy. Another Council member inquired about the criteria for gender mainstreaming rating in GEF-8, to which the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) responded that new criteria will be developed and used.

20. A Council member noted the progress of the LDCF as reflected in the report and urged GEF Secretariat to continue to address the challenges that have been highlighted in previous LDCF program evaluations. GEF Secretariat thanked the Council for introducing new operational improvement for efficiency gains under programming strategy under GEF-7.

Agenda Item 7 New Contribution Announcement

21. The Ambassador of Belgium to the United States of America addressed the Council and announced Belgium's new pledge to the LDCF of an additional EUR 20 million over next four years. Council members representing the governments of Finland, Qatar and Switzerland made statements expressing their support for the critical work of the LDCF and conveyed new pledges to the LDCF. Cumulatively, the new pledges announced during this Council meeting totaled \$33.93 million.

Agenda Item 8 Other Business

22. One Council member recommended creation of a project to support Civil Society Organizations engage with other stakeholders in ensuring baselines are defined, targets are set, and progress is evaluated through participatory approaches on sex disaggregated information baseline, climate risks and other strategic issues.