



# Global Environment Facility

May 10, 1999

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## **JOINT SUMMARY OF THE CHAIRS GEF COUNCIL MEETING MAY 5-7, 1999**

### **OPENING OF THE MEETING**

1. The meeting was opened by Mohamed T. El-Ashry, Chief Executive Officer/Chairperson of the Facility.

### **ELECTION OF A CHAIRPERSON**

2. The Council elected Inaamul Haque, the Member representing the constituency of Afghanistan, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan and Yemen, as its elected Chairperson.

### **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

3. The Council adopted the provisional agenda set forth in document GEF/C.13/1/Rev.1. The Council agreed that under the agenda item "Other business" it would discuss information papers concerning the private sector, the 1998 Project Performance Report and the Progress Report on actions to implement the recommendations of the Study of GEF's Overall Performance and the policy recommendations of the second replenishment.

### **STATEMENTS ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

4. Statements were made to the Council by Mr. Michael Zammit Cutajar, Executive Secretary, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and Mr. Hamdallah Zedan, Acting Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity. Messrs. Zammit Cutajar and Zedan responded to questions from Members. Mr. Hama Arba Diallo, Executive Secretary, Convention to Combat Desertification, also addressed the Council and responded to questions from Members.

### **STATEMENT BY THE CHAIR OF STAP**

5. The Chair of STAP, Dr. Madhav Gadgil, reported on STAP's work program including STAP's efforts to mobilize the scientific and technical community particularly in developing

countries, and its work concerning land degradation, global taxonomy, persistent organic pollutants, indicators, targeted research and the roster of experts.

## DECISIONS OF THE COUNCIL

6. The Council approved the following decisions:

*Decision on Agenda Item 6 Expanded opportunities for executing agencies*

7. The Council reviewed document GEF/C.13/3, *Expanded Opportunities for Executing Agencies*. The Council notes the efforts being made to expand opportunities for Regional Development Banks and considers the proposals contained in the document as an important step forward. The Council approves the proposed approach for the participation of Regional Development Banks in preparing and executing GEF projects and their access to PDF-B resources. The Council urges the Implementing Agencies to make a greater effort to diversify and cooperate with a wider range of executing agencies, including in the implementation of the strategic partnerships. The Council requests the Secretariat to provide a report on progress made at its May/June 2000 meeting.

*Decision on Agenda Item 7 Implementing Agencies' action plans for integrating global environmental objectives*

8. The Council took note with appreciation of the document, *Integrating GEF-related Global Environmental Objectives into UNDP Managed Programmes and Operations: An Action Plan* (document GEF/C.13/4) and welcomes the strategic commitments made by UNDP to mainstream global environmental issues throughout UNDP-managed programs and operations. The Council requests UNDP to take into account the comments made at this session and to report to it annually on progress made in its efforts to fulfill these commitments.

9. The Council took note with appreciation of the *Action Plan on Complementarity between the Activities undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme under the GEF and its programme of work* (document GEF/C.13/5). The Council welcomes recognition of the three elements that would best contribute to promoting complementarity between UNEP's regular program of work and its role in the GEF: additionality, synergy and integration. The Council invites UNEP to continue its efforts to strengthen its partnerships with the GEF Secretariat and other Implementing Agencies, based on its comparative advantage. The Council requests UNEP to report to it annually on progress made in its efforts to strengthen the complementarity of UNEP's regular program of work with its activities under the GEF.

10. The Council took note with appreciation of the document, *World Bank Environment Strategy and Mainstreaming the Global Environment: Status Report* (document GEF/C.13/6). The Council welcomes the Bank's efforts to develop a comprehensive environmental strategy that includes global dimensions. The Council requests the World Bank to present to its next meeting the draft environment strategy paper as well as a summary setting out specific elements

that will have a direct bearing on integrating global environment concerns into Bank policies and programs.

*Decision on Agenda Item 8 Incremental costs*

11. The Council reviewed document GEF/C.13/7, *Note on Incremental Costs*, and approves the steps proposed to be undertaken to make the process of determining incremental costs more transparent and its application more pragmatic. The Council requests the Secretariat to keep it informed of progress made in completing the proposed activities and to identify specific actions to be implemented.

*Decision on Agenda Item 9 Work program*

12. The Council reviewed the proposed work program submitted to Council in document GEF/C.13/8 and approves it subject to comments made during the Council meeting and additional comments that may be submitted to the Secretariat by May 28, 1999.<sup>1</sup>

13. The Council finds that, with the exception of:

- (a) Bolivia: Sustainability of the National System of Protected Areas;
- (b) Ethiopia: Conservation and Sustainable Use of Medicinal Plants;
- (c) Malawi: Barrier Removal to Malawi Renewable Energy;
- (d) Malaysia: Conservation and Sustainable Use of Tropical Peat Swamp; Forest and Associated Wetland Ecosystems;
- (e) Mekong River Basin Water Utilization Program; and
- (f) Morocco: Solar-based Thermal Plant;

each project presented to it as part of the work program (i) is or would be consistent with the Instrument and GEF policies and procedures and (ii) may be endorsed by the CEO for final approval by the Implementing Agency, provided that the CEO circulates to the Council Members for information, prior to endorsement, draft final project documents fully incorporating the Council's comments on the work program accompanied by a satisfactory explanation by the CEO of how such comments and comments of the STAP reviewer have been addressed and a confirmation by the CEO that the project continues to be consistent with the Instrument and GEF policies and procedures.

14. With respect to the projects listed in paragraph 13 above, Council requests the Secretariat to arrange for Council Members to receive project documents and within four weeks transmit to the CEO any concerns they may have prior to the CEO endorsing a project document for final approval by the Implementing Agency. Such projects may be reviewed at a further Council meeting at the request of at least four Council Members.

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<sup>1</sup> In introducing the work program, the CEO noted that the project proposal entitled, *Regional: Reversing Degradation Trends in the South China Sea* had been withdrawn from consideration at the Council meeting, making the proposed total GEF allocation for the work program US\$ 219.23 million.

*Decision on Agenda Item 10 Strategic partnerships with GEF Implementing Agencies*

15. The Council, having reviewed document GEF/C.13/9, *Strategic Partnerships with Implementing Agencies*, supports the efforts of the Implementing Agencies and the Secretariat to design strategic partnerships that advance GEF objectives by building on the comparative advantages of each Implementing Agency and on their commitments to integrate global environmental activities in their regular work programs.
16. The Council takes note of the efforts made by UNDP to implement and promote the Small Grants Programme and welcomes a discussion at the next Council meeting when a request for replenishment would be made.
17. The Council supports the development of a Capacity Building Initiative with UNDP and the development of a partnership with UNEP on mobilizing the scientific and technical community, and approves resources up to the budget envelope under special initiatives in the Corporate Budget for these activities. Terms of reference, work programs, and task budgets of specific proposals under each of these partnerships will be circulated to Council for approval on a no objection basis. Recognizing the complementarity between GEF's and UNDP's efforts in capacity building, the Council requests UNDP to provide matching resources towards the strategic partnership.
18. The Council welcomes the efforts to develop a renewable energy partnership with the World Bank, and invites, at its next Council meeting, proposals on a pilot phase basis for country-driven renewable energy programs that build fully on current mainstreaming efforts in the Bank . The Bank is requested to mobilize co-financing for these proposals exceeding historic norms for climate change investment projects.
19. The Council welcomes the inter-agency partnership on land and water degradation and looks forward to progress.

*Decision on Agenda Item 11 Corporate budget for FY00 and proposal for a fee-based system*

*Proposal for a Fee-Based System for Funding GEF Project Implementation*

20. The Council having reviewed document GEF/C.13/11, *Proposal for a Fee-Based System for Funding GEF Project Implementation*, approves the application of a fee-based system to determine Implementing Agencies' fees with respect to GEF projects, subject to the comments made by the Council. While recognizing the importance of initiating a fee based system in order to gain experience which will allow the GEF to promote efficiency and implement cost savings, the Council requests the Secretariat, in consultation with the Implementing Agencies, to:

- (a) enhance the fee structure by identifying and defining common project variables and their respective impacts upon project implementation costs

in order to establish standard fee premiums and discounts that would be applied to the referenced flat-fee;

- (b) prepare fee benchmarking and financial management reviews of the Implementing Agencies' costs;
- (c) organize an independent audit of selected projects;
- (d) exchange best practices in project-implementation funding; and
- (e) develop with the Trustee guidelines for a phased disbursement, based on planned resource requirements, of up to \$70.78 million to the Implementing Agencies, representing the outstanding implementation and supervision costs of the agencies' portfolios of GEF projects approved by the Council through June 1999,

21. The Council also requested the Secretariat to report on the first-year of operation of the fee-based system and on the outcome of the above actions at its first meeting in 2000. The Secretariat is also requested to propose preliminary performance indicators to identify clearly the relationship between project delivery performance and project grant/fee expenditures in order to facilitate fiduciary oversight of project costs.

#### *GEF Corporate Budget FY00*

22. The Council reviewed document GEF/C.13/10, *GEF Corporate Budget FY00*, and approves the proposed FY00 corporate budget of \$22.235 million, comprising:

- (a) an amount of \$17.666 million for the operational resource requirements of the six GEF organizational units (the three Implementing Agency coordination units, the GEF Secretariat; the Trustee and the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel) in the provision of corporate management services; and
- (b) an amount of \$4.569 million to support the implementation of the proposed strategic partnerships and special initiatives for strengthening country ownership of GEF projects and greater outreach and communications.

23. In approving the proposed corporate budget, Council requested that GEF Secretariat, in presenting future years' corporate budget proposals, to provide (i) more detailed analyses to substantiate the requested GEF corporate management budgets; and (ii) comparative budget data and statistics from previous fiscal year's budget for review purposes. Also, Council recognized that, as from FY00, budget management enhancements should enable and support continuing monitoring of budgets and expenditures by cost categories and standard corporate management activities among the Implementing Agencies and across fiscal years.

*Decision on Agenda Item 12 Relations with conventions, including the  
Intergovernmental Negotiation Committee  
concerning certain organic pollutants*

24. The Council, having reviewed document GEF/C.13/12, *Relations with Conventions*, takes note of the developments of relevance to the GEF within the various international global agreements, and encourages the Secretariat and the Implementing Agencies to continue their collaboration with the Parties to the Conventions and the Convention Secretariats. In particular, the Council welcomes the progress made by the Secretariat and the Implementing Agencies to operationalize the guidance approved by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity as well as the guidance adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Council encourages recipient countries, the Implementing Agencies and the GEF Secretariat to continue their efforts to develop country-driven projects consistent with the policies and program priorities identified in such guidance.

25. The Council welcomes the proposed initiative of the GEF Secretariat and UNDP, in collaboration with the other Implementing Agencies, the Convention Secretariats and STAP, to enter into a strategic partnership to assess capacity building needs, including those relating to land degradation and desertification, in a comprehensive and targeted fashion and requests the GEF Secretariat and UNDP to report to it regularly on the progress being made under this initiative.

26. Pending the results of this initiative, the Council authorizes the CEO to approve revisions to enabling activity projects to allow recipient countries to address immediate capacity building priorities consistent with the guidance of the conventions. GEF financing for enabling activities through expedited procedures, including revisions to initial projects, should not exceed US\$450,000 per country. The Secretariat, in cooperation with the Implementing Agencies and in consultation with the relevant Convention Secretariat, is requested to develop financing norms for such additional activities.

27. The Council requests the GEF Secretariat to submit to the next Council meeting the paper that it is preparing in consultation with the Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification on defining better the linkages between land degradation, particularly desertification and deforestation, and the GEF focal areas.

28. The Council further requests the CEO to continue to observe the negotiations for an international legally binding instrument for implementing international action on certain organic pollutants and to advise the Council as to developments in the negotiations and their relevance to the mandate of the GEF.

*Decision on Agenda Item 13 Constituencies and assistance for country level  
coordination*

29. The Council, having reviewed the document GEF/C.13/13, *Constituencies and Assistance for Country Level Coordination*, approves the proposal to amend the rules of procedure for the

Council together with the proposed activities to strengthen country level coordination, subject to the comments made by the Council. Specifically, the Council:

- (a) agrees to amend the *Rules of Procedure for the GEF Council* by approving the annex proposed in the document to clarify matters related to the appointment/reappointment of Council Members and Alternates by a constituency and changes in constituency groupings; and
- (b) approves the proposed activities and associated financial resources to strengthen country level coordination and requests the GEF Secretariat to reach agreement as early as possible with the Implementing Agencies on the modalities for providing support to the national focal points and the Council Members as described in the document. The GEF Secretariat in cooperation with the Implementing Agencies are requested to report annually to the Council on the use of the resources provided for this purpose.

*Decision on Agenda Item 14 Elements of an Operational Program on Carbon Sequestration*

30. The Council reviewed document GEF/C.13/14, *Elements of an Operational Program on Carbon Sequestration*, and approves the elements as a basis for preparing an operational program, subject to the comments made during the Council meeting and written comments to be submitted to the Secretariat by June 7, 1999 and on the understanding that this program will be fully consistent with the guidance provided by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Council requests the Secretariat to conduct further consultations on the development of the operational program with concerned partners and stakeholders, including the Implementing Agencies, STAP and the Secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention to Combat Desertification prior to the circulation of a draft program to Council Members for comments.

*Decision on Agenda Item 15 Other business*

31. Having reviewed the information documents, *Actions to Implement the Recommendations of the Study of GEF's Overall Performance* and the *1998 Project Performance Report*, the Council requests that an annual discussion of the Project Performance Report, the recommendations of the *Study of GEF's Overall Performance* and the policy recommendations of the second replenishment be included in its agenda. The Council also recommends that the findings of the GEF evaluation reports and reviews be disseminated to the meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to the Conventions.

32. The Council also stresses the need for project quality both at entry into the work program and in implementation. The Council endorses actions by the monitoring and evaluation team to expedite the formulation of more precise monitoring and evaluation guidelines. This will entail working more closely with the monitoring and evaluation units of the Implementing Agencies to

ascertain that: (a) there is consistency on adequate monitoring and evaluation plans in all projects; (b) that all projects upon completion have terminal evaluation reports; and (c) that the terminal evaluations are made public. The monitoring and evaluation unit is requested to include information on its efforts in this regard in its reporting to the Council.

33. The Council welcomes the document on *Engaging the Private Sector in GEF Activities* and requests the Secretariat and the Implementing Agencies to proceed in preparing projects that incorporate the approaches described in the document. The Secretariat is requested to keep the Council informed of progress made in collaborating with the private sector.

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF COUNCIL'S DISCUSSION**

34. The following explanations and clarifications were made during the Council's discussion of its agenda items and related decisions.

#### *Agenda Item 3*

#### *Adoption of the Agenda*

35. The Council agreed that at future meetings the agenda should include an item for substantive discussion on monitoring and evaluation in the GEF.

#### *Agenda Item 6*

#### *Expanded opportunities for executing agencies*

36. The Council welcomed the initiative to expand the opportunities for the four regional development banks to execute GEF projects and expressed its interest, after gaining experience in these efforts, to explore expanding such opportunities to other potential executing agencies, including NGOs.

37. In developing projects with the regional development banks, the Implementing Agencies should seek to minimize transaction costs.

38. In reporting to the Council on progress made at its first meeting in 2000, the Secretariat is requested to also include information on transaction costs and any barriers that may be encountered in carrying out the steps described in the paper.

#### *Agenda Item 7*

#### *Implementing Agencies action plans for integrating global environmental activities*

39. The Council welcomed the progress that had been made by all the agencies in advancing the integration of global environmental activities into their regular programs and activities as reflected in the comprehensive papers that were presented. The Council noted its interest in receiving periodical reports on the progress being made in implementing the commitments outlined in the papers.

40. The Council expressed its appreciation for the quality of the UNEP document which helps to clarify UNEP's niche within the GEF family, and it commended UNEP for the comprehensive process of consultations that it had followed in preparing the report.



41. Several Council Members expressed concern over the level of co-financing and the long time frames proposed by UNDP for integrating global environmental concerns into its country assistance programs. UNDP was called upon to seek consensus within the organization on fulfilling its proposed commitments.

42. The Council took note of the work being undertaken by the World Bank to prepare a comprehensive environmental strategy. Several Council Members indicated that their general support of the document prepared by the World Bank should not be construed as an endorsement of all the activities described in the document.

*Agenda Item 8*

*Incremental costs*

43. The Council welcomed the progress that is being made in simplifying the application of the concept of incremental costs and requested the Secretariat to work towards real, measurable progress in this area.

*Agenda Item 9*

*Work Program*

44. The Council expressed its disappointment at the lack of projects addressing the cross-cutting issue of land degradation in the current work program and urged the Implementing Agencies to accelerate preparation of land degradation projects and their inclusion in future work programs. In this regard, the Council welcomed the strategic partnership for interagency collaboration on land and freshwater degradation in Africa.

45. The Council confirmed its request that the Secretariat, in consultation with the Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, prepare for Council review at its meeting in December 1999 a paper defining the linkages between land degradation and the GEF focal areas. The Council also requested that the Secretariat, in consultation with the Implementing Agencies and the CCD Secretariat, to prepare for the next Council meeting information addressing the constraints and challenges for addressing land degradation and its linkages to sustainable development. This information should include an action plan and timetable for increasing GEF support for land degradation activities as they relate to the GEF focal areas. Such support should be geographically broad-based.

46. The Council expressed its concern with the decreasing number of climate change projects in the work program as well as the decreasing level of Implementing Agency co-financing for GEF-financed projects.

47. The Council requested the GEF Secretariat, in consultation with the Implementing Agencies, to make efforts to develop a robust pipeline of climate change investment projects as well as projects addressing sustainable use of biodiversity.

48. The Secretariat will work with the Implementing Agencies and executing agencies to prepare the pipeline of GEF projects on a regular basis. In future, pipeline information on proposals will be made available to Council at least one meeting prior to the meeting at which

the work program is to be discussed. Pipeline information will include GEF eligibility of the proposal, the core commitments of the Implementing Agency upon which the project will build, proposed partnership and execution arrangements, the likely project size, and the applicable fee under the fee-based system. Special attention will be devoted to building a stronger pipelines of GEF eligible projects with land degradation activities and climate change projects.

49. With regard to the project proposal for *Russian Federation: Phaseout of Ozone Depleting Substances (Third Tranche)* the Council requested the CEO to take into account the concerns expressed at the meeting prior to his endorsement of the project. It was also agreed that the Secretariat will keep apprised of the work in the joint technical task force of the Montreal Protocol and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change on substances of concern to both agreements and will take into account the results of those deliberations.

50. One Council Member, due to its country's national policy, objected to the project proposal for *India: Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve's Coastal Biodiversity*.

51. One Council Member, in light of national legislation regarding its country's voting position for development projects financed by certain development institutions, opposed the following project proposals: *India: Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve's Coastal Biodiversity*, *Removal of Barriers to the Effective Implementation of Ballast Water Control and Management Measures in Developing Countries*, and *Demonstration of Innovative Approaches to the Rehabilitation of the Heavily Contaminated Bays in the Wider Caribbean*.

52. It was proposed that future cover notes to work programs include as a separate list all the recommendations raised in the note.

53. The importance of public participation in project design and implementation, particularly at the level of the local community and including indigenous people where appropriate, was underlined.

#### *Agenda Item 10*

#### *Strategic Partnerships with GEF Implementing Agencies*

54. In carrying out the proposed strategic partnerships, the Secretariat and the Implementing Agencies were requested to ensure coordination with, and outreach to, other international entities with experience in the area of capacity building.

55. The Council agreed that the initiative on capacity building should also address capacity building needs in the area of land degradation.

56. The Secretariat is requested to ensure that in implementing the strategic partnerships appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems are included and that the Council is kept informed on a regular basis.

57. Under the partnership with UNEP, early attention will be given to mobilizing the scientific and technical community to help prepare projects on the sustainable use of biodiversity.

*Agenda Item 11*

*Corporate Budget for FY00 and proposal for a fee-based system*

*Proposal for a Fee-Based System for Funding GEF Project Implementation*

58. Recognizing that the introduction and operation of a new system for fee-based budgeting carries with it a number of uncertainties, the Council requests the Secretariat to carry out the following activities with the objective of enhancing the fee-structure and the Implementing Agencies' financial management practices pertaining to GEF projects. In this regard, the GEF Secretariat, in consultation with the Implementing Agencies, will undertake to:

- (a) enhance the proposed fee structure;
- (b) prepare a benchmarking review of the fee structure against project implementation costs of comparable development agencies, including bilaterals and Regional Development Banks;
- (c) coordinate knowledge sharing and exchange of best practices in project-implementation funding with other organizations;
- (d) review each Implementing Agency's financial and cost management practices (with attention to resource management, activity-based cost management and financial accounts/reports of fee utilization); and
- (e) engage an independent consultant to perform audits of a selected number of projects from all three Implementing Agencies in order to evaluate their expenditure accounting for the involved cost categories (i.e., project grant, executing agency fees, implementing agency fees).

59. Council expects that with additional information and controls as well as increased efficiencies, costs in implementing GEF activities will decrease over time.

*GEF Corporate Budget FY00*

60. The GEF Secretariat will prepare an annual retrospective of each fiscal year's actual work program outcome and expenditures in comparison to that year's proposed work program and budget and will analyze operational and financial performance and deviations from planning assumptions .

61. The Council reiterated its earlier decisions and understandings during the second replenishment emphasizing steady growth in work programming at an average annual rate of 15%.

62. The Council urged donor countries with arrears to GEF 1 to clear those arrears as soon as possible in order not to disrupt GEF commitments for project activities.

63. With regard to outreach activities, one Council Member proposed that the Secretariat explore the possibility of preparing a GEF quarterly publication in cooperation with the Implementing Agencies.

*Agenda Item 12*

*Relations with conventions, including the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee concerning certain organic pollutants*

64. The Council confirmed the GEF statement to the second meeting of the International Negotiating Committee for an International Legally Binding Instrument for Implementing International Action on Certain Organic Pollutants (January 1999) that if the negotiators decided to establish a financial mechanism for the Convention, the GEF would be ready to fulfil this role in accordance with its mandate. The Council requests the Secretariat and the Implementing Agencies to increase support for country-driven initiatives concerning persistent organic pollutants within the framework of Operational Program 10 of the International Waters focal area.

65. The Council noted that further clarification would be welcomed from the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change with regard to guidelines for the preparation of the second national communications of non-Annex I Parties.

*Agenda Item 13*

*Constituencies and assistance for country level coordination*

66. With regard to the two options presented in paragraph 5 of the proposed amendments to the Council's rules of procedure, the Council approved the inclusion of the second option: i.e., if consensus on the nomination of a Council Member or Alternate cannot be reached by the time that the term of the incumbent Council Member or Alternate expires, the incumbent Council Member or Alternate will continue in office until a successor is appointed.

67. The Council approved the proposals for a three year program of assistance for country level coordination through the field offices of the Implementing Agencies as a useful starting point for strengthening country level ownership. The Secretariat and the Implementing Agencies were requested to consult with Council Members and national focal points, as appropriate, when determining the modalities for providing such support.

68. The Council agreed that midpoint in the three years of assistance the Council should review the services that have been provided and their impact in promoting strengthened country level coordination.

69. The CEO informed the Council that with the provision of the assistance described in the document, the Secretariat would begin to use the worldwide Web as a means of distributing

Council documentation and project proposals. When a document is available on the Web, the Secretariat would inform Council Members, Alternates and focal points, as appropriate, that the documentation had been posted on the Web. If the Member, Alternate or focal point does not have access to the Web, such individual may request the appropriate field office to download the documents for him/her. In a country where there is no Implementing Agency field office, arrangements will be made with the closest field office to assist the focal point.

70. Some Council Members proposed that a fellowship program for national focal points be initiated as a pilot program. Under this program, national focal points would spend a number of months with the GEF Secretariat and the Implementing Agencies to familiarize themselves with the policies and procedures of the GEF.

71. One Council Member proposed that the Council consider financing the cost of the travel and subsistence of Alternates from recipient countries to Council meetings.

*Agenda Item 15      Other business*

72. The Secretariat was requested to prepare a strategy note on current and potential collaboration of the GEF with bilateral development agencies.

73. The Secretariat was also requested to work with the Implementing Agencies to ensure that comprehensive and timely data on GEF procurement is made available to the Council.

74. The CEO informed the Council that the 1999 Global Environment Leadership Award will be awarded jointly to Professor Bert Bolin and Ambassador Bo Kjellén, both of Sweden, on June 7 in Bonn.

75. The NGO representatives presented the following two papers to the Council:

- (a) *Innovative Financing and the GEF: Directions for a New Millennium*, and
- (b) *Improving GEF Country Level Coordination: Experiences, Views and Recommendations from the NGO Community*.

**CLOSURE OF THE MEETING**

76. The meeting was closed by the Chairs on May 7, 1999.