

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COUNCIL'S DISCUSSIONS  
62<sup>ND</sup> GEF COUNCIL MEETING  
JUNE 21-23, 2022, TYSONS CORNER, VIRGINIA**

The following is a record prepared by the GEF Secretariat of comments, understandings, and clarifications made by Council Members. These points are supplemental to the Joint Summary of the Chair, which records the decisions agreed by the Council. The full video of the Council Meeting can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/GEFSecretariat>

***Agenda Item 1           Opening of the Meeting***

1.       The CEO and Chairperson of the GEF, Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, and Ambassador Feturi Elisaia of Samoa, Elected Chairperson, opened the 62<sup>nd</sup> GEF Council meeting.

***Agenda Item 2           Adoption of the Agenda***

2.       A Council member noted the different versions of the agenda circulated where some items were removed. They further noted differences between the information document on CES and the Summary of the Replenishment negotiations on the same topic. The Secretariat was requested to prepare a new document on the CES that is in line with the decisions approved by the replenishment. The document should include a clear budget with individual allocations to each specific activity. This document should be considered at the 63<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Council. This was supported by other members who also asked for explanations on the changes to the agenda and the status of the document on CES.

3.       Another Council member supported the statement and noted that several important items were presented as information document when they should be the object of further discussion. In particular, the document on CES contains proposals that were the subject of discussion and objections during the replenishment. Since these are issues that need further discussion before being approved clarification was requested on the status of these documents.

4.       Two other Council members indicated that under other business they would make statements on the situation in Ukraine.

5. Another Council member requested that OFPs should always be informed by agencies of global projects and their progress.
6. The Secretariat commented that the documents on SGP and CSP were presented as information documents because the Secretariat felt it had not had enough time to present fully developed working documents for decision. The intention was to explain the thought process so far and to present working documents for decision at the 63<sup>rd</sup> meeting with full operational details.
7. All points were noted and would be revisited under Other Business.
8. Agenda was adopted.

**Agenda Item 3      *Summary of negotiations of the 8th replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund***

9. The Secretariat presented the report on the replenishment negotiations. A statement by Mr. Akihiko Nishio, co-chair of the replenishment was heard. Norway announced its contribution of 780 million Norwegian Kroners. Denmark announced a contribution of 800 million Danish Kroners.
10. Council members congratulated the GEF for its historic replenishment. They recognized the quality of the process; they highlighted the fact that SIDS (or large ocean nations) had been specifically represented; and they expressed the expectation that strong impact on the global environment will be achieved. It was also mentioned that LDCS should have separate representation at the next replenishment.
11. Some Council members mentioned the STAR system stressed the importance of maintaining the GDP component of the formula and their view that there should be no discrimination among recipient countries based on criteria such as vulnerability that are not recognized by the MEAs. One Council Member mentioned vulnerability as an issue for GEF-9. The issue of vulnerability was mentioned as relevant for GEF-9.
12. One Council Member requested that consideration be given transforming arrears to the GEF Trust Fund into debt for nature swaps. Others asked for further details on practical aspects of GEF-implementation, in particular details on the competitive window under STAR and the Country Support Program.

**Agenda Item 4            *Updating the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR)***

13. The Secretariat introduced the document detailing the characteristics of the STAR system for GEF-8. The Secretariat recalled that the list of indicative national allocations would be published in July, distributed to all countries, and posted on the GEF website.

14. Council members highlighted different aspects of the STAR system. There was recognition of the higher floors for LDCS and SIDS, the full flexibility in the use of STAR resources, the expansion of Rio markers to measure results and an evaluation of the STAR system by the IEO.

15. The competitive window was the subject of questions on the timing for the call for proposals, focal area requirements and measurement and reporting of results and the ceiling of 9 million dollars. Some Council Members requested that the countries concerned be consulted as the details of this window are developed.

16. Some Council members requested a session during the next Council meeting to be dedicated to the competitive window to understand the implementation details and the project selection process.

17. Some Council Members reiterated their view that the STAR system should not introduce any kind of differentiation among recipients that is not agreed at the MEAs while others expect to see vulnerability introduced as a factor in GEF-9. A Council Member reminded that a STAR utilization mid-term review report was necessary to put corrective measures in place, if needed. Another Council Members stressed that domestic policy coherence should reflect the national policy landscape and that country context should be given adequate weight as an incentive rather than rigid conditionality in the project selection.

18. The Secretariat thanked the Council for support for the system and spirit of compromise. It further responded that it would continue to engage recipient countries on competitive window. The call for proposals will be done after that to give ample time for consultation. Focus will remain on the three focal areas covered by STAR. The competitive window will be subject to results analysis as every other project in the GEF. A mid-term review will be done, and the scorecard will reflect progress. The spirit behind the ceiling of 9 million was to make sure that all countries in the competitive window would have an incentive to participate and to use it with very innovative proposals. The issue of competitive window and its various details will be further discussed in the Council.

**Agenda Item 5            *GEF-8 Integrated Programs Lead Agency Terms of Reference and Selection Process***

19. The Secretariat introduced the item and emphasized the importance of integrated programming for the GEF-8 and beyond.

20. Many Council Members commented on this paper, aimed at transparency, clarity, accountability, and ease of process. Suggestions for various changes were introduced and the paper was subject to further discussions overnight. The issues raised included the following: the technical committee for selection should include STAP, focal points and other experts; co-lead should be possible, along with an Annex 1 that indicates which functions the different agencies would be responsible for; no agencies should be excluded; concentration/cap on how many IPs can be led by one agency; celerity as IPs take a long time to get going; evidence of lead agency suitability and its impact on the selection process; how to solve disputes on country selection; solve challenges related to communication between IP Agency lead and country project Agency lead.

21. The document was revised and approved the following day.

***Agenda Item 6 Report of the Selection and Review Committee***

22. This item was discussed in Executive Session.

***Agenda Item 7 Work Program for GEF Trust Fund***

23. The Secretariat presented the Work Program with 18 projects and 1 program for a total request of \$165.8 million including GEF project financing and Agency fees. The June 2022 Work Program is the last in the GEF-7 replenishment cycle, and 95% of GEF-7 resources have been programmed at the end of the cycle. In addition, \$754 million is expected as co-financing which includes \$578 million of investment mobilized. Eight out of 18 Agencies were represented with more equitable distribution among the top three agencies. In terms of regional spread, Africa was highest programmed region taking 33.3%, followed by LAC, ECA and Asia. One project from NGI project is proposed meaning that 90% of NGI funding was programmed. The WP delivers results across all 10 indicators of the work program, with 8 out of 10 have reached 100% or more in their targets. WP to benefit 25.1 million people as beneficiaries.

24. The Council expressed satisfaction at the progress achieved in programming overall and in the quality of the projects included in this work program. Some of the many comments covered issues such as: concentration; co-financing; underperformance of some core indicators; some labor allegations; the SELVA Fund and assessing financial risks in NGI; delays in processing enabling activities; gender indicators. A Council member brought up the issue of the SAFER tanker in Yemen and the imminent danger it poses.

**Agenda Item 8**            **FY23 corporate budget and business plan**

25. The Secretariat introduced the document that presents the combined budget for Secretariat. STAP and Trustee and is aimed at having a fast start to GEF-8. It includes measures to increase the capacity of the Secretariat for two reasons: GEF-8 ambition reflects a significant increase in volume and demand; and GEF staff levels have been at zero growth for the past two replenishment. This process will follow careful step by step approach which for FY 2023 means adding STC and ETC support. This will keep the Secretariat well within the GEF-7 overall budget. Request also reflects efficiency and savings.

26. The budget proposal received overall support. Council members supported the idea of using ETC and STCs as a first step towards understanding the staffing needs for GEF-8; greening proposals that included continued use of virtual meetings; budget line to support civil society; support for OFPs. Some of the questions included savings that can be achieved by having one virtual Council meeting a year or reducing office space due to reduced presence by staff as well as the potential impact of World Bank cost recovery measures.

27. The Secretariat replied that the GEF Council budget had been kept at 700.000 a year so half could be saved, but not all as even virtual meetings have some costs. It explained that it had not expanded office space on another floor in the building, though the issue would be further studied and also explained that it was having conversations with the World Bank to ensure fair compensation for services received.

**Agenda Item 09.**            **Work Program and Budget of the Independent Evaluation Office**

**Agenda Item 10.**            **Evaluation of GEF support to Sustainable Forest Management**

**Agenda Item 11.**            **Study on Climate risk, Adaptation and Resilience in the GEF Trust Fund Management Responses to Items 10 & 11**

28. The three items were presented together by the IEO and so were the management responses by the Secretariat.

29. The IEO Work Program was well received, and several Council members emphasized the need for an evaluation on co-financing, its modalities, and challenges, including practices by other funds. The IEO was requested to integrate gender issues in the planned evaluations as well as to evaluate the extent to which GEF projects programs consider indigenous consultation, and their engagement and involvement in implementation of GEF projects. Of further interest is an assessment of the impacts of covid on projects, the difficulties encountered in the projects or the integrated approach in small island developing states, and the assessment on nature-based solutions.

30. On SFM Council members the Council welcomed the findings, supported the conclusions, and agreed with the need to focus on sustainability of the interventions beyond the project duration. They were interested in understanding how this will be addressed in the IP design in particular, the Amazon, Congo and critical forest biomes and on adaptive management of forests in the context of SFM. Some mentioned they would like to see a role for the International Tropical Timber Organization given their unique expertise; and suggestions for better ways to monitor socio-economic co-benefits in this area. There was interest to know why forest protection results in Africa were comparatively lower compared to other regions.

31. On climate risk adaptation and resilience evaluation, Council welcomed the findings that these are increasingly being integrated into the GEF strategy and projects, the climate risk screening tool and interagency trainings and dialogues to share best practices and that the integration trends to have a positive impact on project outcome. They noted that the definitions of these terms are not quite clear, especially for resilience, and expect meaningful reporting on climate-resilient benefits in the future.

***Agenda Item 12. Report of the Chairperson of the STAP***

32. The Council expressed its appreciation for the presentation and for the STAP's leadership and impact on GEF programming.

33. One of the issues raised by many of the Council members was the question of risk. Mention was made that it would be helpful to clarify the difference between fiduciary risks, which the Council always considers, but also for the GEF to be truly transformational, to recognize that risks need to be taken to achieve some of that high reward sought on Global Environmental Benefits. As a result, a specific decision was adopted under Other Business.

34. Council Members also welcomed the exploration and further refining the tracking of co-benefits in improving human well-being and how well the GEF partnership is achieving transformative change for different segments of populations. This includes a focus on gender co-benefits and sex and age disaggregated data in any future adjustments of the results measurement framework. Some were very supportive of the STAP recommendation for GEF to adopt a comprehensive framing of policy coherence so as to ensure enduring results of GEF investments.

35. A Council Member asked whether the technical assistance facility suggested by Stanford would add significantly to the ability of countries to implement natural capital accounting. It recalled that there are many demands for GEF funding and wants to ensure new initiatives have a demonstrable value-added and are not actually supported via the Country Support Program or a staff briefing. They were surprised to realize that the integrated approach pilots in GEF-6 and

even the IPs in GEF-7 were not really designed to succeed when scaled and asked what steps can be taken to ensure the GEF-8 integrated programs are capable of being scaled.

36. Another Council Member reiterated that many times the terminology used is not agreed at the level of conventions. Therefore, it would be better for the document to also reflect the need to have a common understanding among member states on the implementation of nature-based solutions.

**Agenda Item 13. Report of the Ad-Hoc Working Group on Governance**

37. The Chair of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Governance presented the revised report. She stated that they looked at the Instrument on the co-chairing arrangements and the Rules of Procedure of the Council. The new procedure includes circulating policy documents for comments and oral reporting by the Secretariat to the Council. She ended by recalling the suggestion that the changes proposed not be adopted at this Council meeting but be brought back for decision at the 63<sup>rd</sup> Council meeting.

38. The proposed draft decision was adopted without comment.

**Agenda Item 14. Report of the Ethics Committee**

39. The Chair of the Ethics Committee introduced the topic explaining the reasons for its inclusion and the proposed amendment to the policy.

40. An amendment to the draft decision to include the word non-public before documents was proposed and accepted.

**Agenda Item 15. GEF'S Private Sector Advisory Group Summary Report**

41. The Secretariat introduced the report explaining that a decision was necessary to end the work of the Private Sector Advisory Group. The PSAG carried out its role until the end of GEF-7 as envisaged in the pertinent decisions. The advisory contributions will be continued through a different structure of a flexible, informal network of experts. It will support Secretariat, STAP, IEO, Agencies and the CSO Network. Membership will be broad and balanced; identified with help from all partners; and included in a data base that will be available for all and organized according to theme, region, industry sector. It has no budget implications.

42. Council members commented that the proposal seems to be a bit too informal to ensure momentum is continued and requested further explanation, including on transparency of the

process to set up the new network; on how private and financial sectors will participate in GEF-8; on how often the advisors will meet and how will those concerned with the key aspects of GEF-8 be consulted. It was also requested that the annual report on private sector includes reporting on the operation of this new network. Some expressed hope that all vulnerable groups would be considered beyond gender basis, including youth, disabled and indigenous groups. Secretariat was asked how it intended to integrate the private sector strategy with NGI projects and that yearly reports on the private sector policy should include information on the operation and functioning of the new network.

43. The Secretariat responded that intent is more in dynamic network to engage and use rapidly growing entities part of the GEF's activities and business. The function of IPs to attract attention of PS in more flexible platform their involvement is something that is mutually reinforcing. IP platforms for GEF-8, we have specific section on private sector on any advisory services during implementation. The Secretariat added that the relation between PSES and NGI was designed as parallel pillars in GEF-7 Programing Direction, and this alignment will be developed in GEF-8. The network is much wider and broader PSAG and some of its members are now in the network. The database being developed will allow consultation and information on what level and in what form private sector is involved in GEF funded projects.

#### ***Agenda Item 16      Relations with the Conventions and Other International Institutions***

44. The Co-chair explained that this item included three sections: a) Presentation by the Executive Secretaries of the conventions that the GEF serves; b) Update on the UNFCCC COP26 outcomes; and c) Consideration of the Report on Relation with Conventions.

45. The Co-chair introduced and welcomed the Executive Secretaries of Conventions present in the meeting – Patricia Espinosa (UNFCCC - virtually), Elizabeth Maruma Mrema (CBD), Rolph Payet (Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm Conventions) and Monika Stankiewicz (Minamata Convention), and Andrea Meza Murillo, Deputy executive secretary (UNCCD).

46. Patricia Espinosa (UNFCCC) noted that over the past ten months three IPCC reports were presented with the most up-to-date science on climate change. She quoted the IPCC chair, Dr. Hoesung Lee: "Climate change is a grave and mounting threat to our wellbeing and a healthy planet." She stressed that time is running out. If we are to limit temperature increase to 1.5 deg above preindustrial levels, every country will have to take immediate and unprecedented action. Glasgow COP signaled new determination, and to turn this into action will depend on predictable financial resources. The GEF has a great role to play to finance this transition to a low sessions and climate resilient development.

47. Patricia welcomed the record level of pledges achieved of 5.33 billion USD. GEF-8 replenishment outcomes points at strengthening GEFs role to combat climate change and



support sustainable development, which will pave the way to countries designing projects with accredited climate benefits. This responds to the outcome from Glasgow a few months ago.

48. She noted that this was her last address to the GEF Council as Head of Climate Change and made one last single recommendation: “It may be better described a petition, as you deliver on policy and design of projects, keep I mind the IPCC’s sobering words and think carefully about their implications for developing countries seeking financial support, and enhanced resources, more expedient procedures, stronger accountability is likely to follow. I and many others count on the GEF to fulfill with ever growing success its critical mission.”

49. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema (CBD) Congratulated on the successful conclusion of the GEF-8 negotiations. The success was marked by historical level of funding and agreed measures for transformative changes. By increasing pledges to BD, the message to the world is clear: Biodiversity matters, and all lives matter. BD matters will be addressed not only in FA interventions, but also through interventions on land degradation, climate change, chemicals and waste, and international water.

50. Elizabeth recalled that ongoing negotiations on the post-2020 framework will build on the successful results of GEF-8 replenishment. The GEF pledge of almost 2 billion USD is an increase by almost 62% for the next four years. The post-2020 Framework will need to be matched by another doubling of resources over the next 8 years. She noted that GEF-8 BD FA has responded directly to all elements of the objectives of the conventions and will thus support implementation the post-2020 GBF. She stressed that the GEF has demonstrated its capacity to rapidly conceptualize and approve much needed critical grants in response to the post-2020 GBF. As learnt from the NDCs process to the climate change agreement, timely promotion of early national planning will contribute to successful adoption of the post-202 GBF.

51. Rolph Payet (Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm Conventions) Presented outcomes of the Face-to-Face segments of the BRS COP 6-17 June in Geneva, dealing with budget as well as guidance to the GEF, building on earlier online segments. He mentioned that the Stockholm COP 10 included PFHxS, its salts and compounds, and new guidance on BAT and BEP. He recalled that many parties expressed satisfaction for the work of the GEF and the increased CW financing in GEF-8. Rolph mentioned that the COP had urged the GEF to explored options to support PCB management and disposal. Priority areas of work include PCBs, newly listed POPs, POPs pesticides, DDT, unintentionally produced POPs and continued support for NIPs and the Global Monitoring Program. The next COP will be in Bahamas 2023.

52. Monika Stankiewicz (Minamata Convention) recalled that international cooperation with chemicals-related conventions, and biodiversity convention happened for the first time. As a result, Minamata Convention is participating in the 4<sup>th</sup> open ended working group for CBD. She mentioned that on the decision of effectiveness a new open ended scientific group for

programmatic group was created. The COP decision on the financial mechanism expressed gratitude to GEF for supporting implementation and showcasing work on Mercury using GEF funding. She recalled that the Parties agreed the TOR of the second reviews of the Financial Mechanisms. She noted that a high percentage of countries are participating in National Reporting and implementation of the convention. Finally, Monika shared key timeline for different industry sectors and linkage of chemicals and hazardous chemicals IP as well as IPs. She stressed that the Convention Secretariat will participate actively with GEFSEC and agencies in the design of the IP.

53. The second part of the session was a virtual briefing on CoP 15 outcomes by the Deputy Executive Secretary of UNCCD, Andrea Meza Murillo who stated that UNCCD COP works towards implementation of different targets. Before COP 15, the second Global Land Outlook was published to generate momentum and data to the table for different stakeholders. She noted that up to 40% of planet's land is degraded by humanity and that this was a threat to half of global GDP. The COP attracted political attention and momentum with more than 7,000 participants who managed to have high-level political segment, a presidential summit, and more than 50 ministers discussing different issues related to LD and drought. The COP engaged with stakeholders, green business forums, youth engagement forum to discuss youth engagement strategy and gender issues. For the first time there was a food day in Rio convention. COP 15 considered integration/synergies among convention; it acknowledged SDG 15.3. The COP welcomed support from GM and relative partners that would assist countries to set up LDN and implementation efforts; it requested Secretariat of GM of some partners like GEF to develop tools to translate of LDN targets to concrete actions

54. Council members expressed their appreciation for the presence and contributions of the Executive Secretaries. They also welcome the report, particularly work on effort to promote synergies between various conventions. They appreciated the GEF Secretariat efforts to be present at all COPs and contribute to their work.

55. The Co-Chair opened the floor for comments on the Report on Relations with Conventions and other International Institutions. Council members welcomed the report, supported the draft decision and encouraged GEF to continue exploring synergies with conventions and multilateral climate funds. Emphasis was placed on a harmonization of monitoring and reporting processes across funds; joint trainings; synergetic use of funds by piloting and upscaling Innovative projects as well as enhancing private sector mobilization for an active strategic exchange, and the introduction of a standardized process across funds to reach medium-term goals.

***Agenda Item 17      Update on preparations for the Seventh GEF Assembly***

56. The Council Member from Canada explained that due to many events having been postponed due t the pandemic no venues were available in Vancouver in December 2022.

Therefore, the option being considered is mid-2023. All steps are being taken strictly following the rules applicable in the Canadian regulations.

57. The Secretariat thanked Canada recalling that this Assembly will be non-conventional in that it is being organized in a developed country and with indigenous peoples. More details will be provided as they are available.

58. A Council member asked if the format would be hybrid and the Secretariat indicated that it was too early to say but consultations will be held to ensure the best option possible. An observer stressed the importance of the Assembly for civil society.

### **Agenda Item 18      Other Business**

59. As stated at the adoption of the agenda two Council members expressed their intention to make statements concerning the situation in Ukraine. Following are the two statements:

60. Statement by Council Member Senad Oprasic: *Respectable Chairpersons, Council Members and Alternates, representatives of Conventions and Agencies,*

61. *First of all, we would like to thank the Global Environment Facility for its long-lasting support to Ukraine. Just to remind, since 1991, it has been providing significant support to environmental sector reforms in Ukraine, demonstrating and piloting new environmental principles and methodologies in the field of biodiversity conservation, integrated water resources management, energy saving, nutrients, and POPs reduction, climate change, etc. The application of these principles and methodologies became a ground for the development of a new national sound environmental policy compliant with main international environmental conventions and helped to build the capacities of the country to pave its way towards sustainable development despite economic difficulties.*

62. *Also, let me thank GEF member countries for their hearted support of Ukraine in an unjustified and unprovoked war of conquest from the Russian Federation. You have given shelter to our refugees, thus providing a sense of security. The support of your people in the information, military and humanitarian fields, on the streets and squares of your cities, inspires and empowers Ukrainians to continue defending itself and Europe at large against Russia's invasion. Thank you for supporting the sovereignty and integrity of Ukraine!*

63. *As you know, this war leads not only to the deaths of thousands of soldiers, but also murder of innocent civilians, destruction and damage to buildings and infrastructure throughout Ukraine. The war has also a significant impact on the environment:*

- *There is a threat to nuclear and chemical safety - we have cases of critically low missiles flying over nuclear power plants, and Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant is currently under occupation and used as a military facility. At present, there are battles for Severodonetsk, Luhansk region, which houses the Azot plant, which was engaged in the production of ammonia. The plant is under fire, posing a significant threat to the environment and there are a lot of similar cases all over Ukraine;*
- *Destroyed military equipment and ammunition, exploded missiles and air bombs pollute the soil and groundwater with chemicals and leads to land degradation;*
- *Thousands of mines and other explosives are left unmanaged in forests, lakes, rivers and even at the Black Sea;*
- *There is an acute problem of municipal solid waste management after the destruction of buildings in cities that were released. Such wastes are also dangerous as it contains hazardous waste - freon, mercury, lamps, etc.;*
- *A number of the wastewater treatment systems in settlements are fully destroyed leading to the discharge of untreated waters directly into rivers;*
- *Almost three million hectares of forests have been covered by the war - for comparison, this is almost the territory of Belgium;*
- *Due to Russian aggression, dolphins and other marine inhabitants are dying en masse, routes of migratory birds are changing, and nesting sites of rare species are being destroyed.*

64. *The nature is boundless and silent, so we need to speak loud for its needs!*

65. *Overcoming all these challenges needs a lot of efforts and time as well as financial resources - which Ukraine, unfortunately, does not have. Besides, the environment is not a top priority in the Ukraine's reconstruction plan. Due to the significant destruction and the need to rebuild settlements and infrastructure, it will be difficult for Ukraine to allocate budgetary resources for environmental protection in the coming years. So, we are counting on the support of the GEF as the main environmental mechanism to help with green re-building!*

66. *We kindly ask all the states to unite their efforts to help Ukraine to compensate for the negative environmental consequences of the military aggression of Russian Federation using GEF as a platform. Ukraine owns invaluable European ecosystems; it has habitats for many rare and endangered species, so its environmental well-being will affect the global biodiversity and sustainability of our planet.*

67. *The GEF has developed very transparent and effective supporting mechanisms for environmental conservation. Projects implementation through honorable GEF Agencies allowed to involve specialists from all over the world and created numerous opportunities for knowledge and experience exchange.*

68. *From our side, we are ready to take all needed actions, including prioritizing required environmental activities and their urgency.*

69. *In the military field, we have jointly created a historical precedent of courage and unity. Now we can create a new precedent of environmental solidarity, beneficial for all living creatures on our planet.*

70. Statement by Council Member Abigail Demopoulos: *We'd like to make a statement on behalf of Australia, Belgium Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.*

71. *We condemn in the strongest possible terms the unjustifiable, unprovoked, and illegal war against Ukraine by the Russian Federation. In addition to the tragic loss of life and suffering of the Ukrainian people, Russia's war has rendered catastrophic consequences on the environment and exacerbated global food insecurity. Our thoughts are with the people of Ukraine.*

72. *We call once again on Russia to abide by its international obligations, immediately cease all hostilities in Ukraine, withdraw its troops and facilitate the rapid, safe, and unhindered access of humanitarian assistance to those in need in Ukraine.*

73. Under other business an additional decision was introduced and approved requesting the GEF Secretariat, in consultation with the STAP and interested Council Members and Alternates, to prepare a paper on GEF-8 programming risk framework for consideration by Council at its 64<sup>th</sup> session.

74. During the discussion a Council Member asked what are the steps and the approach to be taken in developing such a framework and how will it be integrated into the operational policy of GEF and what will be the implications for programming, budgeting allocations and portfolio management. He also wondered if there would be any impact on the Agencies and what could be learned from their experience. The Secretariat replied that a paper will be presented at the 64th Council and that based on the discussion at that time consideration would be given to future steps. The Secretariat will keep all well informed.

75. On a separate issue, a Council Member asked if the GEF was considering the possibility of being a financial mechanism for BBNJ. The Secretariat recalled the steps taken leading up to the GEF becoming a financing mechanism for the Minamata Convention. In the case of BBNJ the discussion on financing is at an early stage, the GEF has not been identified as playing a role yet and therefore no discussion was called for in the Council. That is why a briefing was scheduled at lunch but was interrupted due to power failure. The BBNG will have an IGC 5 potentially followed by a diplomatic conference or, if necessary, an IGC 6 will be held. Depending on how the

negotiation proceeds, the issue could be discussed at the next Council Meeting and the Instrument could be amended at the 7<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

76. Another Council Member asked about the impact of any decision of the IGC and the Secretariat clarified that the IGC could only invite the GEF to play a role and it would be then submitted to the Council.

***Agenda item 19      Joint summary of the co-chairs***

77. At the time of adoption of the Summary of the Co-chairs, some Council Members brought up the issue raised at the time of adoption of the agenda where they requested that a draft decision be brought to the Council concerning the Country Engagement Strategy with a description of activities and specific funding levels for each one of them. The Secretariat stated that the concerns would be reflected in the highlights document and committed to have such a document submitted for decision at the 63<sup>rd</sup> Council Meeting for both CES and SGP.