

August 20, 2021

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**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COUNCIL'S DISCUSSIONS  
60<sup>TH</sup> GEF COUNCIL MEETING  
JUNE 14-18, 2021, VIRTUAL MEETING**

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 Mette Møglestue, Elected Chairperson, opened the 60<sup>th</sup> GEF Council meeting.

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

2. A Council Member requested that an item referring to: *The Quality of ODA*, be added under Other Business. The Secretariat mentioned that dates for future meetings would also be considered.

3. The Agenda was adopted.

***Agenda Item 3      Work Program for GEF Trust Fund***

4. The Secretariat presented the work program with 36 projects and programs for a total request of \$281.1 million including GEF project financing and Agency fees while \$2.6B is expected as co-financing which includes \$2.1B of investment mobilized. The GEF is at the 75 % timeline mark of the cycle; STAR utilization reached 80% and overall financing reached 81% of the replenishment amount.

5. The Council thanked the GEF Secretariat and Agencies for efforts to deliver the Work Program despite the pandemic, with high co-financing and inclusion of more IW and CW projects.
6. Council appreciated that the GEF Secretariat provided the risks and opportunities arising from COVID-19 for each program and project and requested an analysis of green and blue recovery opportunities to be presented to the Council before the Replenishment meeting in September.
7. The Council recognized that most of the core indicators already surpassed the target, but also noted that three core indicators (1, 4, 9) are lagging and the GEF Secretariat provided explanation for each indicator.
8. Council members requested the Secretariat to provide further progress report on gender strategy implementation, especially with stronger focus on socio-economic matters related to gender.
9. Some Council members expressed concern at the concentration of projects in one GEF Agency. Others expressed concern at the challenges posed by the COVID situation to generating the requested level of co-financing. Council Members recognized the strong focus on LDCs and SIDS and especially the Africa region. A call for more use of local expertise on projects was raised by some Council members, to ensure durability and impact. The apparent decline of funding for the Latin American region was mentioned as well as the need to avoid any differentiation among recipient countries not recognized at the level of the Conventions. There was a suggestion to increase the number of GEF Agencies at regional and national level.
10. Council members encouraged more coordination among the various activities carried out by various partners on the same topic; stressed that some activities will need fine-tuning before CEO endorsement; added that projects should benefit actors that have the greatest need, examples were given. A Council member stressed the importance of consultations with indigenous peoples that were affected by the pandemic and another requested that NGI proposals include information to allow an equity level risk assessment as the descriptions should be different from the grant proposals.
11. The Secretariat commented that it is not concerned with the numbers for Core Indicator 9 as there has been a change in the methodology and rationale behind the

measurements. The GEF Secretariat has limited ability to determine or steer projects between agencies. The Agencies are selected by the countries, and country ownership is a very important principle in the GEF system.

12. The GEF Secretariat agreed to the suggestion made and will prepare an analysis of contributions to blue/green recovery for presentation at the December Council meeting and for the GEF-8 replenishment process. The GEF Secretariat is ahead in terms of programming, resources and it is confident that most of the resources will be programmed even if, as with the end of every cycle, there may be some resources that carry over.

13. The Secretariat is aware that there are challenges in securing finances, noting that in the last WP the GEF did notably well on co-financing. It was further recalled that the co-financing policy does not apply project by project, but across the entire portfolio and so there is flexibility to accommodate specific project and local contexts. The Secretariat will continue to report on how the GEF is progressing in this area and hopes that the current report is clear in its depiction of positive progress.

#### ***Agenda Item 4      Progress Report on the Independent Third Party Review of UNDP***

14. The Secretariat introduced the three main components of the document: i) a summary of GEF Secretariat actions related to Council decisions on UNDP, ii) a summary of the revised self-assessment submitted by UNDP, and iii) a preliminary progress report from the Independent Third Party Reviewer of UNDP. The Secretariat also recalled that all GEF Agencies are required to provide self-assessments against four key GEF policies during the final year of each replenishment cycle, subject to an independent third-party review facilitated by the Secretariat.

15. Council members appreciated the report, noting the importance attached to this issue and process. They expressed satisfaction with the monthly reports by UNDP on its action plans and commitment. Some members noted a need to draw upon information from all sources and some expressed the need to analyze the capacity of agencies to fulfill the commitments and policies.

16. The relevance to the issue of concentration of funding among Agencies was seen both from the side of risks as from the angle of ensuring access where choice of agency is determined by availability and country choice. One Council Member stated that their contribution to the replenishment was dependent on adequately addressing this issue. The Secretariat mentioned that this issue would be addressed during the replenishment negotiations.

17. Council members reaffirmed the importance of UNDP within the GEF partnership, with some noting concern regarding possible delays in project preparation and implementation, particularly in LDCs and SIDSs. They also expressed concern at new reports of grievance cases. The question was raised of whether the screening for UNDP projects will stop once the Third-Party review is delivered. Some gaps in the areas to be addressed were also mentioned. Evidence of real change is expected. The Secretariat assured the Council that no cancellations has occurred because of delays due to special extra UNDP requirements

18. Council members stressed the importance of confidence in GEF Agencies, looked forward to more detail on self-assessments and reviews of all GEF Agencies, and continued facilitation of the process and reporting thereon by the Secretariat. One Council member asked for all the Third-Party reviews to be finalized before the end of the replenishment negotiations. Some Council members also requested information in the future on the coordination between the work done at GEF and GCF on this issue. The Secretariat confirmed that the Third-Party reviews also look at implementation capacity and that at least preliminary results will be made available during replenishment negotiations.

***Agenda Item 5 Follow up of UNDP related decisions from the 59th Council meeting***

19. The Secretariat introduced the item, referring to information reported in C.60/05 on actions by the Secretariat. These included contracting the Third Party Independent Reviewer, receiving UNDP's revised self-assessment, reviewing the new project checklists applicable to UNDP projects, and monthly reporting to Council on progress. The Secretariat work is proceeding in line with the request received from the Council and is on track to meet the deadline. While it is too early to reach conclusions, there is good access to information to support this informative process.

20. The Council then invited Pradeep Kurukulasuriya, Executive Coordinator and Director, Global Environmental Finance, at UNDP, to report on activities undertaken in response to the UNDP OAI audit and the specific Council requests. UNDP reaffirmed its strong commitment to the GEF as a founding Agency and recalled its support to over 160 countries' access to assistance. The OAI audit is a critical input to strengthen UNDP as it was the first system-wide review of UNDP's management of GEF resources. The findings were accepted and made public and UNDP is committed to the resulting Action Plan. Results are encouraging as 24 of the 31 management actions recommended have been completed of which 22 have been assessed to have been fully implemented. The remaining 7 are on track to be completed within the timelines agreed by UNDP. April to May there was a first follow up and a second follow up audit will be done later next year. UNDP provided additional information on internal actions and reviews of its systems, procedures, and application as part of an all-UNDP effort, from headquarters to country level, to determine root causes and enact remedies. Transparency was

also mentioned as key to the work of the organization. An executive session was also offered as deemed necessary by the Council; this offer was welcomed. UNDP also mentioned that no cancellations were expected and that delays were only due to Covid. He also mentioned that OAI is planning on reviewing implementing partners later this year.

21. Council members noted with appreciation the additional information from UNDP and the actions taken. The view was expressed and supported that the dysfunctionalities are systemic and need systemic solutions. The actions taken are mostly procedural and regulatory and do not address organizational culture, management behavior and operational capacity limits. Future reports should be self-critical, self-reflective, and present the difficulties faced in this task, all of which will increase credibility. In addition, the solidity of the self-assessment system needs to be revisited to ensure similar dysfunctionalities do not appear in other agencies by looking at the compliance issues more in depth.

22. There was a request to have this issue on the agenda of the 61<sup>st</sup> Council meeting.

23. Council members recalled that agency choice is a function of country ownership and OFPs should receive more capacity to ensure they are able to select the best agency.

24. Reference was made to a specific UNDP case and a briefing by UNDP on this case was requested for a future date.

25. UNDP commented that one step was the pre-investment reviews of requests for support which help to manage risks; a second step was the clarification of roles and responsibilities thus determining who is accountable at each step; another is the country offices needs assessment to manage the National Implementation Plans. Staff are being trained and, though it may take time, the changes will have an impact. He added some more information on the project mentioned.

#### ***Agenda Item 6            Third Joint GEF-UNDP Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme***

26. The GEF IEO presented the findings and conclusions of the Third Joint Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme (SGP). The IEO also mentioned that the evaluation has been presented to the UNDP board and that UNDP presented its own management response. The Council welcomed the evaluation and the SGP's overall relevance and impact at the local level. The Council supported the formulation for a long-term vision and a level of resources to SGP that matches its objectives.

27. Some Council members expressed concern on the issues of governance and accountability, which includes roles and responsibilities, and are interested in measures that will be taken to make administration issues lighter. Others want to hear how sustainability could be further increased or want to make sure that SGP does not lead to a succession of small-scale independent actions but achieves impact through a portfolio approach which allows a scaling up of successful SGP projects. The Secretariat mentioned that it would work with UNDP on improving sustainability and that this would be included in GEF-8.

28. Some Council members said the upgrading process is critical to ensuring that core funding is available to those countries with the greatest need and to providing upgraded countries access to additional funding and enhanced ownership. At the same time, upgraded countries should not experience financing gaps during the move from core to upgraded because, as noted by the IEO, this could lead to gaps in programming and loss of momentum.

#### ***Agenda Item 7            GEF Support to Innovation – Findings and Lessons***

29. The GEF IEO presented the evaluation of the GEF Support to Innovation study. The Council welcomed the IEO findings and recommendations, and the management response made by the GEF Secretariat.

30. The Council appreciated having a concrete definition, as well as lessons on how innovative projects can create transformational change. Council members asked to clarify whether GEF's innovative projects contribute to gender mainstreaming; the connection between innovation and risk; and stressed their high expectations from partnerships with innovation support programs. Council members stressed that separate funding windows for innovation should not come to the detriment of other allocations (STAR, SGP, CSP).

31. The GEF IEO clarified that innovation is accompanied by a certain level of risk and the level of risk taking varies across Agencies. The GEF Secretariat confirmed that innovative projects in the GEF portfolio support gender mainstreaming, including in the current work program. The Secretariat explained that specific funding modalities to support innovation reflect the need for more agility and flexibility, and they will not come at the expense of other allocations. An example of a separate funding window for innovation in the GEF is the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation. The Secretariat also pointed out that partnerships to mobilize new risk capital help catalyze financing for activities that may be perceived too risky by commercial investors and this is already considered when assessing the non-grant instrument proposals. Further, the Secretariat clarified that the recommendations will be discussed in the context of the GEF-8 replenishment negotiations, both on the concept of an innovation modality as well as how to strengthen and build partnerships with risk capital.

**Agenda Item 8                      *Evaluation of the Country Support Program (CSP)***

32. The GEF IEO presented the findings and conclusions of the Evaluation of the Country Support Programme (CSP). The Council welcomed the evaluation and the strong contribution of the CSP to the GEF partnership. The Council supported the management response.

33. The Council stressed the importance of developing a clear strategy for the program in GEF-8 and in coordinating efforts with other global environmental funds such as the GCF including the possibility of having all global environmental funds work as a system. It also signaled great importance on CSP's efforts to work closely with LDCs and SIDS. Some Council members additionally stressed that the role of the Operational Focal Points could be further developed as well as putting more emphasis on stakeholder inclusion beyond CSP events. Some recipient Council members suggested the Secretariat should broaden the program to strengthen national capacities, especially to improve the work between countries and agencies. Some Council members noted that there was an underutilization of funds even though recipient countries are still heavily dependent on the program. The Secretariat mentioned that an expansion of the program is dependent on limits to the number of staff in the Secretariat.

**Agenda Item 9                      *Formative Evaluation of the GEF Integrated Approach to Address the Drivers of Environmental Degradation***

34. The GEF IEO presented the findings and conclusions of the Formative Evaluation of the GEF Integrated Approach to Address the Drivers of Environmental Degradation. The Council was pleased with the positive results generated so far and its improvement from GEF-6 IAPs to GEF-7 IPs. However, the Council was concerned about operational challenges in terms of the selection of lead agencies and on ensuring there is more access and balance given to LDCs and SIDS.

35. Several Council members stressed the need to ensure access of all recipient countries to IPs to increase programming share and requested GEF Secretariat to address this in further detail. In this context an amendment to the draft decision was proposed and accepted. Questions were also raised regarding the cities IP and its more limited results. The Secretariat explained that this was due to institutional arrangement challenges. The Secretariat also mentioned that it will provide a detailed implementation plan for the next replenishment meeting.

36. The Council commended the IEO for its timely delivery of the evaluation given its relevance to the GEF-8 programming directions during this replenishment negotiation period. The Council stressed the unique advantage the GEF has in this area and its significant importance in the direction of integrated programs and expressed overall support for the management response.

***Agenda Item 10      Evaluation of GEF Engagement with Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises***

37. The IEO presented the findings and recommendations of the Evaluation of GEF Engagement with Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, and the Management Response, followed by the management response by the GEF Secretariat. The Council welcomed the evaluation and management response and supported the broad engagement with the private sector.

38. The Council underlined the importance of tracking socio-economic benefits as part of project outcomes. Several Council members also stressed the need to keep the GEF OFPs/PFPs informed and involved in the private sector portfolio in their country. The Council welcomed the evaluation recommendations, however one Council member expressed concern that due to effects of the pandemic, MSMEs in their constituency need access to financing in addition to low-cost context-appropriate practices, technologies, and facilities. The Council members also pointed out that MSMEs need to comply with GEF's social environmental safeguards, inclusiveness, and other principles.

***Agenda Item 11      Evaluation of Institutional Policies and Engagement at the GEF***

39. The GEF IEO presented the Evaluation of Institutional Policies and Engagement of the GEF, followed by the management response by the GEF Secretariat. The Council welcomed the detailed evaluation on policies, the management response, and lessons on inclusion and knowledge management strategies for GEF-8.

40. A representative of the GEF Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group (IPAG) clarified the definitions of the indigenous peoples and local communities which was welcomed by the Council. The Council also supported the overarching narrative on diversity and inclusion and suggested that in the future it can be broadened further to include support for LGBTQ+ people and other groups. The Council noted with satisfaction the increase in resourcing activities to address gender disparities and recommended the GEF to implement strong monitoring and reporting requirements on gender and for other policies. The Council expressed their concern about stakeholder involvement, in particular CSOs, and welcomed the GEF Secretariat's commitment to increase CSO involvement. The Council reiterated the importance of involving GEF focal points from the beginning to ensure alignment with environmental national initiatives established by the governments.

***Agenda Item 12      Results Based Management – Evaluations of the Agency Self-Evaluation Systems and the GEF Portal***



41. The IEO presented the Results Based Management Evaluations of the Agency Self-Evaluation Systems and the GEF Portal followed the by presentation of the Management Response by the GEF Secretariat. The Council commented on the fundamental importance of these evaluations for the GEF operations.

42. The Council members noted some concerns about Agency self-evaluations, including overly positive evaluations and compliance issues in delivery of mid-term reviews and terminal evaluations. The Council stressed the urgency to reverse these challenges and the need to establish correct incentives for candor in self-evaluations. The GEF IEO responded that it is cognizant of the quality of self-evaluations, it does its own validation, and started doing post-completion verifications. The GEF Secretariat commented on its monitoring efforts and innovations (such as the Agency scorecard) that are less dependent on self-evaluation.

43. The Council members invited the Secretariat to continue improvements of the Portal, and requested several specific changes, including synchronization of information between the Portal and the public website, the possibility to create notifications for the GEF OFPs if new documents concerning their country portfolio are uploaded to the Portal, and making available information on the GEF funds given to countries and groups of countries over time. The Secretariat responded by explaining its plans to improve the user experience.

44. The Council requested that the WB in collaboration with the Secretariat monitor the impact of invested sustainable bonds and report back on the findings to the Council for consideration.

***Agenda Item 14      GEF Business Plan and Corporate Budget for FY22***

45. The Secretariat introduced the combined budget request covering the Secretariat, STAP and Trustee. The request reflects additional needs related to: i) Continued implementation of the GEF-7 strategies ii) support for the GEF-8 replenishment discussions and iii) continued action to address the risks posed by COVID-19. This is well within the budget approved for the GEF-7 period. It also provides for additional needs that are not present every year, including the third-party reviews of all agencies.

46. Council members supported the budget request, with some noting the increase of over 5% in the Secretariat budget, especially in consultancy fees, and 9% for the Trustee. In this context, Council members inquired about resource constraints and capacity gaps in the Secretariat reflected by recourse to consultants. Some asked how the unused funds were repurposed. Some noted the need to pay attention to costs and what savings can be achieved. They also requested analysis of the impact of remote work, and virtual modalities, including for Council meetings.

47. The GEF CEO then shared some of his preliminary observations and intention to undertake research on “acute and chronic” human resource issues and report findings to the 61<sup>st</sup> Council meeting; this would include opportunities for longer term modalities arising from the pandemic experience.

48. The Secretariat confirmed it would continue to adhere to Council members’ requests to maintain fiscal prudence through a stringent management of costs.

***Agenda Item 15      Work Program and Budget of the Independent Evaluation Office: June 2021.***

49. The GEF IEO presented its work plan and budget for the fiscal year 2022. It also provided an update on the IEO completed and ongoing evaluations and knowledge management activities during the reporting period. The Council thanked IEO for the evaluations, and underlined the importance of OPS and other ongoing evaluations and studies to inform the replenishment negotiations and GEF policies. The Council asked about the staffing issues. The IEO responded that it plans to engage World Bank human resources to understand the staffing needs based on the work program and on the IEO peer review that was done last year.

50. One Council member asked how restricted travel during COVID-19 affected evaluations. The IEO responded that it applied several mitigation strategies, including remote sensing and satellite imagery, the use of existing data (such as World Bank household surveys), remote interviews, and country-based consultants. Depending on the situation during the fiscal year 2022, IEO plans to do more field visits, once the travel is open.

51. There were several questions about ongoing evaluations. The IEO responded that all evaluations that inform the Seventh Comprehensive Evaluation will be completed within a month. The Sustainable Forest Management evaluation includes contextual, as well as strategic issues, it also covers the land degradation focal area.

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

52. The Co-chair introduced the item explaining that it included three sections: 1) Presentation by Executive Secretaries of the conventions that GEF serves; 2) Consideration of the report on Relation with Conventions, and 3) Consideration of the paper on the long-term vision on complementarity, coherence, and collaboration between the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

53. The Co-Chair invited five Executive Secretaries to speak: **Ms. Patricia Espinosa**, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; **Mr Ibrahim Thiaw**, Executive Secretary of UN Convention to Combat Desertification; **Ms. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema**, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CDB); **Mr Rolph Payet**, Executive Secretary for the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions; and **Ms. Monika Stankiewicz**, Executive Secretary of the Minamata Convention. They were requested to provide updates (where possible) from the intersessional process towards the next Conference of the Parties (COP) and Key developments and financial needs in view of the replenishment process.

54. **Patricia Espinosa (UNFCCC)** congratulated the GEF on its to 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and its strong partnership and support to UNFCCC. She recognized the GEF CEO as caring deeply about conservation, environmentalism, and climate change.

55. She said that much has changed since the journey began 30 years ago. We have more scientific data on climate change, we know its impact and that the emergency is growing and are likely close to the window where our opportunities to address this permanently closes. The world is dangerously closed to reaching the 1.5 degrees global temperature limit outlined in the Paris Agreement. She stressed that what has not changed is the need for adequate finance to address climate change, particularly in developing nations.

56. The Executive Secretary shared one main message with the council: The UNFCCC needs you. *Parties* need you. *Developing nations* need you. And the original mandate given to the GEF to serve as an operating entity of the Financial Mechanism under the Convention and the Paris Agreement is more crucial than ever.

57. She said It would be easy to be apathetic, but the last 6 months shows otherwise; the US rejoined the Paris agreement and submitted an ambitious NDC, the EU has boosted its proposal, as have other nations as well. Recent court cases revealed the power of the consumer, the shift to electric is happening faster than anticipated.

58. She highlighted that the GEF's mandate sits at the center of this work. Its support remains crucial. GEF's explicit mandate to support NDC enhancement can help advance stronger national climate action plans, and its support for reporting obligations under the Paris Agreement is vital. With the need for this work, now more than ever, she underscored the need to have a robust GEF-8 replenishment outcome that is commensurate to the climate emergency.

59. **Ibrahim Thiaw (UNCCD)** Wished GEF a happy anniversary and celebrated the achievements and 30 years of working together to tackle the most pressing global environmental issues. He noted that more than just a funding mechanism, GEF turns out to also be a knowledge hub and a finance advisor where big and

small constituencies meet, exchange views, and get the latest information on successful and less successful environmental projects and programs. Over the last 30 years, GEF has made remarkable progress.

60. The Executive Secretary stressed that much remains to be done, we are at a moment of great challenge for the health of people and planet and are far from delivering on commitments to sustainably manage and restore land and ecosystems. Demand for land restoration has become more and more visible. He invited the GEF to embrace this momentum and to deliver on that promise with the right level of ambition and resources.

61. He highlighted that ten years after the GEF council opened a focal area on land degradation and trusts that countries see land as an integrator in many other focal areas, so they cannot continue to work in silos. He noted that as the climate changes, with more droughts and floods expected, additional measures are needed. He supported the idea expressed by some Council Members calling on the GEF to be more assertive and attentive to challenges that droughts are causing. During the upcoming cycle, the GEF community should consider investing in early warning systems, preparedness, vulnerability and risk assessment, and climate risk mitigation.

62. **Elizabeth Mrema (CBD)** congratulated GEF in supporting conventions and many other programs. Expressed appreciation for the strong and active engagement by the GEFSEC in the processes of the conventions, and the effective liaison between the GEF and the GCF as duly reflected in the council document.

63. The Executive Secretary explained that the first formal draft of the post 2020 global biodiversity framework is a work in progress, with some key aspects being:

- a. **4 long-term goals** for 2050 for biodiversity, including means of implementation.
- b. **Implementation support mechanism** that will address issues such as mobilization of sufficient resources and capacity development.
- c. **Enabling conditions required** to ensure participation of all stakeholders, including indigenous people and local communities, as well as synergies with other relevant MEAs.
- d. **A system of planning, reporting, planning and review** of implementation outlined together with the responsibilities and transparency.
- e. **Outreach awareness and uptake** by all stakeholder recognized as essential for effective implementation.

64. She stressed that all these indicate that the GEF will be indispensable in supporting the implementation by eligible countries of all such aspects of the framework. The GEF will have an important role in stimulating integrated approaches to implementation cutting across

all focal areas. The GEF is expected to play its designated role in the provision of the resources necessary to achieve transformative change. Further, biodiversity is well positioned to contribute to and benefit from the integrated programming approached considered.

65. She noted that there is however a concern under the present system that countries are not drawing support from the GEF for the implementation of the protocols despite their inclusion in its strategy and a clear notion on allocation to BD. It will be important to work together to understand the factors influencing this, including at the national level to ensure that the needs for effective implementation of the protocols are adequately addressed.

66. **Rolph Payet (Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm Convention)** joined everyone in congratulating GEF, and recalled that the Stockholm Convention is also 30. He noted that we can celebrate, but also need to remember that there are lots of chemicals that remain in the environment. Want to draw attention to this, one of them being DDT.

67. The Executive Secretary said that the Stockholm Convention has started work on plastics and additives to plastics, of which many are toxic and have the demonstrated ability to accumulate in the environment causing human health issues and environmental damage. Together with the Minamata Convention it published two important documents and looks forward to working together to see how to distribute and share the outcomes. They were produced to provide clarity on potential coordination and to overcome misunderstanding that climate change, biodiversity and chemicals stand alone. For example, most of climate change is caused by combustion which is a chemical reaction. There are also many more examples where the chemical conventions have a very strong relation with climate change and biodiversity.

68. **Monika Stankiewicz (Minamata Convention)** Thanked the chair, the CEO and Council members for sharing time with executive secretaries, noting that it is a unique opportunity during this important time of GEF-8 replenishment. She reported that there are now 131 parties to the convention and new countries are joining every month.

69. The Executive Secretary mentioned that the first segment of the 4<sup>th</sup> COP will be held online on 1-5 November and that particular importance will be given to the convention financial mechanism as the COP reflects on the GEF-8 replenishment. As the convention is only 4 years old, robust funding in GEF-8 will be essential to parties' abilities to fully meet the deadlines of the convention.

70. She added that the convention secretariat was encouraged by the One Health concept. One cannot separate human health from planet health, which is fundamental to the Minamata Convention. She recognized that investment in any focal area generates benefits in others, with a need for an integrated approach to produce transformational change.

71. She highlighted that the Minamata Secretariat found the GEF-8 Programming Document to be substantially consistent with the convention guidance and is confident that the GEF-8 mercury portfolio will be responsive to convention guidance and convention obligations and raise the collective level of ambitions.

72. Council Members appreciated the presence of the Executive Secretaries and stressed the strong links existing between the conventions and the GEF.

73. On the second item, the report on Relations with Conventions and Other International Organizations, the Council appreciated the report and the decision was adopted.

74. On the third item, the Secretariat introduced document GEF/C.60/08 and its long-term vision (LTV), which is a roadmap developed jointly by GEF and GCF. The mission of both funds is to support climate action towards the goals of the UNFCCC and the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Both believe in maximizing the impact and transformational change and support highest international practice on accountability, transparency, gender, and safeguards. The Secretariat highlighted that there are differences and unique strengths, and that it is important to understand the respective focus of each institution, to minimize potential complications, and generate long-lasting outcomes in climate change mitigation as well as adaptation on the ground. The GEFTF, LDCF and SCCF are part of this vision. The Council encouraged the complementarity within the mandates of both funds and requested to be kept informed of the evolution of this long-term vision and its implementation. An amendment to the decision was proposed and accepted.

## **Agenda Item 20      Other Business**

75. One Council Member expressed concern that the report from the Centre for Global Development on Quality of Aid ranked the GEF very low. The Secretariat responded that it had studied the report to see what could be learned. It noted that the unique environmental mandate of the GEF was not sufficiently reflected in the report; that there are no substantive environmental indicators as the methodology utilized is more geared to development and humanitarian organizations. The report design does not capture the dimensions of GEF support in fragile areas, nor does it reflect the particular partnership system of the GEF and focuses heavily on countries. Other calculations are not necessarily comparable. The Secretariat outlined future steps that were acceptable to the Council, and the Secretariat was requested to report back on them.

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