

Summary Report
Informal Dialogue: Secretariats of MEAs and GEF
Held at the margins of 51st GEF Council
24 October 2016

Overview

The GEF organized the Second Informal Dialogue for the Secretariats of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) for which the GEF serves as a/the financial mechanism and the GEF Secretariat. The dialogue considered the increasingly prominent role of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 agenda in MEA activity. The dialogue was also an opportunity to hear updates from the different MEA Secretariats and to discuss how GEF can assist countries during the remaining GEF-6 period and moving toward GEF-7.

The dialogue had three goals:

1. Launch discussion among MEA representatives on the implication of the SDGs and 2030 Agenda on their work, including with GEF and each other.
2. Provide space for MEA Secretariats to share information on upcoming Conferences of Parties (COPs) and key decisions.
3. Gather MEA input on GEF's 2017 series of Expanded Constituency Workshops (ECWs).

High level representatives of the five MEAs participated in the dialogue:

- Mr. Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary, Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions
- Ms. Amy Fraenkel, Director, Mainstreaming, Cooperation and Outreach Division, CBD
- Mr. Jacob Duer, Principal Coordinator, Interim Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, UNEP
- Mr. Melchiade Bukuru, Chief, UNCCD Liaison Office
- Mr. Alejandro Kilpatrick, Team Leader, Climate Finance Sub-programme, UNFCCC

Participants included representatives from the GEF Secretariat and various GEF Council members/country representatives.

Discussion:

The GEF CEO and Chairperson, Naoko Ishii, opened the meeting, emphasizing that the goals promoted in MEAs such as the Paris Agreement, Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), and Aichi Targets have fundamental synergies with the SDGs. She noted GEF's unique role of serving multiple MEAs and thanked the MEA representatives for their willingness to explore integrated ways to address the global environmental commons. She said GEF is increasingly using its convening power and multi-stakeholder partnerships to spur coordinated efforts such as regulatory reforms and concrete investments. With the launch of the GEF-7 replenishment negotiations at the 51st Council, she emphasized it is time to reflect on what countries will need to achieve both SDGs and their commitments under MEAs.

In a discussion facilitated by Gustavo Fonseca, GEF Program Director, the MEA representatives expressed their readiness to engage with the GEF to enhance integration and to foster connections amongst each other and with SDGs.

Participants also noted key SDG linkages within their respective conventions:

- Ms. Fraenkel emphasized that MEAs are binding goals or targets, while SDGs are political goals. She also noted the crossover in the biodiversity space, for example, that biodiversity goals are contained in CBD targets and SDG goals 14 and 15.
- Mr. Bukuru emphasized that Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), which is part of UNCCD and the SDGs, has a ripple effect of benefits to women, food, and water.
- Mr. Payet said that in a world driven by consumer goods, chemicals are everywhere and therefore relate to most MEAs and SDGs. He noted the urgent need to deal with stockpiles of chemicals that can leak into the environment.
- Mr. Kilpatrick said that the Paris Agreement will see an early entry into force in early November 2016, and that the goals in Paris Agreement cut across SDGs. He expressed that finding effective synergies among MEAs will prove crucial to meeting the goals of the Paris Agreement. For example, countries' Nationally Determined Contributions may support resilience and biodiversity, thereby overlapping with other MEAs.
- Mr. Duer noted the Minamata Convention's link with water quality, poverty, and health.

On announcements on upcoming meetings and key decisions, Mr. Duer informed the group that 50 countries are expected to join the Minamata Convention, triggering an entry into force in early 2017. He expected that the upcoming COP1 will consider a Memorandum of Understanding with the GEF to serve as a Financial Mechanism, and will likely also adopt another element of a financial mechanism specific to supporting capacity building and technology assistance for national programs. He said a high level segment from 28-29 September 2017 is pending.

Mr. Bukuru invited all participants to the UNCCD COP in September 2017 in Inner Mongolia. Ms. Frankel noted the upcoming CBD COP in December 2016 in Cancun, which will include meetings of Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. She also announced the Business and Biodiversity Forum held alongside the COP, in which businesses will make pledges on biodiversity in business models and supply chains. Mr. Kilpatrick announced that the 2016 UNFCCC COP22 in Marrakech will also include a major milestone, the first meeting of Parties to the Paris Agreement.

On ECWs, William Ehlers (GEF) gave an overview of the GEF's Country Support Program, noting that 13 ECWs occur yearly around the globe. In a recent ECW in Bangkok, GEF sponsored a session on synergies amongst the MEAs, all of which made presentations. He asked participants if GEF should organize such MEA sessions during ECWs in 2017.

All MEA representatives fully supported the idea, saying ECWs comprise a good opportunity to gather MEA focal points with constituencies such as CSOs and implementers. Several challenges were noted, however, most notably that the Secretariats' limited travel budgets make it challenging to physically attend the ECW meetings. They suggested virtual participation as an option. Mr. Payet also offered that due to limited resources, it may be prudent to select 1 or 2

pilot workshops, or perhaps one or two MEA representatives could report back to the full group. Mr. Bukuru made a suggestion to the agenda: to facilitate a discussion on common reporting and indicators, to hear from parties how to improve and streamline national reporting.

Council members/country representatives also shared their views. The United States asked what types of project is best for best for spanning multiple focal areas and conventions. The United Kingdom emphasized that the MEA heads are speaking the language of integration, and that the GEF should have the flexibility to change with the times. Various participants reiterated that it is important to stay faithful to the guidance of Conventions and integrated programming is the responsibility of the recipient country.

Way forward:

Chizuru Aoki, GEF Lead Environmental Specialist and the GEF's MEA Lead, thanked the participants for their active discussion and enthusiasm for continued dialogue, and suggested to organize the next MEA meeting at the spring 2017 GEF Council, with a focus on GEF-7 replenishment. Participants elaborated that continued dialogue on integration could help dissolve silos, shift away from isolated approaches, and make use of scarce financial resources for maximum impact.