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GEF-NGO NETWORK RESPONSE TO THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE GEF-NGO NETWORK

(Prepared by: The GEF NGO Network)

NETWORK'S RESPONSE TO THE REVIEW

The GEF-NGO Network welcomes and greatly appreciates the Independent Review undertaken with the purpose of increasing Network's accountability and effectiveness; strengthening an active partnership between the Secretariat and Council and the NGO Network; and exploring funding and other support to build capacity for the Network.

After 10 years of work which was done on a volunteer basis out of devotion, we believe it was time to review constraints and weaknesses of the Coordination Committee faces to involve some 500 NGOs in the different regions in a more effective way.

The Coordination Committee of the GEF-NGO Network is fully committed to the GEF, and has outlined a strategic plan for the future interaction between the NGOs and the GEF Council, the Secretariat and the Implementing Agencies, in order to more effectively serve the community of accredited NGOs to the GEF.

The following are the first steps that the Coordination Committee agreed to take to address the recommendations identified in the Report:

1. Strengthen Accountability and Effectiveness

- The Coordination Committee, in consultation with the Secretariat, will:
 - a) Develop and agree on a work plan, with specific priorities, to strengthen its accountability and effectiveness.
 - b) Develop and agree on a set of indicators of performance for the members of the Coordination Committee, based on the Terms of Reference for Focal Points included in the Guidelines; and carry out annual self-evaluations which will be presented to the Council meetings.
 - c) Identify an independent entity to act as an "ombudsman" to help the Coordination Committee monitor the work of its members. The Coordination Committee will contact the Office of Monitoring and Evaluation of the GEF to seek their assistance on this matter.
 - d) Jointly agree on the timeframe for this ombudsman to monitor the work of its members.
 - e) The teleconferences recommended by the Report should serve as a tool to follow-up and monitor the effectiveness of the agreed work plan.

--Elections and amendment of the Guidelines:

- The Coordination Committee will review the Guidelines, to fully reflect all decisions made, currently not incorporated to the text.
- The Coordination Committee will identify an independent entity to investigate the elections that may have violated Guideline provisions. The Coordination Committee will contact the Office of Monitoring and Evaluation of the GEF to seek their assistance on this matter.

- The results of this review will be respected as final, and will be communicated to the accredited NGO in the respective regions.
- Before calling for new elections of Regional Focal Points, the section on Election Procedures of the Guidelines were reviewed and amended, to avoid similar situations as those described in the Report, in future elections.
- Prior to the final endorsement by the Coordination Committee of the reviewed Guidelines, the accredited NGOs will be given the opportunity to comment.
- The Coordination Committee will request to the Secretariat that the revised Guidelines are posted in the NGO section of the GEF website.

--Re-focus Accreditation goals:

- The Coordination Committee will work with the Secretariat on reviewing the accreditation process for NGOs.

--Database of NGOs, Website Improvement:

- The Coordination Committee will cooperate with and assist the Secretariat in providing the list of updated contacts in the regions, to update the database of all accredited NGOs to the GEF, and keep the database updated.
- The Coordination Committee will work with the Secretariat on ways to improve the NGO section of the website.

2. *Strengthen Outreach:*

- The distribution of the NGO Guide to the GEF, developed by the Network, will be our first coordinated task to better reach out the NGOs (accredited or not to the GEF) in the regions.
- The Coordination Committee will contact the Small Grants Programme (SGP), to explore ways to involve the SGP grantees on a regular basis in the Network.
- The Coordination Committee will contact the World Bank's Civil Society Group, as well as the UNDP and UNEP NGO coordinators, to explore ways to join efforts in developing outreach activities, and invite those NGOs to join the Network.
- Furthermore, the Coordination Committee will also explore ways to engage with thematic NGO Networks (such as those participating of the Conference of the Parties meetings for those Conventions which the GEF serves).

3. *Secretariat and NGO Network partnership*

- The Coordination Committee welcomes the proposal to convene a Task Force to collaborate with the Secretariat in establishing a long-term vision for the Network, and ways to carry out this vision.
- The Coordination Committee will start an internal dialogue process, in consultation with accredited NGOs, to identify some key areas and issues to start this collaboration process with the Secretariat.

4. *Funding*

- A Medium-Sized Proposal is currently being developed by the Coordination Committee of the Network, with the goal of engaging NGOs at national, regional and international levels in GEF recipient countries, and building the capacity of NGOs to interact more efficiently with the GEF –at the policy and project levels.

The Coordination Committee of the GEF-NGO Network will meet on November 5, 2005. A more detailed action plan will be prepared to be presented at the GEF-NGO Consultation and Council meetings of November 2005.