

August 24, 2015

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COUNCIL'S DISCUSSIONS
48TH GEF COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 02-04, 2015, WASHINGTON, D.C.

The following is a record prepared by the GEF Secretariat of key comments, understandings, and clarifications made by Council Members. These points are supplemental to the Joint Summary of the Chairs, which records the decisions agreed by the Council.

Agenda Item 1 Opening of the Meeting

1. The CEO and Chairperson of the GEF, Naoko Ishii, opened the 48th GEF Council Meeting by noting the crucial moment of this meeting ahead of the Conference on Financing for Development in Ethiopia in July, the anticipated adoption of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in New York, and the Conference of the Parties (COP 21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris in December. She emphasized the GEF's relevance to these processes and their follow-up by drawing on integrated, multi stakeholder approaches capable of addressing the drivers of environmental degradation. The largest work program in GEF's history presented to Council at this meeting is beginning to embody the principles and features of GEF 2020.

2. The CEO welcomed three new Agencies to the GEF Partnership. They are: the Foreign Economic Cooperation Office of Ministry of Environmental Protection of China (FECO), the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF), and the Development Bank of West Africa (BOAD).

Agenda Item 4 GEF 2020 Implementation

3. The CEO made a presentation on the *GEF2020 Strategy: Reflections after One Year*. In their comments, Council Members noted their appreciation for the opportunity to discuss broader strategic issues relevant to the GEF, and reiterated their support for the overall direction embodied in GEF2020. Several Council members emphasized the importance of country ownership and GEF's support aligned with national priorities and with Convention guidance. In the context of the evolving climate finance landscape, GEF's role in catalyzing action and private funds, including through the NGI pilot, was emphasized by several Council members, as was GEF's role as a risk-taker and innovator. Finally, the importance of effective implementation, of capacity building, of monitoring and evaluation, and KM was emphasized by a number of Council Members.

4. In response to Council Members' requests and in order to strengthen future Council discussions on GEF2020, for subsequent strategy discussions the Secretariat will prepare a written report to the Council.

5. Jeff Seabright, Chief Sustainability Officer at Unilever, was a guest speaker. He shared perspectives and actions of the private sector on the centrality of sustainability to their work – including Unilever's ambitious plans for a deforestation-free palm-oil supply chain, and emphasized the catalytic role that well-targeted public interventions could have. His remarks were appreciated by the Council.

Agenda Item 5 Annual Monitoring Review (AMR) FY14: Part II

6. The Council welcomed the AMR, and emphasized the importance of a strong results focus. Several Council members noted that it would be useful if results reporting includes what did not work too. A number of Council Members commended the Secretariat's progress so far in implementing the Gender Equality Action Plan, including the number of projects which addressed and reported on gender equality and women's empowerment. Recognizing a higher number of projects that included a broader social dimension, such as gender, indigenous peoples, and CSO participation, some Council Members stated that this trend needs to continue and requested the Secretariat to closely monitor the data, including tightening the criteria on gender mainstreaming. Some Council Members encouraged the Secretariat to track climate risks, adaptation, and resilience indicators in a more comprehensive manner, to use remote sensing data and mapping where possible and to effectively disseminate data and information in a user-friendly format, if possible also by country or region.

Agenda Item 6 Expediting the Preparation of the Stock of Delayed Projects

7. Many Council Members asked that the potential use of any potential funds released by cancellations be considered at the June 2016 Council meeting. Some also asked for a list of delayed projects to be distributed for information. Many highlighted a shared responsibility between recipient countries and agencies, requesting greater efficiency within countries and better coordination with agencies, and for the Secretariat to closely engage and communicate with agencies in the implementation of the Cancellation Policy. Some Council Members also suggested that all communications to countries on potential cancellation of projects be addressed to both the Operational and the Political Focal Points.

Agenda Item 7 GEF Business Plan and FY16 Corporate Budget

8. Council Members expressed support for the business plan, highlighting its alignment of priorities with those of the GEF-6 replenishment. They were also pleased that the Secretariat budget request remains within a budget cap of approximately \$80 million for the FY16-19 period. Council Members asked for additional information on costs associated with initiatives on information technology (IT), RBM, KM, and gender. The Secretariat explained that much of the effort on KM will leverage existing staff and resources, and that additional cost estimates are modest, while associated IT upgrading plans that would largely draw on special initiatives resources.

9. Several Council Members requested a new organigram for the GEF Secretariat to be provided by the next council meeting.

Agenda Item 8 Four-Year Work Program and Budget of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office – GEF-6

10. Council Members welcomed the new approach to the IEO Four-Year Work Program developed around the main issues in GEF-6, including multiple benefits, programmatic approaches and the drivers of global environmental change. A Council Member remarked that this approach will allow IEO to provide inputs to the 7th replenishment process.

11. Council Members commended IEO for emphasizing gender and women's empowerment as co-benefits. A further inquiry relating to this was raised as to how this could be tracked when the Secretariat has yet to develop specific indicators, and IEO responded that gender dimensions can be evaluated using multiple methods.

12. A Council Member emphasized the importance of GEF's KM initiative and IEO's active role in this area was requested. The same Council member also stated that, while impact evaluation can be costly, it should always feature in IEO work program.

13. Responding to a Council Member's inquiry, IEO explained that the update to the GEF M&E Policy and the Terminal Evaluation Guidelines would be finalized within this calendar year. The CSO Networked called for the revised M&E Policy to extend stakeholder engagement and promote a more participatory approach, and asked IEO to address stakeholder engagement in the 6th Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF.

Agenda Item 9 GEF Agency Compliance with Policies on Environmental and Social Safeguards, Gender, and Fiduciary Standards

14. Several Council members asked about the relationship between the GEF Safeguards Policy and the World Bank's review of its safeguard policies. The Secretariat explained that it has started discussions with the IEO about how to review the GEF Safeguards Policy and with the World Bank on its on-going review of its own safeguard policies.

Agenda Item 10 Knowledge Management Approach Paper

15. Council Members welcomed the Secretariat's initiative to establish a knowledge management team to champion KM integration to implement the concrete plans described in the Council document. The Council requested regular progress reports, welcomed the intention to prepare a more detailed plan by the end of 2016, and expressed appreciation for efforts to integrate knowledge management into the IAPs.

16. Many Council members emphasized the importance of embedding KM in all stages of the project cycle, the need for recipient countries' active participation (including in the KM Working Group), measuring success, the key role of Agencies, the need to develop a proper platform for data storage, analysis and information search, and effective dissemination tools.

Agenda Item 11 Report of the Chairperson of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel

17. Council Members welcomed the STAP's contributions to the Integrated Approach Pilots (IAPs) and to the knowledge management approach paper. Several Council Members asked that the STAP continue to assist in technical matters and project design under the IAPs and programme approaches. STAP stated that it would continue to work and develop lessons on the IAPs and KM. While the review of child projects (under programs, including IAP programs) is technically not within STAP's mandate, STAP offered to work with any Agency that so requests.

Agenda Item 12 Work Program

18. Council Members commended the Secretariat, Agencies, and STAP for their collaborative efforts to develop this large and innovative Work Program.

19. The 3 IAPs – (i) Sustainable Cities, (ii) Fostering Sustainability and Resilience for Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa, and (iii) Taking Deforestation out of Community Supply Chains – were well received by Council Members, who reiterated the importance of country ownership and alignment with country priorities. Many Council Members asked for an opportunity to examine the final child project designs of IAPs. Some Council Members emphasized the importance of participation of STAP in child project development. Some Council Members asked that the child projects of the programmatic approach on Illegal Wildlife Trade be shared with Council once they come in for endorsement. Some Council Members asked that the World Bank consider updating the PFD to reflect comments that were to be sent by these council members subsequently.

20. Council Members recognized the innovative approach of non-grant instrument projects, and encouraged the Secretariat to engage the private sector upfront in project designs. Since one of the targets is to engage the Public Sector with the NGI, several Council members reemphasized the importance of the public sector.

Agenda Item 13 Semi-Annual Evaluation Report June 2015 and Management Responses

21. Council Members welcomed the new streamlined approach of the GEF IEO to its reporting to the Council and also appreciated IEO's focus on ensuring the utility of the evaluations and mainstreaming gender concerns in evaluations.

22. Two Council members noted the finding that jointly implemented projects have slightly lower rating. While one of the Council members pointed out that joint projects may still be important as they bring different expertise together, another identified it as an issue that needs to be taken into account when implementing the integrated approaches.

23. A Council member noted with concern that GEF projects in SIDS underperform compared to projects in other areas, and called for further analysis of the underlying factors and how project implementation may be improved in SIDS.

24. Council members noted their concerns for the low ratings for project M&E among completed projects and called for greater attention to this concern.

25. Council members asked whether – given the leveling of the performance trends – APR could be prepared less frequently. The IEO responded that APR provides useful information to and is appreciated by several GEF stakeholders. The information that it provides will be useful for shedding more light on the implementation of the integrated approaches that the GEF has adopted in GEF-6.

26. Council Members welcomed the conclusions and recommendations of the Joint GEF/UNDP Evaluation of the Small Grants Program and the related joint management response, particularly the call for re-vitalizing the global SGP Steering Committee. Council Members asked for a completion date by the Secretariat on updating the program long-term vision and strategy.

Agenda Item 14 Relations with the Conventions and Other International Institutions

27. The Executive Secretary of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, Mr. Rolph Payet, addressed the GEF Council and gave an overview of the recent joint CoP of Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions.

28. Mr. Payet noted that the report from GEF to the Stockholm Convention had been well received. The CoPs requested the BRS Secretariat to prepare a report on financial resources available apart from GEF and on how to mobilize funds in a way that avoids duplication and achieves synergistic impact. On the effectiveness of implementation of the MoU between the Stockholm Convention COP and GEF Council, he thanked the GEF for its support to the BRS Secretariat. The CoP took note of the leveraging ratio of 1 to 3, as well as the concerns related to difficulties in raising co-financing. In guidance to the GEF, the Stockholm Convention CoP welcomed the increased funds provided to Chemicals and Waste under GEF-6, though it was concerned that support for Stockholm remained the same as GEF-5.

29. Some Council Members highlighted the importance of avoiding duplication in reporting to the Rio Conventions, highlighting joint reporting as a potential option to be considered by the Council. Council Members noted with appreciation the enhanced meaningfulness of the document, thanks to an inclusion of tables describing the response of the financial mechanism to the guidance received from Conventions as well as key issues that are of relevance to the GEF that are discussed at the CoPs.

30. Council Members expressed their strong support for the GEF's role as the most important mechanism for the global environment and in the context of the post 2015 development agenda through its work on strengthening the environmental sustainability pillar for sustainable development. They also underlined the need for the GEF to continue to be the premier mechanism for funding activities under the Conventions.

31. Council suggested that relations with GCF should be included in future reports.

Agenda Item 15 Progress Report on the Pilot Accreditation of GEF Project Agencies

32. Many Council Members commended the work of the Secretariat and the Accreditation Panel which led to the successful completion of the pilot, and stated they look forward to the next Council meeting discussion on Accreditation.