

**Summary Report**  
***Dialogue with Multilateral Environmental Agreement Secretariats and the GEF***  
*Held at the Margins of 52<sup>nd</sup> GEF Council*  
22 May 2017

## **Overview**

The Global Environmental Facility (GEF) organized the Third 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 celebrated the early adoption of the Minamata Convention and the International Day for Biological Diversity. It brought into attention the feedback received from MEAs as of the first replenishment meeting on GEF-7, highlighting cross-cutting elements, and the continued engagement of the GEF Secretariat with the MEAs on the replenishment process. The dialogue also created an opportunity for updates on key recent guidance to the GEF and to highlight convention-specific priorities for the GEF-7 replenishment.

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

- Mr. Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary, Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions
- Mr. Jacob Duer, Principal Coordinator, Interim Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury, UN Environment (UNEP)
- Ms. Amy Fraenkel, Director, Mainstreaming, Cooperation and Outreach Division, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- Mr. Melchiade Bukuru Chief, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Liaison Office
- Mr. Alejandro Kilpatrick, Team Leader, Climate Finance Sub-programme, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

Other participants included various GEF Council Members/country representatives, representatives from the GEF Secretariat, and representatives from GEF Agencies.



## **Opening Remarks and Introduction**

The GEF CEO, Naoko Ishii, opened the meeting celebrating the early adoption of the Minamata Convention and Biodiversity Day. She highlighted the important role of the conventions to the GEF and the GEF-7 replenishment. She highlighted the three emerging guiding questions that were identified during the first GEF-7 replenishment meeting held in Paris in March 2017: consistency with country priorities and objectives of the MEAs, GEF's comparative advantage,

and transformational potential. She also provided insights from the recent COPs and meetings she has attended since the last dialogue, including the UNFCCC, CBD and BRS COPs. She emphasized the importance of continued dialogue with the MEAs and the need to work together towards a common goal, including by supporting countries to integrate their MEA work with their sustainable development strategies.

### **Convention Engagement in the Replenishment**

The GEF Director of Programs, Gustavo Fonseca, presented a summary on the engagement of the GEF Secretariat with the Conventions on the GEF-7 replenishment to date. He highlighted feedback from Paris to be incorporated between now and the next replenishment meeting in Addis Ababa in October 2017. This included the ongoing analysis of the proposed Impact Programs to ensure they answer the three emerging questions identified.

He summarized the feedback received from the CBD, UNCCD, Stockholm Convention and UNFCCC and discussed cross-cutting elements such as using COP guidance as a starting point, ensuring alignment with national priorities set out in the various national planning instruments of each MEA and country ownership through the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) and focal area strategies, and enhancing synergies across conventions. On the construct and design of Impact Programs, comments were received on additional potential areas, in particular to ensure geographic coverage. The need to look at efficiency and effectiveness in the Impact Programs model, with experience from the Integrated Approach Pilots (IAPs) was mentioned. In terms of trade-offs and impacts, the work from the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) was highlighted. Another topic raised was on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how they would fit into the overall construct of GEF-7, from one standpoint, they are national-level targets, however there is also some ambition to start looking at linkages with the conventions and the GEF.

Chizuru Aoki, GEF Lead Environmental Specialist and the GEF's MEA Lead, gave additional MEA-relevant considerations that need to be taken into account for GEF-7, including the key strategies and priorities coming out of each convention, needs assessments carried out by some conventions, specific guidance on the SDGs and synergies across focal areas, and other GEF-7 relevant guidance from recent COPs. She also discussed the intention to schedule a MEA-wide discussion prior to the second replenishment meeting, most likely in August.

### **Updates from Convention Secretariats**

#### **BRS Conventions**

Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary of the BRS Conventions made a brief presentation on the outcomes of the BRS COP. Key messages included the finding that global levels of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) are declining, proving that investment in POPs management can show results; the financial needs exceed available funds, as the needs for 2018-2020 is estimated at around 4.3 billion USD, which predominantly involves dealing with legacy POPs. In the Stockholm Convention, three new POPs were listed and waste management emerged as a critical issue, including plastics and e-waste, as well as its synergies with the 2030 Agenda. The effectiveness evaluation of the convention has been concluded and the past COPs welcomed the outcomes. It may be replicated for Basel and other conventions. In the decisions taken by the

COP on the financial mechanism of the convention, parties provided additional guidance to the GEF, including GEF-7 priority areas.

As regards the draft GEF-7 programming document, Mr. Payet mentioned that the development of the Impact Programs did not take into account Stockholm Convention National Implementation Plans (NIPs) and COP guidance. As a consequence, he raised the concern that the GEF-7 approach may not take into consideration all POPs, especially legacy POPs, thus lacking adherence to the most recent COP guidance to the GEF. He suggested that any future revision of the Impact Programs should be based, among others, on NIP priorities and COP guidance and offered the support of the BRS Secretariat, as the host of this information, for the redrafting of the GEF-7 strategy, including the Impact Programs. Potential areas of cooperation were highlighted, with a more integrated approach across focal areas such as biodiversity and climate change, as well as co-benefits to be explored through the implementation of the Minamata Convention. These areas included poor handling of waste; mosquito-borne diseases, agricultural pests and expansion of vector zones, which may trigger the use of DDTs; POPs waste arising from disused solar panels and batteries; levels of toxicity of POPs found in animals and causing an impact on reproduction; and the growth of micro plastics in cells of animals, among others.

#### Minamata Convention

Jacob Duer, Principal Coordinator of the Interim Secretariat of the Minamata Convention on Mercury provided an update on the process for the ratification of the Minamata Convention. The convention will enter into force on August 16, 2017 with a deadline of June 23, 2017 for countries to submit their letters of ratification to the UN Depositary in order to be a party to the convention at COP1. Currently, 52 ratifications have been deposited in New York, but it is expected that over 60 countries will take action to ratify in order to be a party at COP1. COP1 will be held in Geneva, Switzerland on September 24-29, 2017. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the GEF Council and the COP has already received comments from the Council. The GEF guidance is mostly agreed text, except for an issue regarding eligibility to access funds of signatories of the convention, which may not yet be parties. As both texts have been negotiated in the INC process, both will be presented to COP1 for formal adoption. Regarding the GEF-7 replenishment, the guidance is an important contribution to the replenishment discussion. The guidance contains areas that could receive support from the GEF, including Enabling Activities (NAP and Minamata Initial Assessment). It is expected that countries will continue to seek support for enabling activities after COP1 and during the GEF-7 period.

Regarding the implementation of Minamata, the draft COP1 guidance to the GEF includes an indicative list of categories of activities that could receive GEF support, which are: support to activities related to legally binding obligations; support to activities that facilitate implementation; and support for the reduction of mercury releases and emissions. This guidance combined with messages received from countries have painted clear messages for the GEF, including that the COP guidance should be the main directing document for the GEF-7 strategy; direct country engagement and through agencies is fundamental; an impact-driven approach is needed due to scarcity of resources; facilitating access to resources in an efficient and effective manner is key; coordination and synergies are supported, as long as they do not complicate the

way countries access resources; and support for the continuation of the focal area approach. Regarding the Impact Programs presented at the first replenishment meeting, there are some of significant relevance and interest to the Minamata Convention, including circular economy, Amazon and Congo Basins, energy, and healthy oceans. As the Minamata Convention is very new, early implementation will be the priority, as well as to continue to attract countries to ratify the Convention.

### CBD

Amy Fraenkel, Director of Mainstreaming, Cooperation and Outreach Division of the CBD, made a presentation on the decision on the Financial Mechanism, adopted by the thirteenth Conference of the Parties in December 2016, with a focus on the Four-Year Framework of Programme Priorities for the Seventh Replenishment Period of the GEF. She noted that the Four-Year Framework provides specific guidance to the GEF that is more strategic, and prioritizes key areas where additional support is needed. She mentioned that the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 is coming to an end in 2020, and that GEF-7 thus comes at a very important time, both to push to the finish line for some of its targets, while also looking ahead to what will be needed going forward. She noted that the Four-Year Framework had been developed in close consultation with the GEF Secretariat, as well as with other biodiversity-related conventions. She also noted that a needs assessment had been carried out per the direction of COP12, and that assessed needs were found to be in the range of 2.8 – 4.5 billion dollars for the 2018-2022 period. In terms of policy directions, the COP recognized opportunities for synergies among other MEAs and also with the SDGs, and supported more enhanced coherent policy frameworks at the national level, with collaboration at the national level among the various focal points, as well as integrated approaches to project design, and regional and global projects.

### UNCCD

Melchiade Bukuru, Chief of the UNCCD Liaison Office, highlighted a number of key messages incorporated in the UNCCD comments to the GEF Secretariat on the first draft of the GEF-7 programming directions document. He highlighted the GEF Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) Value for Money Analysis of the land degradation focal area as a strong argument for allocating the appropriate resources to this area and as an important basis for integrated approaches. He also mentioned that the UN General Assembly had identified land degradation neutrality (LDN) as an SDG accelerator.

He raised the gender aspect as an important issue that unifies all of the conventions, and where the GEF has a role to play, as in particular women bear the brunt of the impacts of environmental degradation in general, and in land in particular. He announced that next year the UN will assess SDG target 15.3, so the group of friends on LDN (co-chaired by Iceland and Namibia) convened a meeting with the UN General Assembly to build momentum around this target. He also announced that the high-level segment of COP 13 will be held on September 11-12, 2017 in Ordos, China, which will likely be opened by the President of China.

### UNFCCC

Alejandro Kilpatrick, Team Leader of the Climate Finance Sub-programme at the UNFCCC, provided some information on the latest developments and guidance from the last COP. In a recap of GEF-related COP guidance, he highlighted the decision that the financial mechanism

would serve the Paris Agreement, thus the GEF and Green Climate Fund (GCF) are to serve it; the request for a strong replenishment and for the GEF to learn from previous replenishments; the request for the GEF to include the Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) in its GEF-7 package; continued support for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Development States (SIDS); continued collaboration with the Climate Technology Center and Network (CTCN); and to continue the Non-grant Instrument (NGI) pilot.

He mentioned that the Sixth Review of the Financial Mechanism will be concluded by COP 23 and is to inform the GEF-7 process, and appreciated collaboration with the GEF Secretariat to date on that topic. He highlighted the growing issue of eligibility of resources for certain parties. Outside of COP 22 guidance, he emphasized the need to reflect linkages between the GEF and GCF in terms of complementarities in the GEF-7 strategy. Capacity-building will continue to grow as a topic of importance and guidance on this to the GEF may be enhanced, already reflected by invitation to the GEF to participate in meetings of the Paris Committee on Capacity-Building. The vision of the Executive Secretary is to better align the implementation of the Paris Agreement with the SDGs, and she has had constructive discussions along these lines with the GEF CEO. The UNFCCC has appreciated interaction with the GEF Secretariat and look forward to additional opportunities to provide comments. Thus far, comments have focused on technology, technology transfer and development, including support to Poznan Strategic Programme and TNA development that were not clearly identified in the proposed programming directions. He supported Mr. Bukuru's comments on gender as an important area to build on what has already been done. He raised the issue of understanding the needs of parties better, not only in the context of NDCs, as well as the need to clearly express the linkages between the Impact Programs and the UNFCCC, which is not very clear now.

## **Discussion**

The representative from Italy asked about the internal challenges the GEF Secretariat might face in terms of staff, flexibility and structure to deliver the goals of the GEF-7 replenishment. The GEF CEO answered that she was confident that the GEF staff can deliver, but the specifics will depend on the final outcome of the replenishment, to be agreed among the donors.

Some GEF Council Members and representatives expressed their support to the Programming Directions construct where the focal areas would come first, with Impact Programs to complement them. The representative from Switzerland echoed the CBD's comments regarding the need to clearly understand and reflect how the Four-Year Framework will be taken up by the GEF-7 programming by the next COP in 2020.

The notion of needs assessment was discussed, as they are produced when there is a specific provision either in the convention or the MOU. While the UNCCD does not have one, the UNCCD Secretariat estimated that \$650 million would be needed in the GEF-7 replenishment context. The \$100 billion for climate change is seen as a political declaration and does not constitute at all a needs assessment exercise, since the UNFCCC does not contemplate such a process compared to the CBD or CCD. The Council Member from Belgium highlighted that this indicative number does not reflect the current economic conditions nor does it reflect the GEF's role, which is not to pay everything for the whole world.

The Council Member from Belgium responded to the issue raised by the UNFCCC on access modality and that not all parties of the convention receive resources and said it was something that needed to be discussed, as it will likely be raised at COP 23. With regards to the Paris Agreement and the fact that some parties may never ratify it, he asked the UNFCCC what it may mean for GEF-7, and whether there may be additional guidance on support for future Biennial Update Reports (BURs). The UNFCCC clarified that regarding ratification of the Paris Agreement, it is more of a political discussion than a practical one. He said it is clear that the Paris Agreement is to enhance the implementation of the Convention, and the GEF continues to receive guidance from the Convention, but how the COP serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA) and Convention guidance will be transmitted is still to be decided.

The representative from the United States asked the following questions to which each of the MEA representatives was requested to address:

- Which topics or under what circumstances do the MEAs think an Impact Program could do better than multi-focal area projects and programs to achieve MEA goals?
- How can convention results be tracked through the Impact Programs?
- How can we ensure the conventions are receiving the necessary funding for their implementation?

Mr. Payet's view was that traditional programming through focal areas have had an impact as shown in the positive results of the 4<sup>th</sup> review of the Financial Mechanism of the Convention, the chemicals and waste focal area study and the preliminary results of OPS-6. He cautioned that the GEF-7 programming strategy needs to reflect learning from GEF-6. He shared his thought that the Impact Programs can be goal-driven, but from the implementation of GEF projects it is known that results can be seen 5-10 years down the line. This long-term feedback would need to be gathered before the GEF changed its delivery model in such a drastic manner by introducing the programming through Impact Programs. In terms of tracking, Mr. Payet indicated that it is important to have clearly visible and defined indicators—for chemicals and waste this is not very clear as one has to be able to actually measure it. He thought it was important to include integration in GEF-7 programming by looking at the whole picture, for example with regards to synergies between climate change and chemicals and waste, where there are many examples.

Mr. Duer's perspective was that focal areas are important to support national efforts, while Impact Programs are an opportunity to support the mainstreaming of the Minamata Convention through linkages to other areas (energy, cities, oceans) where the focal area has not traditionally moved into. He indicated that the Impact Programs can provide an opportunity for broader thinking and broadening the finance space by telling the story of the chemicals issue beyond chemicals, and thus be able to leverage other types of resources to support the implementation of the chemicals and waste agenda, including through involvement of the private sector.

Ms. Fraenkel said these questions got to the heart of the CBD's comments to the GEF. She re-emphasized the suggestion to start with the guidance of the COPs and have a narrative on the best way to address these, whether it is through focal area only or through integrated approaches, so as to better explain why that is the best way to address the guidance. She stated that the CBD Secretariat did not find these linkages well reflected in the documents as yet. She gave

sustainable cities as an example of where an integrated approach might make sense. On tracking results, she agreed that this was a key issue, i.e., how to demonstrate that an Integrated Program was delivering on specific focal area priorities, and track accountability and funding expenditures for the various MEAs.

Mr. Bukuru re-emphasized the need to protect the STAR, separate from what gets decided on the Impact Programs. He agreed that is not easy to measure impacts of what we invest, but thought that with the global LDN target, there were more concrete indicators that could help track results, including extent of land cover, and amount of carbon stored above and below ground.

Mr. Kilpatrick agreed with Ms. Fraenkel on the need for a narrative that uses COP guidance as the starting point and reiterated that in the case of UNFCCC the GEF will also serve the Paris Agreement and thus GEF-7 should fully take into account the provisions of the Paris Agreement particularly as regards support to NDCs and the transparency framework. He also agreed that it is important to see lessons learned from the IAPs in terms of defining in which specific situations an integrated approach could work better. He thought the Impact Programs provided an important opportunity to look at interlinked elements where they may best apply, either thematically or ecosystem-based and where greater added value could be achieved. He mentioned that in climate change there is a strong push towards looking at non-state actors in the implementation of the Paris Agreement, and believes Impact Programs could be designed in a way that attracts partnerships or leverages additional funding or partnerships. However, he emphasized that these would have to be based on convention guidance and on how these programs best add value to transboundary or very specific issues. In terms of tracking, he thinks it should be linked to priorities for countries and conventions. As an example, he highlighted leverage of resources as an important indicator.

## **Closing**

Gustavo Fonseca thanked the participants for their active participation. Naoko Ishii closed the meeting, highlighting the constructive questions and comments from the MEAs, and reaffirming the GEF commitment to continue consultations with Conventions in the GEF-7 replenishment process.

