

Monday, 21 June 2021

Summary of the 60th Meeting of the Global Environment Facility Council: 14-18 June 2021

The 60th meeting of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council adopted a Work Program that includes eight stand-alone full-sized projects on international waters, four on biodiversity, three on climate change mitigation, and two on chemicals and waste. This Work Program, worth USD 281.1 million, represents 7.2% of the entire seventh replenishment of the GEF (GEF-7) and delivers full achievement of five core GEF-7 indicators.

In addition, the 30th meeting of the Council for the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF) adopted a Work Program totaling USD 60.73 million for seven projects to address climate change adaptation priorities. The LDCF Work Program involves seven LDCs, five of which are accessing the LDCF for the first time during the GEF-7 period. The LDCF/SCCF Council also approved plans for developing a 2022-2026 climate change adaptation strategy for Council endorsement in June 2022.

These projects will contribute to efforts to address the challenges Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chairperson of the GEF, laid out in his opening remarks to the 60th GEF Council meeting. Rodríguez highlighted the need to work together to address the “crises in front of us,” including climate change, biodiversity and wildlife habitat loss, land degradation, ocean pollution and depletion, and dangerous chemicals.

The five Executive Secretaries from the conventions for which the GEF serves as a financial mechanism also raised the themes of collaboration and the need for synergistic action during a dialogue with the GEF Council. GEF CEO Rodríguez noted the timeliness of the dialogue given their shared priority of supporting a clean, green, and resilient recovery and the GEF’s role in fostering integrated action. The Council’s adoption of a decision regarding a long-term vision on complementarity, coherence, and collaboration between the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the GEF was also highlighted as an important opportunity for collaboration and building synergies.

Rodríguez and Mette Møglestue, Norway and Elected Chairperson for 2021, served as the Co-Chairs for the meeting, which took place online from 14-18 June 2021.

In addition to the decisions on the Work Program and collaboration with the GCF, the Council agreed to take action on recommendations included in several evaluation reports conducted by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the GEF. The Council was also updated on the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel’s (STAP) recent work, its evaluation of

the GEF Work Program and programming proposals for the GEF-8 replenishment, and the STAP’s plans for the coming months.

The next GEF Council meeting will take place in December 2021 and will be preceded by a consultation with civil society on the theme, “Engaging Young people in promoting GEF’s mission: Youth-led solutions to the planet’s environmental crisis.”

This summary highlights the discussions and decisions from the 60th meeting of the GEF Council and the 30th meeting of the LDCF/SCCF Council.

A Brief History of the GEF

The GEF was created in 1991 to formulate financing responses to the mounting concern in the preceding decade over global environmental problems. The GEF operated in a pilot phase until mid-1994. Negotiations to restructure the Facility were concluded at a GEF participants’ meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, in March 1994, where representatives of 73 countries agreed to adopt the GEF Instrument.

The GEF organizational structure includes:

- an Assembly that meets every four years;
- a Council that meets twice a year;
- a Secretariat;
- the STAP; and
- the IEO, which was created in 2003.

The organization’s main decision-making body is the GEF Council, which is responsible for developing, adopting, and

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evaluating the GEF's operational policies and programs. Meeting twice a year, it is composed of 32 appointed Council Members, each representing a constituency, that is, a group of either donor or recipient countries. The Council includes both donor and recipient countries.

The GEF Assembly has convened six times: 1-3 April 1998 in New Delhi, India; 16-18 October 2002 in Beijing, China; 29-30 August 2006 in Cape Town, South Africa; 25-26 May 2010 in Punta del Este, Uruguay; 28-29 May 2014 in Cancún, Mexico; and 27-28 June 2018 in Da Nang, Viet Nam.

The GEF is funded by donor countries, which commit money every four years through a process called the GEF replenishment. Since its creation in 1991, the GEF Trust Fund has been replenished by USD 2.75 billion (GEF-1), USD 3 billion (GEF-2), USD 3.13 billion (GEF-3), USD 3.13 billion (GEF-4), USD 4.34 billion (GEF-5), USD 4.43 billion (GEF-6), and USD 4.1 billion (GEF-7). Negotiations for GEF-8 are currently ongoing.

The GEF administers the LDCF and the SCCF and provides secretariat services to the Adaptation Fund established by the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The GEF also serves as a financial mechanism for a number of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), including the:

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);
- UNFCCC;
- UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD);
- Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs); and
- Minamata Convention on Mercury.

The GEF's work also focuses on sustainable forest management, international waters, and ozone layer depletion.

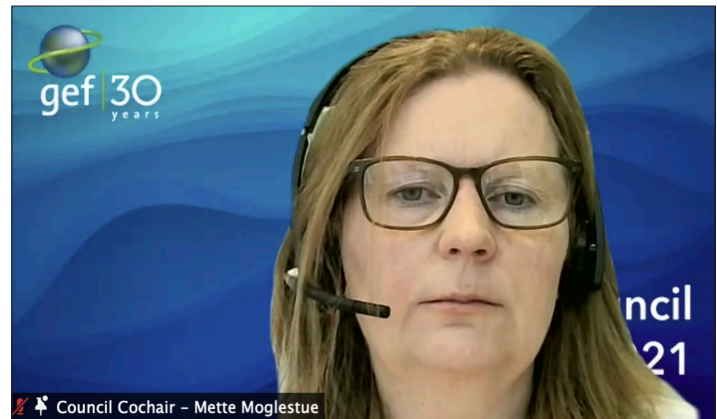
Funding from the Facility has been channeled to recipient countries through 18 "GEF Agencies": the UN Development Programme (UNDP); the UN Environment Programme (UNEP); the World Bank; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO); the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); the African Development Bank (AfDB); the Asian Development Bank (ADB); the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD); the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); World Wildlife Fund-US.; Conservation International (CI); the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN); the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA); the Brazilian Biodiversity Fund (FUNBIO); the Chinese Foreign Economic Cooperation Office (FECO); the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF); and the West African Development Bank (BOAD).

Summaries of ENB coverage of past GEF Council and Assembly meetings can be found at: <https://enb.iisd.org/negotiations/global-environment-facility-gef>.

GEF Council Consultation with CSOs: A GEF Council Consultation with civil society organizations (CSOs) took place on Friday, 11 June 2021, prior to the 60th meeting of the GEF Council. The discussion focused on the theme, "Enhancing Climate Resilience: The Role of Civil Society, and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities." For ENB's summary of the proceedings, see: <https://enb.iisd.org/gef/60th-council-meeting/highlights-and-images/11june2021>.

Report of the GEF Council Meeting

Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, GEF CEO and Chairperson, opened the 60th GEF Council Meeting on 14 June 2021, expressing his



Mette Møglestue, Norway, Elected Chairperson for 2021

hope that this would be the last virtual Council meeting due to COVID-19. He highlighted the need to work together to address "the crises in front of us," including climate change, biodiversity and wildlife habitat loss, land degradation, ocean pollution and depletion, and dangerous chemicals. The CEO suggested that strong political signals coming from political leaders, including the G7 Leaders' Summit that had just concluded, are cause for hope. He reported that the first meeting for the GEF-8 replenishment had discussed how the GEF can scale up action on inter-related environmental threats and expressed general support for the GEF's plans and priorities. Rodríguez highlighted that the Council will consider the formalization of an agreement for the long-term vision on complementarity, coherence, and collaboration between the GCF and the GEF, among other agenda items. In closing, he reminded participants that the GEF turns 30 in 2021 and announced a new six-month GEF campaign on the theme #ForThePlanet (<https://www.thegef.org/30-years-gef>).

Rodríguez welcomed Mette Møglestue, Norway, as the Elected Chairperson for 2021. She thanked the Council for the confidence placed in her.

The Council proceeded to adopt the agenda and convened online for over four hours per day to complete its work. In this report, we summarize the deliberations based on the order in which agenda items were addressed.

Adoption of the Agenda

On Monday, 14 June, Møglestue introduced the agenda ([GEF/C.60/01/Rev.01](https://www.thegef.org/30-years-gef)). A Council member noted that the 2021 Quality of Official Development Assistance (QuODA) report ranks the GEF 19th of 20 donors, asking the Secretariat to respond. Møglestue noted this issue would be taken up under the agenda item for "Other Business." The Council adopted the agenda as presented.

Progress Report on the Independent Third Party Review of UNDP

Møglestue opened the discussion on this agenda item on 14 June. Françoise Clottes, GEF Secretariat, presented "Progress Report on the Third Party Review of UNDP" ([GEF/C.60/05](https://www.thegef.org/30-years-gef)). She recalled the December 2020 Council decision calling for the review to be completed in time for the December 2021 Council session, and drew attention to its Annex 3 on the progress report by the third-party independent reviewer. She noted some positive preliminary findings by the third-party reviewer, and promised that the GEF Secretariat will keep the Council advised.

All Council Members intervening in the discussion expressed appreciation for the report, the transparency of the process, and the signs of progress so far. In response to questions and observations, Clottes said:

- the GEF Secretariat is committed to ensuring transparency in the assessment process;
- the Agency assessments are “unambiguously” required to look at the Agency’s implementation capacity;
- the third-party review of UNDP takes into account all sources, including any assessments underway by other institutions such as the GCF;
- the differences in the standards being assessed for UNDP compliance would be best explained by UNDP;
- the GEF Secretariat takes note of Members’ concerns about the concentration of GEF resources in projects implemented by UNDP;
- the GEF Secretariat understands the importance to the GEF-8 replenishment negotiations of the third-party review of UNDP, which is why the review was accelerated;
- extending the use of the project screening template beyond 2021 is for the Council to decide;
- it is up to the Council how to address any gaps identified between UNDP’s self-assessment and the independent third-party review; and
- project delays caused by the assessment process are being monitored by the GEF Secretariat.

Clottes added that delays caused by the assessment process are a necessary trade-off to ensure proper controls are in place. She said no project cancellations have resulted, and many of the delays have as much to do with the pandemic as the assessment, with 47 projects having received extensions.

CEO Rodríguez thanked all speakers for their input, and said it was too early in the third-party review process to draw any conclusions. He noted some positive steps undertaken by UNDP, and promised to keep the Council informed on review progress. He also stressed the importance of the UNDP review as a precedent for assessments of other GEF Agencies.

The draft decision on this item was adopted without amendment.

Decision: The Council takes note of the report.

Follow up of UNDP related decisions from the 59th Council meeting

On 14 June, Françoise Clottes, GEF Secretariat, introduced this agenda item, referencing the Progress Report on the Third Party Review of UNDP just discussed and noting that it also addresses UNDP’s self-assessment and the Secretariat’s activities to disseminate information and develop a project checklist template, in addition to the independent assessors’ progress report.

Pradeep Kurukulasuriya, UNDP, updated the Council on UNDP’s ongoing self-assessment, the first system-wide review of UNDP’s resource use. Noting its focus on systems and on increasing effectiveness, he pointed to “encouraging” findings. He reported completion of a first follow-up audit, which will be made public, saying a second audit will assess the sustainability of changes made. He reported on a UNDP inter-bureau task team’s collaborative work on implementation and on a new corporate performance unit for enhanced oversight and coordination of responses, with zero tolerance of

mismanagement. He highlighted UNDP’s commitment to full transparency, noting that two recent reports on ODA have found UNDP among the best providers. He said strengthening risk management will continue.

During ensuing discussion, many Council Members queried how UNDP’s “systemic dysfunctionalities” will be addressed for real change on the ground, particularly regarding management behavior, organizational culture, and operational capacity limits. Some speakers called for more self-critical/self-reflective reporting on difficulties in implementing required changes.

Others raised questions on:

- improving systems to avoid similar dysfunctionalities in any GEF Implementing Agency;
- avoiding as much as possible any delays to projects due to the extra requirements this situation necessitates;
- stakeholder capacity to have meaningful presence in all projects;
- UNDP’s implementation of recommendations on the “Standards and Labels” project in the Russian Federation, particularly on oversight and accountability;
- strengthening the role and capacity of operational focal points (OFPs) to choose implementing Agencies; and
- increasing transparency on the ground and in-country review of implementing partners.

Kurukulasuriya responded that his written presentation would be circulated, and underscored ongoing changes to strengthen risk management, including through: a pre-investment steering committee to review assistance requests; clarification of roles and responsibilities; and development of assessment tools for country offices. He proposed addressing the Standards and Labels project in executive session.

Rodríguez said the ongoing third-party review process will be addressed in the context of GEF-8, particularly on managing complex risks. Clottes added that the GEF is assessing its procedures, particularly on minimum fiduciary standards.

Work Program for GEF Trust Fund

On 14 June, Gustavo Fonseca, GEF Secretariat, introduced the proposed “Work Program for the GEF Trust Fund” ([GEF/C.60/04](#)), containing 33 projects and addenda to three existing programs for a total request of USD 257.3 million from the GEF Trust Fund and USD 23.8 million in associated Agency fees. He pointed out that the total of USD 281.1 million represents 7.2% of the entire GEF-7 replenishment. He reported that, if approved, the Work Program would result in 100%



Gustavo Fonseca, GEF Secretariat

achievement of five of the core GEF-7 indicators while a sixth will nearly reach that level.

Most Council Members intervening expressed support for the Work Program as proposed, although some requested that certain projects undergo a second review before CEO endorsement to address particular concerns about project design or issues such as additionality. Several Members asked for specific conditions to be placed on the Climate Resilience and Adaptation Finance and Technology Transfer Facility (CRAFT) Non-Grant Instrument (NGI) for it to be approved. The Secretariat agreed to note these conditions in a footnote to the Work Program.

One Council Member said his country's policies on human trafficking, state-sponsored terrorism, and transparent military audits do not allow him to support several projects proposed in the draft Program and asked that his objections be reflected in the Co-Chairs' Summary.

In response to other concerns and questions raised by Members, Fonseca explained:

- the Secretariat will commit to provide the December 2021 Council with an analysis of how recent projects will contribute to a "green and blue recovery" from the pandemic;
- the lower share of Latin America and the Caribbean in recent work programs reflects the fact that this region got many projects approved early in the GEF-7 cycle;
- the low figure achieved on the indicator on chemicals and waste of global concern is more a problem with how this figure is calculated rather than real results on the ground, and the Secretariat will examine how to better reflect the latter going forward;
- the low figure for the protected areas indicator may reflect greater Member concern with integrated landscapes, and may change once the new global biodiversity framework is approved by the CBD;
- the Secretariat is limited in what it can do to change the concentration of GEF resources under each Agency, since countries pick which Agency they wish to work with;
- for hotel revitalization, NGI's eligibility criteria screen out five-star hotels and only permit help to International Development Agency countries, which should address concerns about luxury hotels getting funding; and
- concerns about GEF funding to countries not on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) ODA list are misplaced since GEF lending is compliant with criteria and allowances set by the OECD.

Responding to concerns raised by a recipient constituency Member, CEO Rodríguez said flexibilities to account for challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic are being allowed by the GEF Secretariat to the extent possible without sacrificing project quality.

Council Members adopted the decision as presented.

Decision: The Council approves the Work Program comprising 33 projects and three programs, subject to comments made during the Council meeting and additional comments that may be submitted in writing to the Secretariat by 15 July 2021.

Total resources approved in this Work Program amount to USD 281.1 million. The Work Program comprises Project Identification Forms (PIFs), Program Framework Documents

(PFDs), and a Non-expedited Enabling Activity contained in Annex A to the decision.

The three programs approved are extensions of existing programs to add new countries:

- Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, and Sao Tomé and Príncipe to join the Implementing Sustainable Low- and Non-Chemical Development in Small Island Developing states (SIDS) Program (ISLANDS);
- Benin, Chad, Mali, Niger, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Zambia to join the GEF-7 African Minigrids Program; and
- Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Guinea, Mali, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone, and Zambia to join Global Opportunities for Long-term Development of Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining Sector Plus Program (GOLD+).

The Work Program includes two NGIs: one to scale up CRAFT that invests in private sector solutions that deliver both adaptation and mitigation benefits, and the International Finance Corporation (IFC)-GEF Hotel Green Revitalization Program (HGRP), which aims to provide a de-risking mechanism that will support the small and medium-sized hotel industry in "building back greener" after the pandemic.

Stand-alone full-sized projects include eight on international waters, four on biodiversity, three on climate change mitigation, and two on chemicals and waste.

The Work Program also includes six multi-focal area projects and four multi-trust fund projects. The Non-expedited Enabling Activity funds help:

- two SIDS and four LDCs to prepare and submit Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs) and National Communications (NCs) that comply with the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement reporting requirements;
- Nigeria to prepare its Fourth National Communication and first BTR for submission to the UNFCCC;
- Brazil to prepare its Fifth National Communication and its first two BTRs for submission to the UNFCCC; and
- 20 countries to prepare and submit updated National Implementation Plans (NIPs) under the Stockholm Convention on POPs.

With respect to the PIFs and Non-expedited Enabling Activity approved as part of the Work Program, the Council finds that each of these PIFs and Non-expedited Enabling Activity:

- is, or would be, consistent with the Instrument and GEF policies and procedures; and
- may be endorsed by the CEO for final approval by the GEF Agency, provided that the final project documents fully incorporate and address the Council's and the STAP reviewer's comments on the Work Program, and that the CEO confirms that the project continues to be consistent with the Instrument and GEF policies and procedures.

With respect to any PIF and Non-expedited Enabling Activity approved in this Work Program, the final project document will be posted on the GEF website for information after CEO endorsement. If there are major changes to the project objectives or scope after PIF approval, the final project document shall be posted on the web for Council review for four weeks prior to CEO endorsement.

With respect to the PFDs approved as part of the Work Program, the final child project documents fully incorporating

and addressing the Council's and STAP reviews shall be circulated for Council review for four weeks prior to CEO endorsement/approval.

In light of the recent audit report by the UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI) of UNDP GEF Management, all projects included in the Work Program implemented by UNDP shall be circulated by email for Council review at least four weeks prior to CEO endorsement/approval. This shall take place as actions of the Management Action Plan that address the OAI recommendations are being implemented, and as the independent, risk-based third-party review of compliance by UNDP with the GEF Policy on Minimum Fiduciary Standards is being completed. Project reviews will take into consideration the relevant findings of the external audit and UNDP management responses and note them in the endorsement review sheet that will be made available to the Council during the four-week review period.

Third Joint GEF-UNDP Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme

On 15 June, Møglestue opened this agenda item by reminding the Council that it decided at its last meeting to change how decisions address GEF IEO evaluations to shift focus from evaluation endorsement to endorsement of management responses.

Juha Uitto, Director, GEF IEO, introduced the "Third Joint GEF-UNDP Evaluation of the Small Grants Programme" (SGP) ([GEF/E/C.60/01](#)), noting it made nine recommendations, including:

- conducting a consultative process towards the formulation of an updated long-term vision;
- providing the Council and the GEF-8 replenishment with a detailed analysis of the funding implications of adding new countries to the global programme;
- reconsidering whether the SGP needs a continued upgrading policy, the policy whereby countries with SGP country programmes for 15 years or more can only use System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) funds;
- reviewing and re-energizing the SGP's governance at global and national levels;
- testing new ways to track and aggregate the SGP's intangible results; and
- improving the approach to and measurement of sustainability in the SGP.

Providing management's response, Clottes said the Secretariat is already working on these issues and will provide appropriate inputs to the GEF-8 replenishment talks.

In subsequent Council debate, numerous Members expressed strong support for the SGP and general support for the IEO's recommendations and management's response. Developing country Members called for GEF-8 to increase its resources and to include more countries. Several Members urged quicker delivery of funds to recipients, better monitoring and evaluation (M&E), improvements in project governance, and more involvement of OFPs in SGP projects.

In response, Uitto clarified that the IEO had not advocated expanding the SGP but, rather, drew attention to the fact that if it were to be expanded to more countries, additional resources would be needed. He said M&E of the SGP has improved since

the last evaluation but gaps still exist, such as reporting on intangible benefits. Responding for the Secretariat, Clottes said the work on a new SGP long-term vision should help clarify how to streamline the Programme, and ongoing Secretariat work on project sustainability is reflected in current discussions on SGP improvement.

CEO Rodríguez noted that most of the issues raised during the SGP discussion have been addressed in the Secretariat's "Healthy Planet, Healthy People" proposal for GEF-8. He highlighted three elements: providing universal access; greater innovation and scaling up of education and knowledge management; and dropping the upgrading policy. He suggested thinking about how to diversify SGP implementing agencies to include those who can help the Programme focus on key issues, access microfinance, and develop a dedicated mechanism to involve youth and women. He declared that it is time to align the SGP with global expectations to recognize the role of civil society in work towards achieving the 2030 goals and targets related to climate, biodiversity, and chemicals and waste.

The Council adopted the draft decision without amendment.

Decision: The Council takes note of the related evaluation recommendations and endorses the management response to address them.

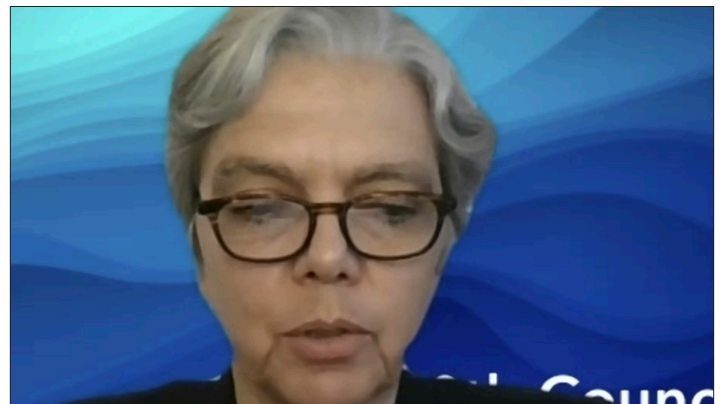
Formative Evaluation of the GEF Integrated Approach to Address the Drivers of Environmental Degradation

On 15 June, Uitto introduced "Formative Evaluation of the GEF Integrated Approach to Address the Drivers of Environmental Degradation" ([GEF/E/C.60/04/Rev.01](#)), noting it analyzed both the Integrated Approach Pilots (IAPs) under GEF-6 and Impact Programs (IPs) under GEF-6. He said the evaluation recommends clarifying program-level reporting requirements for lead Agencies, further catalyzing and demonstrating the value addition of a programmatic approach to integration, and diversifying the countries included in integrated programs.

Delivering the management response, Fonseca said work in line with IEO recommendations is already underway and will factor into GEF-8. He noted that 11 IPs are proposed for GEF-8, including one on green and blue recovery for SIDS.

Several Council Members supported an amendment to the draft decision to specify that the Secretariat should consider ways to respond to IEO recommendations on increasing the access of all countries to IPs. Other issues raised by Members included:

- measuring global benefits of IPs over time;



Françoise Clottes, GEF Secretariat



Juha Uitto, Director, GEF IEO

- overlaps and confusion between the Sustainable Cities IAP and the Sustainable Cities IP;
- providing resources to address gender equality in complex IPs, especially the Sustainable Cities IP;
- finding more ways to include LDCs and SIDS in the IPs;
- improving governance policies for the IPs;
- providing more IPs that address international waters and chemicals and waste;
- considering how to improve in GEF-8 synergies between climate change, biodiversity, and land degradation in IPs;
- reconsidering the number of IPs proposed for GEF-8, since the evidence of their effectiveness and value-added is incomplete; and
- tracking and reporting IP results to the conventions the GEF serves.

Responding to Members' comments, Uitto noted integrated approaches are still being evaluated since only nine of 32 child projects under integrated approaches have had their mid-term review (MTR). He said evaluations so far "indicate we are going in the right direction" with IPs, but verifiable global benefits remain "hard to come by at this stage." He agreed on the need to track how IPs contribute to the objectives of the conventions the GEF serves.

In his response to Members' comments, Fonseca:

- noted that the governance for each IP allows engagement with other programs so they can function as "greater than a sum of their parts";
- noted that the Secretariat already reports to meetings of the Conferences of the Parties (COPs) of the conventions the GEF serves on how IPs contribute to achieving convention objectives;
- acknowledged that gender equality is not included in the Sustainable Cities IAP, but noted it is in the Sustainable Cities IP and has produced several knowledge products on gender, generating an important discussion on gender dimensions of sustainable cities;
- said the Secretariat will provide detailed plans for the IPs proposed for GEF-8 in a September submission to the replenishment process; and
- confirmed that the Secretariat will promote ways to increase LDCs' and SIDS' participation in IPs.

CEO Rodríguez observed that his own experience as Environment Minister in Costa Rica had convinced him "long

ago," before GEF-4 introduced multi-focal areas or GEF-6 experimented with IAPs, that the only way to tackle most environmental issues is in an integrated manner.

On 16 June, the Council considered revised decision text asking the Secretariat to consider ways to address the IEO recommendation about ensuring greater diversification in the countries included in integrated programs. The Council adopted the decision as amended.

Decision: The Council takes note of the evaluation's relevant recommendations and endorses the management response to address the first two recommendations and requests the GEF Secretariat to consider ways to also address the third recommendation, noting the relevance of integrated programming for the GEF moving forward.

Evaluation of the Country Support Program

On 15 June, Uitto introduced the IEO's "Evaluation of the Country Support Program (CSP)" ([GEF/E/C.60/03](#)), reporting, among other findings, that there was:

- no strategy, theory of change, or logical framework for the CSP;
 - little diversity in stakeholders involved in planning CSP activities; and
 - sub-optimal information retention after CSP events.
- He said the IEO offered six recommendations, including:
- increasing collaboration with other global environment funds, such as the GCF;
 - developing a clear strategy and implementation plan with a validated theory of change;
 - enhancing inclusiveness; and
 - applying customized capacity building.

Responding for the management, Clottes said the Secretariat is working on these issues, will provide relevant inputs to the GEF-8 replenishment talks, and will present to the June 2022 Council session a paper on capacity building.

In ensuing discussion, most Council Members supported strengthening the CSP under GEF-8 and developing a clear strategy, implementation plan, and theory of change for the program. Several also suggested, *inter alia*:

- promoting more synergies and complementarity under the CSP with other multilateral funds and with the focal points for the conventions the GEF serves as a funding mechanism;
- increasing the share of GEF resources for the CSPs;
- promoting increased OFP engagement in the CSPs through specific resources to build OFP capacities;
- OFPs engaging stakeholders beyond annual introduction seminars, moving to ongoing processes; and
- developing a strategy on unutilized CSP funding.

In response, Uitto noted that all the focal points for the conventions that had been interviewed and surveyed for the CSP evaluation expressed a desire for greater involvement, and some indicated this process is already underway.

Clottes noted suggestions and comments about expectations regarding maximizing cooperation and synergies, building OFP capacities, and promoting inclusiveness. She said the Secretariat is considering ways to facilitate the work of country steering committees and possible regional mechanisms for promoting knowledge and best practices. Clottes noted that the question of cooperation and synergies with the GCF would be discussed specifically under a separate Council agenda item. She said the

Secretariat will present a strategy document on CSP governance to the GEF-8 replenishment process which should include all the issues the IEO raised.

Noting “I’ve been on the other side” as a country official, CEO Rodríguez said while the CSP has been very successful, it remains “very Washington-centered.” He called for more independence and autonomy of OFPs from the Agencies, and institutional support to build national capacities in implementing GEF projects. Rodríguez said he will propose a new “GEF facilitator” concept in the GEF-8 replenishment, providing resources for people on the ground in recipient countries that can help those countries implement projects.

The Council adopted the draft decision without amendment.

Decision: The Council takes note of the related evaluation recommendations and endorses the management response to address them.

Evaluation of GEF Engagement with Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises

On 15 June, Geeta Batra, GEF IEO, presented the “Evaluation of GEF Engagement with Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises” (MSMEs) ([GEF/E/C.60/05](#)), reporting findings that MSMEs may be unable to participate fully in interventions without sufficient follow-up technical and financial support. She said the IEO recommends that the GEF support address context-specific needs, barriers, and economic viability to generate global environmental benefits and monitor social and economic benefits that of interventions that engage the private sector, including MSMEs, in addition to environmental outcomes.

Providing the management’s response, Fonseca agreed with the recommendations, highlighting the evaluation’s finding that social and economic benefits can overcome constraints to scaling global environmental benefits.

Council Members discussed the evaluation on Wednesday. General appreciation was expressed. Members called for:

- more information on economic and social benefits and impacts as outcomes of private sector projects, possibly with systematic tracking;
- information on low-cost technologies that MSMEs can easily adopt for greater sustainability;
- merit-based selection of private sector entities for engagement; and
- more involvement of the private sector with the GEF, including accounting for differences among countries and transparency and alignment with national policies.

The GEF CSO Network called for the private sector to quantify the benefits of gender mainstreaming.

Responding to Members’ comments, Fonseca said GEF partner Agencies are required to inform the GEF and OFPs of project proposal selection in their respective countries. He highlighted work on high-quality project preparation and economic and social evaluations, through stakeholder engagement, for projects that include MSMEs. Fonseca said the GEF will track more private sector investment in GEF projects, with reporting targets becoming mainstream standards. He noted differences in national contexts for the private sector, such as constraints in access to capital and business knowledge, which, he said, demonstrates the value of partnerships for long-term support. Fonseca noted that a prospective GEF results framework in GEF-8 includes indicators

on social and economic benefits, which will be expanded for further Council consideration.

The decision was adopted with no further discussion.

Decision: The Council takes note of the related evaluation recommendations and endorses the management response to address them.

GEF Support to Innovation – Findings and Lessons

On 15 June, Batra presented “GEF Support to Innovation – Findings and Lessons” ([GEF/E/C.60/02](#)), reporting findings that ongoing GEF-6 and GEF-7 IP innovation is not necessarily correlated with higher risks to outcomes or sustainability. She said the IEO recommends: continuously monitoring risk; requiring monitoring, MTRs, evaluation, and knowledge sharing in all innovative projects; and partnering with innovative support programs to mobilize more capital.

Responding for management, Fonseca said innovation evaluation must have greater impact for systemic change, and noted cross-linkages between these findings and those of other evaluations being presented.

Members discussed the evaluation on 16 June, expressing general appreciation.

Council Members’ comments focused on:

- gender mainstreaming in innovative approaches;
- innovative financing approaches;
- a separate funding window for innovative projects and the implications of this for existing funding;
- support for innovation in small projects;
- involvement of all focal areas in innovative approaches; and
- consideration of how innovative approaches create transformational change.
- Other comments addressed risk in particular, such as on:
 - how to define it and articulate acceptable levels;
 - whether risk should be considered only with regard to outcome achievement; and
 - the possibility that higher risk projects can be innovative.
- Also regarding risk, there were calls for GEF management to:
 - provide guidelines on risk tolerance;
 - avoid rejecting projects with potential for scaling up;
 - stimulate risk tolerance across the GEF portfolio;
 - incorporate information on acceptable risk into GEF-8; and
 - develop skills to implement recommendations on risk, possibly garnering partners’ participation in evaluating risk.



Geeta Batra, GEF IEO

The GEF CSO Network called for quantifying acceptable risk tolerance levels for monitoring purposes, using qualitative and quantitative indicators.

Responding to Members' comments, Batra noted that differences in experience across Agencies mean "what is risky for one may not be for another." Fonseca said all innovative projects include positive considerations on gender mainstreaming. He also stressed that a specific funding window for innovation does not come at the expense of other GEF work but brings greater flexibility that is highly conducive to innovation and attracts new project proposals, and may also mobilize new risk capital through partnerships.

The draft decision was adopted without amendment on 16 June.

Decision: The Council takes note of the related evaluation recommendations and endorses the management response to address them.

Evaluation of Institutional Policies and Engagement at the GEF

On 15 June, Batra presented the IEO's "Evaluation of Institutional Policies and Engagement of the GEF" ([GEF/E/C.60/06](#)), explaining it is a follow-up on previous evaluations of policy coherence and strategic alignment and on the GEF's stakeholder engagement policy related to the CSO Network, IPs, gender equality, and ESS. She reported limited progress on engagement with the CSO Network, good progress on engagement with indigenous peoples, increased recognition that gender equality affects global environmental quality, and general improvement in ESS. Batra said the IEO recommends: tying together policies on stakeholder engagement, gender equality, and ESS under an "inclusion" rubric and highlighting their strategic relevance to the GEF; and resetting the GEF's relationship with the CSO Network while recalibrating the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group (IPAG) mechanism, for increased strategic impact.

Responding for the management, Clottes agreed with the findings, adding that the focus is currently on implementation as no results have been achieved yet. She said the GEF could play a greater role as a "relationship broker" with partners, including in knowledge sharing and capacity development.

Council Members discussed the evaluation on 16 June. General appreciation was expressed. Members called for:

- increasing funding for implementation of work on gender disparities;
- reinforcing support for civil society and indigenous peoples and local communities (CSIPLC) activities in GEF-8;
- keeping definitions of IPs flexible due to their diversity as well as differences in national circumstances;
- increasing clarity and transparency on the selection of projects and of CSIPLC participants in them; and
- monitoring implementation of its policies on stakeholder engagement, gender equality, and environmental and social safeguards.

The GEF CSO Network called for defining indigenous peoples as having not just the individual rights of members of minorities but collective rights, based on self-identification, historical continuity, and territorial connection since before colonization. He also called for separate funding for the CSO Network

for capacity building, particularly for open and participatory monitoring.

Responding to Members' comments, Batra said that: recent IPAG input on defining IPs will be reflected; significant methodologies are being investigated for supporting the CSO Network on quantifying risk and progress; and gaps in gender mainstreaming will be addressed. Fonseca thanked indigenous peoples for their participation in inclusive conservation efforts, noting the evolution of IPAG as recommended by the IEO.

The draft decision was adopted on 16 June with no further discussion.

Decision: The Council takes note of the related evaluation recommendations and endorses the management response to address them.

Results Based Management – Evaluations of the Agency Self-Evaluation Systems and the GEF Portal

On 15 June, Batra presented "Results Based Management – Evaluations of the Agency Self-Evaluation Systems and the GEF Portal" ([GEF/E/C.60/07](#)). Regarding the GEF Agency self-evaluation systems, she said the IEO calls for strengthening the use of MTRs by the Secretariat and Agencies, and for strengthening learning systems and cross-Agency exchanges. On the GEF Portal, she noted that the IEO recommends improving user feedback mechanisms and a time-bound plan to speed up Portal development.

Responding for the management, Clottes proposed to reinforce guidance on evaluating good practice, adaptive management, and problem solving in MTRs and to review MTRs, incorporating greater country engagement and monitoring of timely submission. She also proposed to enhance incentives for candor in self-evaluations, better capture lessons learned, identify gateways for sharing these across the partnership, and host knowledge-sharing events on better tools for self-assessment.

Council Members discussed the evaluation on 16 June. General appreciation was expressed. On Agency self-evaluation systems, Members' comments focused on:

- the centrality of MTRs and mechanisms to learn and build knowledge from reviews and evaluations;
- the need for more detailed examination of successful approaches and systemic support for institutional management;
- concerns about overly optimistic self-evaluations and how the Secretariat will address the "lack of incentives for candor";
- compliance gaps, including on timely delivery of MTRs and terminal reviews; and
- the need for Agencies' commitment to internal IEOs for more objectivity in self-evaluations.

The GEF CSO Network called for systematic quality control systems to monitor implementation.

On the GEF Portal, the CSO Network and Council Members called for building and managing knowledge rather than simply sharing information, and for Portal updates to:

- send documents relevant to specific projects to OFPs; and
- provide information on funding given to countries over time.

Responding to Members' comments, Batra noted variation in the quality of self-evaluations, saying ratings for current self-evaluations are higher than normal because the Agencies currently being assessed, such as the World Bank, exhibit good

quality in their self-evaluations. She also pointed out that the IEO undertakes evaluations itself, focusing on replication, although the pandemic has hindered that.

Citing objective performance measures on timing and compliance in the GEF's Annual Monitoring Report, Clottes said the Secretariat is committed to accurate reporting and constructive dialogue with the Agencies. She asked how the GEF can shape incentives to influence candor in internal self-evaluation processes, suggesting creation of scorecards and greater flows of data. Regarding the Portal, Clottes said its improvements and further evolution are planned, including on notifying OFPs and empowering all participants at their different levels of services and contributions. She said the next phase will have a dashboard including country portfolio dimensions.

The draft decision was adopted on 16 June with no further discussion.

Decision: The Council takes note of the related evaluation recommendations and endorses the management response to address them.

Report of the Chairperson of the STAP

On 16 June, Møglestue opened this agenda item, noting that it would not be the subject of a Council decision.

Rosina Bierbaum, Chair, STAP, presented the "Report of the Chairperson of the STAP" ([GEF/STAP/C.60/Inf.01](#)). She flagged recent reports by other institutions of significance to the GEF's work, such as the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)-Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Co-Sponsored Workshop Report on Biodiversity and Climate Change, UNEP's "Making Peace with Nature" report, the World Meteorological Organization's (WMO) "State of the Global Climate 2020" report, an article in the scientific monthly, *Nature Climate Change* titled, "Anthropogenic climate change has slowed global agricultural productivity growth," and "The Economics of Biodiversity: the Dasgupta Review."

Bierbaum summarized the STAP's views on the current draft of GEF-8 strategic positioning and programming directions. She said the STAP:

- welcomes the centrality of a theory of change and alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals;
- notes the strong focus on transformation and innovation, but also the lack of explicit recognition of appetite for programmatic risk;
- emphasizes the importance of clarity about definitions of transformation, resilience, and durability;
- looks forward to advising on a new system and metrics for monitoring transformation;
- welcomes the prominence given to nature-based solutions and circular economy approaches;
- welcomes the recognition of the importance of addressing behavioral change explicitly;
- emphasizes that adopting a "One Health, One Planet" framework will necessitate more attention to co-benefits;
- welcomes climate change adaptation being addressed synergistically with GEF-8 programming; and
- suggests continuing to add to the learning base from ongoing IAPs and IPs to inform best design and implementation of future IPs and their coordinating projects.



Rosina Bierbaum, Chair, STAP

She explained how GEF-8 programming might benefit from insights gained from:

- STAP studies and briefs on incorporating behavioral change, circular economy approaches, transformative change, and resilient investments;
- recent STAP workshops on business and biodiversity mainstreaming and on risk appetite and transformational change; and
- a technical dialogue on enhancing climate change adaptation.

She also briefed the Council on follow-up work planned on circular economy approaches and on mainstreaming biodiversity, as well as ongoing work regarding: knowledge management in GEF programming; climate risk screening; measuring co-benefits; metrics for transformational change; and South-South knowledge exchange.

CEO Rodríguez echoed the importance of integrating work on linkages between climate change and biodiversity, and said he looked forward to working with the STAP on mainstreaming biodiversity to see if policy elements can be developed to guide the GEF's allocation of resources and programming elements.

All Council Members making interventions praised the STAP's work and work plans. Several urged the STAP to further enunciate the benefits of circular economy interventions in mitigating climate change and other co-benefits of circular economy approaches. Several welcomed further STAP work on risk appetite, synergies between climate change and biodiversity, mainstreaming biodiversity, and learning platforms in IPs.

Responding to Members' questions, Bierbaum said:

- all GEF Agencies now have climate risk screening, and the STAP plans to examine how they have been applied and how application has affected project outcomes;
- the STAP supports combining thinking on climate and biodiversity, and underscores the role nature-based solutions can play;
- a biodiversity equivalent for the "net zero" target used in land degradation does not exist, but the STAP is exploring the topic; and
- engaging universities, particularly students, is very important.

The GEF Business Plan and Corporate Budget for FY22

Peter Lallas, GEF Secretariat, presented the "GEF Business Plan and Corporate Budget for FY22" ([GEF/C.60/03](#)) on 16 June. He summarized this combined budget request for the Secretariat, STAP, and Trustee, noting extraordinary expenses for 2022, including, *inter alia*, review of compliance of the GEF's eighteen Agencies with the GEF's fiduciary standards, and policies on

safeguards, gender equality and stakeholder engagement, also noting underruns in 2021 due to COVID-19's impacts.

Council Members' questions focused on:

- the 5.2% increase in the Secretariat's budget for 2022, including a salary increase of 1.6%;
- whether gaps in Secretariat skills will be filled by permanent staff or with consultants;
- how savings from underruns will be allocated;
- the GEF's new fiduciary standards;
- the possibility of new work modalities, including less travel and more digital use, and the implications of this;
- any cost savings from 2021 due to non-COVID-19 factors; and
- the need for continuing stringent management practices.

CEO Rodríguez summarized the newly-begun World Bank reopening, and promised continuing development of working modalities, including a hybrid system, with monthly updates. He noted ongoing research on Secretariat workload balance issues, findings from which will be presented for GEF-8 in discussion of human resources needs for strategic management, monitoring, and follow-up.

Lallas explained that the requested 1.6% Secretariat salary budget increase is due to 2021's annual World Bank Salary Rate Increase. He noted that the budget for consultant costs is high due to one-time work requests in 2022, including on the GEF-8 replenishment, COVID-19-related expenses, and the compliance review. Lallas confirmed that: focal points are being empowered, especially through the CSP; savings are available for any use; and the Secretariat will track increases in salaries and consultant costs, as well as savings produced by hybrid work modalities and other efficiencies.

The draft decision was approved with no comment.

Decision: The Council takes note of the business plan, and approves a fiscal year 2022 (FY22) corporate budget of USD 30.768 million, comprising:

- USD 24.708 million for the GEF Secretariat;
- USD 2.725 million for the STAP; and
- USD 3.335 million for the Trustee, including its core budget and Special Initiative.

The Council also approves a total FY22 administrative budget for the Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund (NPIF) of USD 18,500, comprising the following allocations from the NPIF to cover the Secretariat's and Trustee's expenses for NPIF administration and implementation:

- USD 13,500 for the GEF Secretariat; and
- USD 5,000 for the Trustee.

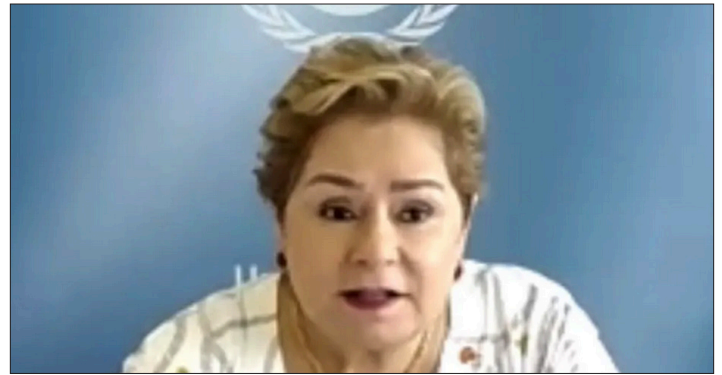
The Council also approves a total FY22 administrative budget for the Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) from the CBIT Trust Fund of USD 421,000, comprising:

- USD 392,000 for the GEF Secretariat; and
- USD 29,000 for the Trustee.

The Council requests the Secretariat, in consultation with the STAP and the Trustee, to present a combined FY23 corporate budget and business plan for discussion at its June 2022 meeting.

Relations with Conventions and other International Institutions

On 16 June, Møglestue opened this agenda item, noting it involves three sections: presentations by the Executive Secretaries of the conventions the GEF serves; consideration of the report on Relations with Conventions and Other International Institutions; and consideration of the paper on long-term vision on complementarity, coherence, and collaboration between the GCF and the GEF.



Patricia Espinosa, UNFCCC Executive Secretary

Presentations by the Executive Secretaries of the Conventions the GEF Serves:

CEO Rodríguez noted the timeliness of the dialogue with the Executive Secretaries, given their shared priority of supporting a clean, green, and resilient recovery and the GEF's role in fostering integrated action. Among other updates, the Executive Secretaries discussed planning for the next meetings of the COPs to their respective conventions. The CBD, he noted, is currently expected to convene COP 15 in Kunming, China, in October 2021. The UNFCCC is expected to convene COP 26 in Glasgow, UK, in November 2021. The UNCCD postponed its COP 15 from late 2021 to the first half of 2022, and expects to announce the date and venue soon. Both the combined meetings of the COPs to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions and the fourth meeting of the COP to the Minamata Convention will convene virtually in 2021, followed by in-person events in 2022.

Patricia Espinosa, UNFCCC Executive Secretary, noted that despite the fact that the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) are not enough to get us on the path we need to be on, there are signs of hope: the US has rejoined the Paris Agreement and submitted its NDC, the Republic of Korea has committed to a coal-free future, and the International Energy Agency has reported that the move to renewables is robust, among other positive developments. She said the UNFCCC needs the GEF, countries need the GEF, and developing nations need the GEF. She also highlighted that the GEF's original mandate to serve the Convention and the Paris Agreement is now more crucial than ever, as we aim for enhanced global climate ambition in both mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Ibrahim Thiaw, UNCCD Executive Secretary, said the GEF is a knowledge hub and science advisor in addition to its other roles. He highlighted that the UN General Assembly had just convened a High-Level Dialogue on Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought, and speakers agreed that investing in land is a smart and effective choice for quick and positive impact. He said land is an integrator for many of the GEF's focal areas, and suggested making investments in early warning systems. He stated that the synergies agenda should be the "new normal" in GEF-8 programming.

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, CBD Executive Secretary, outlined the preparatory discussions for COP 15 and the development of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework. She said the first formal draft of the framework will be prepared for the upcoming virtual meeting in August, and highlighted key aspects of the current zero draft that are relevant to the GEF, including the calls for ensuring the participation of all stakeholders and outreach and awareness raising to ensure the uptake of the new biodiversity

framework. She also noted the GEF will have an important role in engendering integrated approaches to implementation, cutting across all its focal areas.

Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary, BRS Conventions, noted that many toxic chemicals still need to be eliminated, including DDT. He reviewed the Conventions' funding needs for GEF-8, and noted that the Stockholm Convention's Review Committee has begun looking at additives in plastics that threaten human health and cause environmental damage. He discussed the interlinkages among chemicals management, biodiversity, and climate change. For example, he noted that lithium mining takes place in forests, requiring the construction of roads, with follow-on impacts on biodiversity and climate change.

Monika Stankiewicz, Executive Secretary, Minamata Convention, highlighted that investing in any GEF focal area provides support for other focal areas, while underinvestment in one focal area puts other focal areas at risk. She stated that the Convention would be in a position to generate greater global environmental benefits from mercury emission reductions in GEF-8, with transformative change in trade and supply chains relative to mercury. She also touched on the widespread economic and social benefits of full implementation of the Minamata Convention and the "enormous" costs of not fulfilling the treaty obligations. Countries' work to protect human health and the environment from the harmful effects of mercury use and emissions must be part of the blue and green recovery, she said.

Council Members expressed appreciation for the active collaboration between the GEF and Convention secretariats, and stressed promotion of synergies and a more integrated approach to the issues they address. Two Members expressed disappointment that the Montreal Protocol Executive Secretary could not attend to discuss synergies between the Protocol's agenda and GEF work on climate and energy efficiency.

In response, all Executives Secretaries agreed on the value of a more integrated approach rather than working in silos. Thiaw and Mrema stressed the increasing collaboration between the three Rio Conventions. Payet said synergies should be equally promoted among all MEAs as all MEAs are important in contributing to sustainability.

Responding to a Member's question about the CBD's requirements from the GEF once the global biodiversity

framework is adopted, Mrema replied that the financial needs to properly implement the framework will likely be enormous.

Several Members asked how the GEF-8 replenishment talks can get guidance from the UNCCD and Stockholm and Minamata Conventions if the in-person segments of their COPs, which will make key budget and programming decisions, have been postponed until 2022. Thiaw replied that the UNCCD Bureau may set the COP for May 2022, so it is possible the COP will have new guidance for the June 2022 GEF Council to consider. Noting Stockholm Convention parties' reluctance to negotiate online regarding the financial mechanism, Payet expressed hope that the July 2021 virtual BRS session might still produce an output that could guide programming for GEF-8. Stankiewicz said she did not expect a major change in guidance from her COP given the early implementation stage of the Minamata Convention, but the November online session will encourage Party statements that the Secretariat will share with the GEF if they provide helpful insights for GEF-8 programming.

Consideration of the Report on Relations with Conventions: On 17 June, Møglestue invited comments on "Relations with Conventions and Other International Institutions" ([GEF/C.60/06](#)). A Council Member stressed the importance of continued collaboration and interaction with the convention secretariats, especially in the coming months since some COPs will not be able to provide guidance before the GEF-8 replenishment is agreed. Another noted that the document fails to note positive cooperation between the GEF Secretariat and the Ozone Secretariat regarding energy efficiency.

Fonseca said cooperation with the Ozone Secretariat will be noted in the Council meeting highlights. The Council approved the draft decision without amendment.

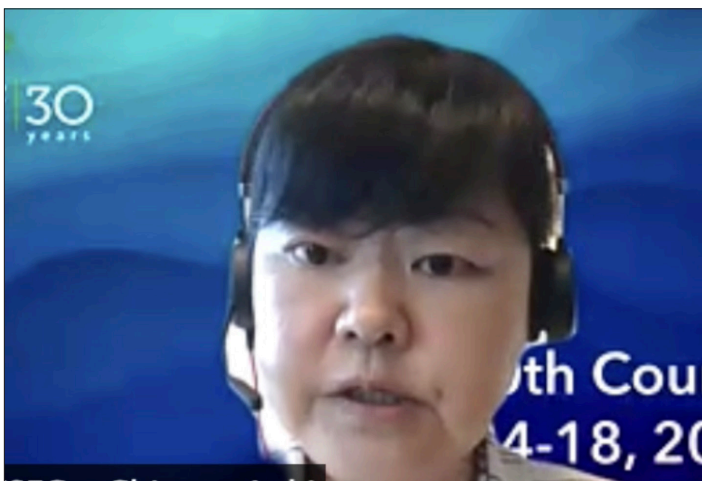
Decision: The Council, having considered document GEF/C.60/06, Relations with the Conventions and Other International Institutions, welcomes the report and requests the GEF network to continue to work with recipient countries to reflect the guidance and national priorities in their GEF programming and activities.

Long-Term Vision on Complementarity, Coherence and Collaboration between the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility: On 17 June, CEO Rodríguez introduced the "Long-Term Vision on Complementarity, Coherence, and Collaboration between the Green Climate Fund and the GEF" ([GEF/C.60/08](#)). He highlighted commonalities between the two Funds, including their commitment to transformational change, describing it as "a huge shift." Noting current piloting of coordinated engagement in several countries, he said the long-term vision is more strategic, and both funds are committed to it.

Chizuru Aoki, GEF Secretariat, summarized three elements that are incorporated into the long-term vision document: collaborative and coordinated programming; information sharing on lessons learned and knowledge creation through guidance products and methodologies; and communications and outreach.

She said the Secretariats will: establish a steering committee; submit joint progress reports annually; commission a study on processes and policies of both funds; and commit to include relevant elements of the vision in official GCF and GEF documents.

In ensuing discussion, Council Members supported the vision. Comments and questions included calls to:



Chizuru Aoki, GEF Secretariat

- identify the strengths and weaknesses, objectives, tools, partners, and policies of each fund;
- ensure closer cooperation on environment and biodiversity, resilience and adaptation to climate change, private sector programming, and gender-responsive actions, as well as harmonization of investment criteria and indicators;
- ensure this focus does not suppress resources for other conventions such as the CBD;
- address the risk that the GCF might overshadow the GEF;
- consider which accredited Agencies are used and how to select them;
- clarify which fund's guidelines will be used;
- address the risk of longer approval processes, which could cause delays in project implementation;
- ensure country ownership, planning, and project development, through strengthening focal points and national capacities in programming and in accessing funding;
- consider the inappropriateness of some types of finance, such as loans, for countries continually suffering from more frequent and intense hurricanes;
- clarify the distribution of labor between the GEF and GCF, ensure real coordination takes place on the ground, and avoid duplication; and
- ask a joint task group to prepare a report on specific proposals for the long-term vision.

Several Members proposed amending the decision to refer specifically to the joint steering committee. The CSO Network expressed the wish to contribute on the steering committee from the outset.

CEO Rodríguez gave examples of synergies between the GEF and the GCF, and noted conversations already taking place with the Adaptation Fund and the World Bank's Climate Investment Funds. He said long-term thinking means planning for the next 20-30 years, expressing optimism about synergizing the work of the funds.

Aoki added that country selection will be upon request and country-driven, lessons learned from the ongoing pilot collaboration will be better articulated to inform activities under the vision, complementarity and coherence will be clarified, and capacity building will be conducted and LDCs and SIDS prioritized. She recalled that, as financial mechanisms for the Paris Agreement, both funds must commit to CSO and stakeholder engagement.

Council then approved the decision with the proposed amendment referencing the joint steering committee.

Decision: The Council welcomes the document and in particular the establishment of a joint steering committee and looks forward to the annual joint progress report to be submitted



Mathew Haarsager, Council Member, US

to the GEF Council and the GCF Board, and requests the GEF Secretariat to inform the Council at its 61st session about comments received by the GCF Board and the GEF Council and potential follow-up actions as applicable.

Strengthening Consultations with Civil Society: Proposed Topics for Discussion at the Consultations of the 61st GEF Council Meeting

On 17 June, Clottes introduced the document, “Strengthening Consultations with Civil Society: Proposed Topic for Discussion at the Consultations Prior to the 61st GEF Council Meeting” ([GEF/C.60/07](#)), noting it proposes that the topic for the CSO consultation before the December 2021 Council session be “Engaging the Youth in Promoting GEF’s Mission: Youth-led Advocacy and Solutions to the Planet’s Environmental Crisis.” She added that the Secretariat has already consulted the CSO Network and IPAG, who supported the proposal, but Council Members could suggest alternative topics if they wished.

Council Members supported the proposal, stressing the importance of youth engagement. The GEF CSO Network welcomed the proposal, stressing the need to “make youth the environmental experts of tomorrow” and get them involved in GEF events, programs, projects, and processes.

Decision: The Council selects the following topic to be addressed as part of the Council Consultations with Civil Society: Engaging Young people in promoting GEF’s mission: Youth-led solutions to the planet’s environmental crisis.

Report of the Selection and Review Committee

On 17 June, Mathew Haarsager (US), Chair, Selection and Review Committee (SRC), explained that the SRC could not provide this Council session with its annual recommendation for performance ratings of the GEF CEO and IEO Director because the World Bank’s managerial impact assessments that provide the basis for rating recommendations were suspended in 2020 due to COVID-19-related disruptions and are only now being resumed, with delivery of the latest assessments scheduled for August 2021. He added that the Bank has informed the SRC that the annual managerial impact assessment process will follow a similar schedule going forward, and no special allowance can be made for assessments of the GEF CEO and IEO Director. Thus, he said, the SRC recommends shifting performance ratings from the June to the December Council session. He read a draft decision prepared by the Committee, which the Council agreed without amendment.

Decision: The Council, having received an oral report from the SRC and taking into account changes in the timing of the relevant World Bank supporting documentation:

- requests the SRC to present the performance evaluations and performance rating recommendations of the IEO Director and the GEF CEO for Council review at its 61st meeting, once all required supporting documentation becomes available; and
- requests the SRC to permanently reset its annual performance evaluation schedule such that mid-year SRC reports are presented to the Council at the first meeting of the year, and the end-year reports and rating recommendations are presented at the second meeting of the year.

Numbering System for GEF Council Decisions

On 17 June, Clottes introduced “Numbering System for GEF Council Decisions” ([GEF/C.60/09](#)), explaining it is the Secretariat’s initiative to address a problem in the current system of recording Council decisions, which makes them difficult to search and locate. She said the proposal would introduce a

numbering system to individually identify all Council decisions, including those approved during the Council meetings as well as those approved by mail, thereby making them more search-friendly and directly accessible online for all interested parties.

Council Members supported the proposal and adopted the draft decision without amendment.

Decision: The Council welcomes the proposal and approves the numbering system for GEF Council Decisions.

Other Business

On 17 June, CEO Rodríguez introduced the item.

GEF Ranking in the 2021 Quality of Official Development Assistance (QuODA) Report: Noting that a Council Member raised this issue on the first day, CEO Rodríguez said the Secretariat had examined the QuODA report issued by the Center for Global Development (CGD) and circulated to Members an analysis of why the GEF is rated 19th among the 20 largest multilateral agencies providing ODA and how this may not accurately reflect the GEF.

Rodríguez detailed problems with the QuODA methodology, and reported that he has initiated discussions with the OECD, the CGD, and others that assess ODA quality on possibly developing an improved methodology for comparing aid that better reflects what the GEF and other environment funds do. He promised to report back to the Council on the topic.

Vulnerability Index: Noting work by the Commonwealth of Nations on a “universal vulnerability index,” a Member inquired about GEF work in this area. CEO Rodríguez responded that he proposed to the first GEF-8 replenishment meeting that the GEF’s STAR structure be adjusted to increase support to vulnerable countries, particularly LDCs and SIDS. He said he will submit a more detailed proposal by early September, before the next replenishment meeting.

Dates of Future Meetings: The Council agreed to hold its 64th session from 11-13 June 2023 and its 65th session from 10-12 December 2023.

Report of the LDCF/SCCF Council Meeting

GEF CEO Rodríguez opened the LDCF/SCCF Council meeting on 17 June. The Council approved the provisional agenda ([GEF/LDCF.SCCF.30/01](#)) without amendment. Rodríguez introduced substantive discussions in the LDCF/SCCF Council by noting that these Funds seek to catalyze climate action and support and mobilize investment in adaptation, including through innovative approaches, for the countries most vulnerable to climate change, especially LDCs and SIDS, as well as the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in society. He said these efforts reflect a philosophy of “leave no LDC behind.”

Sonam Phuntsho Wangdi (Bhutan), Chair, LDC Group, presented the perspective of the LDCs, saying LDCs consider the LDCF “our Fund” because they do not have to compete with more “capable” countries over funding, and the Fund ensures delivery to all LDCs. He voiced concern, though, about the lack of predictability of funding, despite multi-year pledges. He called for reigniting interest in the SCCF due to its focus on innovation. He noted the LDCs’ “Vision 2050” for achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, and said he has discussed a programming strategy for the LDCs in GEF-8 with the GEF CEO.

Progress Report on the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund

Delivering the “Progress Report on the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund” ([GEF/LDCF.SCCF.30/03](#)) on 17 June, Fonseca reported that 90% of

the USD 1.7 billion in cumulative pledges made to the LDCF have been paid, with 2020’s USD 205.3 million in annual contributions being the highest since the LDCF’s establishment in 2001. He noted that although UNDP has 50% of the projects, the number of Agencies implementing projects or programs grew from five in GEF-6 to ten in GEF-7, and 91% of LDCs accessed GEF-7 funding, with only four still in the process of preparing concept papers for submission.

On the SCCF, he said 98% of the USD 356.09 million cumulatively pledged since its inception has been paid, but there were again no new pledges during the current reporting period. He reported involvement of 13 GEF Agencies, with the World Bank implementing the highest percentage (27%) of SCCF projects.

He also reported on the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation, which catalyzes innovations and investments in the two Funds and scales up funds for adaptation from the private sector, one example of which is the Landscape Resilience Fund to mobilize USD 100 million in private sector investment by 2025 to support agriculture and forestry supply chains. He said the luxury goods brand Chanel has already pledged USD 25 million.

Council Members:

- queried the lack of recent funding for the SCCF;
- requested disaggregated data, such as information on gender differentiation and on current year funding;
- called for tables with indicators for judging progress;
- encouraged greater visibility for both Funds;
- questioned the complementarity of the SCCF and the GCF;
- questioned whether project proposals not funded in one round could be considered in a later round; and
- urged expansion of the use of national or regional implementing agencies.

Many expressed concern about the concentration of projects in one implementing Agency, but others emphasized that decisions on Agencies to be used are made by national governments.

In response, Fonseca:

- gave examples of current outreach efforts to improve visibility, asking for Council Members’ suggestions, committing to explicit mention of the LDCF in all outreach contexts, and expressing interest in building more capacity for this;
- promised to disaggregate data as much as possible;



Sonam Phuntsho Wangdi, LDC Group Chair and Secretary to the National Environment Commission, Bhutan

- recalled that alignment with National Adaptation Programmes of Action is part of the GEF 2018-2022 Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the LDCF and SCCF;
- requested Members' help in obtaining more SCCF pledges;
- said UNDP has a history of support in many countries, noting that distribution of projects is more balanced in GEF-7 than in GEF-6 but UNDP's presence on the ground in many LDCs influences decisions; and
- affirmed that older project concept papers could be judged again for viable ideas that meet updated criteria for funding consideration.

The Council adopted the decision without amendment.

Decision: The LDCF/SCCF Council welcomes the report and takes note with appreciation of the progress made under the LDCF and the SCCF.

FY20 Annual Monitoring Review of the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund

On 17 June, Aoki presented the "FY20 Annual Monitoring Review of the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund" ([GEF/LDCF.SCCF.30/04](#)), explaining that the Annual Monitoring Review (AMR) describes the performance and results of, and the lessons learned from, the portfolio of projects and programs financed under the LDCF and SCCF that began implementation on or before 30 June 2019 and were under implementation during at least part of FY20. She said the four main takeaway messages from the AMR are:

- active SCCF and LDCF portfolios are progressing well;
- the SCCF portfolio demonstrated high levels of achievement;
- there was little change in portfolio risk ratings despite COVID-19; and
- the SCCF portfolio has far exceeded its set targets, while the LDCF portfolio has done well.

She noted that 82% of the LDCF projects under implementation for which performance ratings were received were rated "moderately satisfactory" or higher in terms of their progress towards development objectives, and 82% were rated similarly in their implementation progress. For SCCF projects examined, the ratings were 91% and 94%, respectively.

Members making interventions praised the regional distribution of the LDCF portfolio, particularly the share of Africa, as well as the AMR's reporting on gender aspects, progress made, and lessons learned. One Member asked for more details about COVID-19 impacts on the portfolio, while another asked if LDCF results had dropped in FY20.

Aoki responded that Africa naturally should have a large share of the LDCF portfolio, since two-thirds of LDCs are in that region. She said the Secretariat analyzed pandemic risks, and the AMR lists COVID-19 impacts cited in projects, but found the pandemic had not significantly added to the portfolio's risk profile; will continue seeking to improve reporting on gender; and did not detect significant changes in results in FY20, but will do a trend analysis for the next report.

The Council adopted the decision without amendment.

Decision: The LDCF/SCCF Council welcomes the report and takes note with appreciation of the progress made in reporting portfolio-level performance, results, and lessons learned under the LDCF and the SCCF. The Council welcomes the overall finding that the LDCF and SCCF portfolio under implementation in FY20 performed satisfactorily.



Carlos Manuel Rodríguez, GEF CEO and Chairperson

Work Program of the Least Developed Countries Fund

On 17 June, Fonseca presented the "Work Program of the Least Developed Countries Fund" ([GEF/LDCF.SCCF.30/05](#)), noting it requests a total of USD 60.73 million for seven projects to address climate change adaptation priorities. He highlighted the Work Program involves seven LDCs, two of them SIDS, five of which are accessing the LDCF for the first time in the GEF-7 period. He reported all projects have identified and taken into account the risks and opportunities presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, and said a Work Program annex details the COVID-19 review.

Fonseca pointed out that if the Work Program is adopted, 43 of the 47 LDCs will have accessed the Fund under GEF-7, and said the Fund aims to serve all 47 by the end of GEF-7. He noted 30 recipient countries have reached the initial per-country funding cap of USD 10 million. He remarked that the lack of predictable LDCF funding has prevented approving broader projects, and suggested the GEF may wish to consider ways to expand the donor base and get multi-year commitments, perhaps by moving the LDCF to a replenishment model.

Council Members making interventions welcomed the Work Program and the GEF's commitment to reach all 47 LDCs by the end of GEF-7. One asked for greater effort to bridge the gap between LDCs and SIDS, and another expressed concern about the concentration of Agencies executing LDCF projects.

The Council adopted the decision as presented.

Decision: The Council approves the Work Program comprising seven projects, subject to comments made during the Council meeting and additional comments that may be submitted in writing to the Secretariat by 15 July 2021. Total resources approved in this Work Program amount to USD 60.73 million from the LDCF, inclusive of GEF project financing and Agency fees.

The Work Program comprises seven PIFs, on:

- strengthening the adaptive capacity of communities in south-west Central African Republic;
- building climate-resilient livelihoods and food systems in Lesotho;
- advancing climate resilience of the water sector in Bhutan;
- adaptive agriculture and rangeland rehabilitation in Somalia;
- building community-based integrated and climate-resilient natural resources management and enhancing sustainable livelihood in Eritrea;
- protected areas for community, atoll, and island climate resilience in Kiribati; and

- adapting to climate change and enabling sustainable land management through productive rural communities in Timor-Leste.

With respect to the PIFs approved as part of the Work Program, the Council finds that each of these PIFs:

- is, or would be, consistent with the Instrument and GEF policies and procedures; and
- may be endorsed by the CEO for final approval by the GEF Agency, provided that the final project documents fully incorporate and address the Council's and the STAP reviewer's comments on the Work Program, and that the CEO confirms that the project continues to be consistent with the Instrument and GEF policies and procedures.

With respect to any PIF approved in this Work Program, the final project document will be posted on the GEF website for information after CEO endorsement. If there are major changes to the project objectives or scope since PIF approval, the final project document shall be posted on the web for Council review for four weeks prior to CEO endorsement.

In light of the recent audit report by the UNDP OAI of UNDP GEF Management, all projects included in the Work Program implemented by UNDP shall be circulated by email for Council review at least four weeks prior to CEO endorsement/approval. This shall take place as actions of the Management Action Plan that address the OAI recommendations are being implemented, and as the independent, risk-based third-party review of compliance by UNDP with the GEF Policy on Minimum Fiduciary Standards is being completed. Project reviews will take into consideration the relevant findings of the external audit and the UNDP management responses and note them in the endorsement review sheet that will be made available to the Council during the four-week review period.

Planning Note for the Development of the GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the Least Developed Countries Fund and Special Climate Change Fund and Operational Improvements: July 2022 to June 2026

On 18 June, Fonseca introduced the “Planning Note for the Development of the GEF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change for the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund and Operational Improvements: July 2022 to June 2026” ([LDCF/SCCF/C.30/07](#)), saying it presents the proposed timeline for the Programming Strategy discussion to be coordinated by the Secretariat, as well as participation in the Programming Strategy development process.

Fonseca explained that the process will be open to all LDCF and SCCF donors who indicate interest in participating, as well as representatives from five non-donor recipient countries representing Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Latin America, and SIDS, plus a representative of the LDC Group. He said the UNFCCC Secretariat and GEF Agencies will be invited as observers, and written comments will be solicited from the private sector, the GCF, the Adaptation Fund Secretariat, and CSOs. He said the process is expected to produce a final document for endorsement at the June 2022 Council meeting, with an update on the process to be provided at the December 2021 Council session.

Council Members supported the proposal, with many indicating interest in participating. Pointing to the successful use of a working group coordinated by the Secretariat to produce the previous Programming Strategy on Adaptation, one Member suggested using the same formula this time. Another suggested holding the last meeting on the draft strategy back-to-back with the final meeting on the GEF-8 replenishment, given the involvement of many of the same actors. The CSO Network asked for better definition of how CSOs and IPAG will participate in the process.

Fonseca welcomed the suggestions of using a working group and meeting back-to-back with the replenishment meeting, and said CSO participation will follow the same rules agreed for the GEF-8 replenishment.

The Council approved the draft decision without amendment.

Decision: The Council requests the Secretariat to initiate the development process of the Programming Strategy.

FY22 Administrative Budget and Business Plan for the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund

On 18 June, Aoki introduced the “FY22 Administrative Budget and Business Plan for the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund” ([GEF/LDCF/SCCF.30/06](#)), explaining it reviews the outcomes for FY21, and proposes a business plan and administrative budget to cover the costs of the Secretariat, Trustee, and the STAP for FY22 services to the LDCF and SCCF. She highlighted three main elements of the plan:

- development of the 2022-2026 Strategy;
- analysis of COVID-19 impacts and possible blue and green recovery opportunities; and
- outreach, knowledge sharing, and partnership for adaptation action.

Council Members supported the proposed administrative budget and business plan but sought clarifications about staff cost increases and travel costs and asked that these be disaggregated and clarified in further budgets. One recipient country Member raised the issue of how the LDCF will deal with middle-income countries which, due to COVID-19 impacts, have effectively become LDCs.

In response, Aoki explained that increased staff costs are mostly attributable to the costs of preparing the 2022-2026 Adaptation Strategy, with some attributable to salary increases mandated under World Bank rules. She promised future budgets will be clearer on staff and travel costs. As for the LDC question, Aoki explained that the Fund follows the LDC classification negotiated at the UN, and would only be authorized to change which countries it considers LDCs if the UN changes designations.

The Council approved the decision without amendment.

Decision: The LDCF/SCCF Council approves the proposed budget for the GEF Secretariat, the STAP, the Trustee, and the GEF IEO, as follows:

- USD 1,251,037 (GEF Secretariat), USD 128,000 (STAP), USD 420,000 (Trustee), and USD 37,000 (GEF IEO) from the LDCF; and
- USD 583,275 (GEF Secretariat), USD 128,000 (STAP), USD 109,000 (Trustee), and USD 47,000 (GEF IEO) from the SCCF.

FY20 Annual Evaluation Review of the LDCF and the SCCF

On 18 June, Anna Vigg, GEF IEO, presented the “LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report 2021” ([GEF/LDCF.SCCF.30/E/Inf.01](#)). She reported findings that gender considerations improved, innovative approaches were used in 11 projects, and lessons learned included the need to take account of staff and stakeholder capacity.

FY22 Work Program and Budget for the Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF under the LDCF and SCCF

On 18 June, Uitto reported on the “FY22 Work Program and Budget for the Independent Evaluation Office of the GEF under the LDCF and SCCF” ([GEF/LDCF.SCCF.30/E/01](#)). He said the budget for FY22 is USD 84,000, and any unused funds will roll over to FY23.

Members’ comments focused on the low sustainability rating of the analyzed sample of projects and the good progress on projects including gender.

The CSO Network asked about a baseline on staff capacity issues based on different roles and responsibilities, recommended using qualitative data following a scorecard such as “1-10,” requested budgetary support for the Network and IPAG to participate in monitoring, and said countries must have more ownership, including on self-monitoring, for greater sustainability.

Regarding sustainability, Aoki observed that lessons are being learned and will be reflected in project design and implementation arrangements in future projects, but noted that COVID-19 has impacted sustainability for some cohorts and may have further implications for the GEF as a whole at the cohort level.

Elected Chairperson Møglestue asked the CSO Network to provide all their points from the week in writing, for noting in the highlights from the meeting.

The Council adopted the decision without amendment.

Decision: The Council approves the annual budget of USD 84,000 to carry out the work program for FY22. The budget is in line with the term of the evaluation work that spans over multiple years. The approved budget is being distributed as follows: USD 37,000 from the LDCF and USD 47,000 from the SCCF.

Other Business

On 18 June, Members raised other business regarding donor pledges, LDCF/SCCF visibility, and private sector engagement.

On pledges to the LDCF, Germany noted its pledge of EUR 100 million to the LDCF, announced at the Adaptation Summit

in January 2021. Sweden announced a pledge of SEK 130 million. The Netherlands announced the formalization of a EUR 20 million pledge. Denmark and Switzerland indicated they are looking into increasing their pledges.

On LDCF/SCCF visibility, there were calls for having a strong LDCF presence at UNFCCC COP 26 in Glasgow, implementing a comprehensive outreach strategy, with regular reporting to the Council, obliging country-level entities to give more visibility to GEF implementation and objectives, and highlighting the contributions the Funds are making in LDCs.

The CSO Network called for capacity building in environmental literacy for CSOs and the private sector, and asked the Secretariat about an outreach mechanism. He urged assurance of at least two CSO/IPAG representatives at GEF-supported events, to provide views from on the ground. He also proposed updating the CSO website and developing a bulletin on CSO contributions, to be distributed to civil society partners.

CEO Rodríguez confirmed that the website will be checked and noted that the CSO consultations are always reported by ENB. He said joint GEF-GCF events will take place at COP 26, and Robert Bisset, GEF Secretariat, proposed building on experiences from UNFCCC COP 21 and UNFCCC COP 22, with an event at COP 26 celebrating the LDCF’s 20th anniversary, alongside the GEF’s 30th anniversary. Bisset reported on the communications team’s efforts to increase the Funds’ visibility, asking for Members’ engagement and advice.

Closing Sessions

Joint Summary of the LDCF/SCCF Co-Chairs

At the conclusion of the LDCF/SCCF Council meeting on 18 June, Members reviewed the Summary of the LDCF/SCCF Co-Chairs. They agreed on minor revisions to a sentence regarding LDCF visibility, and approved the Summary without further revisions.

Joint Summary of the GEF Council Co-Chairs

At the conclusion of the GEF Council meeting on 18 June, Members reviewed the Summary of the Co-Chairs of the 60th meeting of the GEF Council, and approved the document with the addition of one sentence noting UNDP’s presentation to the Council.

Closing

In closing, GEF CEO Rodríguez complimented Council Members on a productive meeting. He reminded Members that the Council would meet in executive session with UNDP after closing, and that the Secretariat will provide Members with monthly updates on the process with UNDP. He also noted preparations for the next GEF-8 replenishment meeting in September. The Council extended its thanks to outgoing Council Member Kordula Mehlhart, Germany.

Elected Chairperson Møglestue thanked Members for working constructively all week, remarking that the GEF Council is unique. She also thanked CEO Rodríguez for his vision that guides GEF work.

The CSO Network thanked all for “a real participatory event,” and expressed hope that future GEF processes will also include full CSO participation.

Rodríguez closed the meeting at 9:21 AM EDT.



Robert Bisset, GEF Secretariat



Kordula Mehlhart, Council Member, Germany

Upcoming Meetings

High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2021: The ninth session of the HLPF will take place under the following theme: “Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, that promotes the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: Building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.” **dates:** 6-15 July 2021 **location:** online **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2021>

Basel Convention COP15, Rotterdam Convention COP10, and Stockholm Convention COP10: The BRS COPs will convene in a virtual format in 2021 and as an in-person event in 2022. The theme of the meetings will be “Global Agreements for a Healthy Planet: Sound management of chemicals and waste.” **dates:** 26-30 July 2021 **location:** online **www:** <http://www.brsmeas.org/tabid/8395/>

Third Meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework: The Working Group will continue negotiations on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework based on a first draft of the framework that will be circulated six weeks before the meeting. **dates:** 23 August – 3 September 2021 **location:** online **www:** https://www.cbd.int/meetings/WG2020-03_2021

IUCN World Conservation Congress 2020: The IUCN Congress will be a key milestone for nature conservation and the development of a new global framework for biodiversity. **dates:** 3-11 September 2021 **location:** Marseille, France, and online **www:** <https://www.iucncongress2020.org/>

UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP 15): The 15th meeting of the COP to the CBD, the 10th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties (MOP) to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and the 4th meeting of the COP serving as the MOP to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing are scheduled to take place to review the achievement and delivery of the CBD’s Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020. It is also expected to take a final decision on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, as well as decisions on related topics, including capacity building and resource mobilization. **dates:** 11-24 October 2021 (TBC) **location:** Kunming, China **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

Combined COP12(II)/MOP33: An in-person meeting of the combined 12th meeting (part II) of the Vienna Convention

COP and 33rd Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol (COP12(II)/MOP33) is tentatively scheduled to be convened to accommodate issues deferred from 2020. The 67th meeting of the Implementation Committee and the Joint Bureaux meeting will be held on 23 and 24 October 2021, respectively. **dates:** 23-29 October 2021 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya (tentative) **www:** <https://ozone.unep.org/meetings/thirty-third-meeting-parties>

Minamata COP-4: The fourth meeting of the COP of the Minamata Convention on Mercury is expected to review the Convention’s Annexes A and B and financial mechanism, and conduct an effectiveness review of the Convention. COP-4 will be split into an online session in 2021 and an in-person event in 2022. **dates:** 1-5 November 2021 **location:** online **www:** <http://www.mercuryconvention.org/Meetings/COP4/tabid/8506/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

Glasgow Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 26): COP 26, the 16th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 16), and the third meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 3) are expected to convene one year after the conference was postponed due to COVID-19. **dates:** 1-12 November 2021 **location:** Glasgow, UK **www:** <https://unfccc.int>

61st Meeting of the GEF Council: The GEF Council will approve projects to realize global environmental benefits in the GEF’s focal areas, provide guidance to the GEF Secretariat and implementing Agencies, and discuss its relations with the conventions for which it serves as the financial mechanism. **dates:** 7-9 December 2021 **location:** Washington D.C., US **www:** <https://www.thegef.org/council-meetings/gef-61st-council-meeting>

For additional meetings, see <http://sdg.iisd.org>

Glossary

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSO	civil society organization
CSP	Country Support Program
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEF-8	eighth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IPAG	Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group
IPLC	indigenous peoples and local communities
LDCs	least developed countries
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
MEA	multilateral environmental agreement
ODA	official development assistance
OPF	operational focal point
PIF	Project Identification Form
SCCF	Special Climate Change Fund
SIDS	small island developing States
STAP	Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel
UNCCD	UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change