

## Summary of the 55<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Global Environment Facility Council: 18-20 December 2018

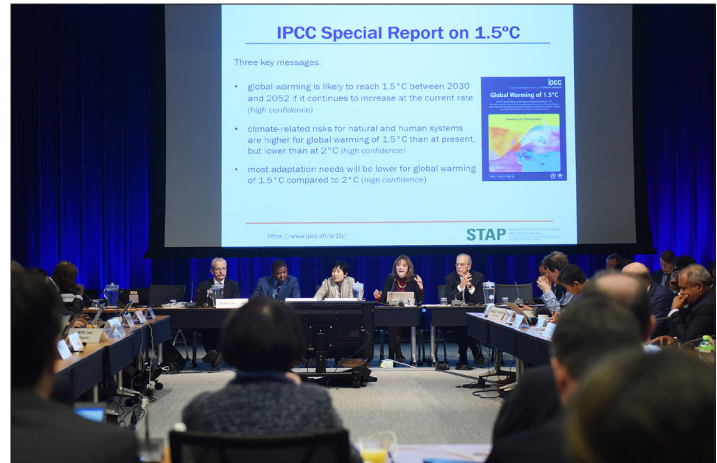
The 55th meeting of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council convened in Washington, DC, US, from 18-20 December 2018, at World Bank headquarters. Representatives of governments, international organizations, and civil society organizations (CSOs) attended the three-day meeting, which also included the 25th meeting of the Council for the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). The meetings were preceded by a consultation with CSOs on 17 December.

Naoko Ishii, GEF Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chairperson, and Abdul Bakarr Salim, Sierra Leone, served as Co-Chairs for the meetings.

The GEF Council adopted the first Work Program since the approval of the seventh replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund (GEF-7). The Work Program comprised 18 projects in 25 recipient countries, and amounted to USD 157.8 million, including GEF project financing and Agency fees, and is expected to leverage USD 819.7 million in co-financing. In addition, the Council of the LDCF/SCCF adopted a Work Program comprising six project concepts, with resources amounting to USD 45.85 million for the LDCF, including project grants and Agency fees.

The Council also discussed and approved a number of policies, guidelines and safeguards on measures aimed at enhancing the efficiency, accountability and transparency of the GEF. These measures included new policy procedures to speed up the preparation, endorsement, implementation, and closure of projects. A policy regarding improved access to information and revised environmental and social safeguards throughout the GEF project and programme cycle were also adopted.

The Council heard updates from representatives of the Conventions for which the GEF serves as a financial mechanism regarding recent and upcoming meetings, decisions and other relevant activities. The presentations by the Minamata Convention on Mercury, Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Convention on Biological



A view of the room during the presentation of STAP Chair **Rosina Bierbaum**

Diversity (CBD), and Montreal Protocol prompted Council Members to reflect on the GEF's unique role in integrating issues and generating synergies.

At the conclusion of the meetings, Council Members reviewed and approved the Joint Summaries of the Chairs for the GEF Council and LDCF/SCCF Council meetings.

This summary highlights the discussions and decisions reached at the 55th meeting of the GEF Council and the 25th meeting of the LDCF/SCCF Council.

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## A Brief History of the GEF

The GEF was created in 1991 in an effort 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 organization 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 Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP); and
- the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), which was created in 2003.

The organization's main decision-making body is the GEF Council, which is responsible for developing, adopting and evaluating the GEF's operational policies and programmes. Meeting twice a year, it is composed of 32 appointed Council Members, each representing a constituency, that is, a group of countries, including 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 nations, 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).

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 UNFCCC.

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

- CBD;
- UNFCCC;
- UNCCD;
- Stockholm Convention on 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); UN Environment (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, Inc.; Conservation International; the International

Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN); the Development Bank of Southern Africa; the Brazilian Biodiversity Fund; the Chinese Foreign Economic Cooperation Office; the Development Bank of Latin America; and the West African Development Bank.

Summaries of IISD RS coverage of past GEF Council and Assembly meetings can be found at: [http://www.iisd.ca/process/trade\\_invest\\_in\\_sd.htm](http://www.iisd.ca/process/trade_invest_in_sd.htm).

**GEF Council Consultation with CSOs:** A GEF Council Consultation with CSOs took place on Monday, 17 November 2018, at World Bank headquarters. The CSO consultation included a dialogue with GEF CEO and Chairperson Ishii as well as panel discussions on: the implementation of the updated vision to enhance civil society engagement with the GEF; the evolving role of CSOs in GEF-7; and connecting environmental impact and gender equality. For IISD RS' summary of the proceedings, see: <http://enb.iisd.org/gef/council55/17dec.html>

## Report of the GEF Council Meeting

Naoko Ishii, GEF CEO and Chairperson, opened the 55th meeting of the GEF Council on Tuesday morning, 18 December. She highlighted that this would be the first Council meeting since the GEF-7 replenishment concluded, and therefore commences a new phase for the GEF. She stressed the urgent need to address global environmental challenges, citing recent scientific reports that reveal that "we are not winning the war against global degradation" and noting the need to address food production and human settlements in relation to the decline in global biodiversity.

She also highlighted: the increased enthusiasm in adaptation, including the growing interest of the private sector in the adaptation agenda; the GEF's commitment to work with the CBD to build a coalition for a successful 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the CBD and adoption of a post-2020 framework; and the role that GEF-7 can play in catalyzing transformational changes for food and land use systems, sustainable cities, and the energy transition, while protecting key biomes. She looked forward to the Council's discussions on ways to improve the GEF's efficiency, transparency, and safeguards in order to deliver results as soon as possible.



Naoko Ishii, GEF CEO and Chairperson

Abdul Bakarr Salim, Sierra Leone, was elected Co-Chairperson of the meeting.

The Council adopted the agenda (GEF/C.55/01) with the addition of discussions during the agenda item on “other business” regarding the information paper on measures to enhance sustainability of GEF projects and programs and the importance of working against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

### ***Policy Measures to Enhance Operational Efficiency, Accountability and Transparency***

On Tuesday, 18 December, Francoise Clottes, GEF Secretariat, introduced the document titled, “Policy Measures to Enhance Operational Efficiency, Accountability and Transparency” (GEF/C.55/04), noting that it contains specific amendments to the Cancellation Policy and the Project and Program Cycle Policy, and a proposal for a one-time cancellation of the uncommitted/unused funds under Programs approved on or before 30 June 2014.

On the Cancellation Policy, she said the proposal was to cancel full-sized projects if they have not been submitted for CEO endorsement within 12 months of Council approval, and if they have not been endorsed by the CEO within 18 months of Council approval.

Some Council Members supported the proposal while others rejected it, raising concerns about possible impacts of shortening submission periods on recipient countries, noting capacity constraints. One cautioned that “in an attempt to discipline implementing agencies, constituencies are being punished.” Several Members called for ensuring comprehensive understanding of root causes of inefficiencies and delays, with one cautioning against providing a “mechanistic” response, while “our goal is to ensure that there is no need for cancellation.”

Another Member called for a portal to enable implementing Agencies, Operational Focal Points (OFPs) and Council Members to track project approval progress.

Responding to these concerns, Clottes explained that the intent behind the proposal was not to penalize countries, but to streamline the project preparation process through ensuring an “effective timeline.” She proposed adding a waiver on the 12 month requirement to allow countries flexibility.



GEF Council Member **Stefan Schwager**, Switzerland



**Francoise Clottes**, Director of Strategy and Operations, GEF Secretariat

During a second round of comments, Council Members agreed that the Secretariat revise the proposal.

On the Project and Program Cycle Policy, Clottes outlined a proposal for a revised commitment schedule of Agency fees, including three-tranche commitment for full-sized projects: 20% at Council approval, 50% at first disbursement and 30% at mid-term review. Council Members welcomed this proposal.

On the one-time cancellation of the uncommitted funds, Clottes introduced the Secretariat’s proposal to release these funds immediately to the GEF Trust Fund for programming. Several Council Members requested information on the amount of funds, which, Clottes responded, was estimated at USD 117 million.

Ishii introduced a revised Cancellation Policy on Wednesday evening, explaining that it introduced flexibility for OFPs to inform the CEO of inability to submit the project for CEO endorsement within 12 months of its approval by the Council.

On Thursday morning, Council Members provided comments on the revised policy. They suggested reflecting in the highlights of the discussion countries’ freedom to choose the implementing Agency based on specialized skills and that the portal on project approval progress be operational within six months.

**Decision:** GEF Council Members approve: an amendment to the Cancellation Policy (OP/PL/02 Council document GEF/C.48/04), as set out in Annex I; an amendment to the Project and Program Cycle Policy (OP/PL/01, Council document GEF/C.50/08/Rev.1), as set out in Annex II; and a one-time cancellation, with immediate effect, of any GEF funds approved for Programs on or before 30 June 2014 that have not been committed towards the Program’s Child Projects, or have not been spent by the Program’s Child Projects and have been returned to the Program set-aside.

### ***Policy on Access to Information***

On Wednesday, 19 December, Francoise Clottes, GEF Secretariat, presented the proposed Policy on Access to Information (GEF/C.55/06) She explained that since the GEF Secretariat and IEO already follow the World Bank’s policy, which has been confirmed by Transparency International (TI) as providing a high level of transparency, and that since Agencies have their own policies, the proposed Policy only covers the Council.

In their interventions, Council Members welcomed the proposal but requested clarification about:

- data protection;
- when OFPs will be able to access project documents through the new portal;
- whether civil society was consulted in developing the proposal; and
- when the GEF will be able to meet the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standard.

Several Members also expressed concern about Council documents not being available on the GEF website early enough for constituency planning meetings.

In response, Clottes explained that:

- the World Bank policy on access reflects best practice;
- because the portal is new and still under development, OFPs will not be able to access project documents through the portal during the next year;
- all data are well protected;
- the proposal was prepared after consultation with Agencies, constituencies, and the Trustee; and
- the Secretariat always aims to have Council documents on the website four weeks before a Council meeting.

Roland Sundstrom, GEF Secretariat, added that the proposal addresses a recommendation by TI to clarify rules for requesting information and responses to such requests, and the Secretariat expects to make its first report to IATI by the end of the current fiscal year.

**Decision:** GEF Council Members approve the Policy on Access to Information.

### **Updated Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards**

On Tuesday, 18 December, Francois Clottes, GEF Secretariat, presented the proposed Updated Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards (GEF/C.55/07), explaining it would supersede the 2011 Policy on Agency Minimum Environmental and Social Safeguard Standards. She noted the key changes, including:

- new documentation and reporting requirements throughout the GEF project cycles;
- expanded and strengthened standards in line with international best practice; and
- strengthened protection of indigenous peoples.

She said the Secretariat proposes having the standards take effect in July 2019 and apply to all mid-term reviews and terminal evaluations submitted after July 2020. She added that, following Council approval of the policy, the Secretariat, in consultation with the multi-stakeholder Working Group on Environmental and Social Safeguards, would finalize guidelines on assessment of the application of the proposed documentation and reporting requirements.

While all intervening Council Members welcomed the updated policies, some suggested possible additions, such as stronger provisions on chemicals, a prohibition on projects using asbestos and asbestos-containing materials, and more provisions on gender. Many stressed the importance of implementation and monitoring, and welcomed the plans for follow-up guidelines. Several stressed that the new policy should not entail new costs



GEF Council Member **Jozef Buys**, Belgium

to recipient countries, and some called for omitting a definition of “indigenous peoples.” The GEF-CSO Network suggested a long list of possible amendments.

One Member, supported by many, suggested two amendments to the draft decision to: clarify that the minimum standards would apply to both implementing and executing Agencies; and create an “early warning system” for reporting between annual implementation reports regarding any identified possible standards violations that might pose reputational risk to the GEF.

On Wednesday the Council examined the revised draft decision text reflecting the two proposed amendments. A Council Member sought clarification if the wording on informing the Council of possible non-compliance with the minimum standards would apply to any infraction noted. Clottes responded that the Secretariat did not intend to notify the Council of minor issues such as a missing document, but rather issues that may pose reputational risk for the GEF. With that clarification, most Council Members indicated support for the revised text.

Several Members, however, continued to object to the inclusion in the standards’ glossary of a definition of “indigenous peoples” “in the absence of an internationally accepted definition.” Clottes explained that the definition used built on those used by the GEF Agencies, and that without it, many parts of the proposed Policy would be difficult to interpret. The Council discussed three options for addressing the concerns of



GEF Council Member **Aparna Subramani**, India



Council members during Thursday's proceedings

Members: keeping the definition as is; keeping the definition, but with a footnote recognizing that there is no universally agreed definition; or omitting the definition. Several Members asked for time to consult capitals about the matter.

On Thursday, the Council returned to the discussion of the revised draft decision text. Members debated whether to modify the language on notifying the Council on cases of non-compliance, but decided to keep the “constructive ambiguity” of “possible non-compliance” that would allow the Secretariat to judge which cases pose possible reputational risk and should be notified to Council. Members also discussed whether the proposal for text noting that the standards apply to the “executing partners” under Agency supervision might cause confusion, and decided to delete this part of the proposed revision. Members then considered a compromise text on the issue of the definition of “indigenous peoples” worked out among concerned Members, whereby the standards paper would be revised to include a footnote noting that “there is no internationally agreed definition” of the term and the definition included in the paper is solely for the purposes of interpreting the GEF policy.

**Decision:** Council Members approve the Updated Policy as amended with the footnote, superseding the 2011 Policy on Agency Minimum Environmental and Social Safeguards Standards (GEF/C.41/10/Rev.01). Further, the Council requests the Secretariat to propose a procedure to inform the Council of possible non-compliance with the minimum standards contained in the Policy, where reputational risks for the GEF may arise, for Council consideration at its 56th meeting in June 2019.

### ***Harmonizing the Rules and Requirements for all Agencies***

On Tuesday, 18 December, Francoise Clottes, GEF Secretariat, introduced the agenda item on “Harmonizing the Rules and Requirements for All Agencies” (GEF/C.55/08), explaining that the document provides an updated analysis of the GEF’s share of each Agency’s portfolio, and sets out proposed implementation

modalities for the application of the 30% ceiling. She noted that only two Agencies have shares just under 30%, with the rest being well below 30%.

Council Members voiced concerns over the proposal to introduce a 30% ceiling, including its possible unintended consequences, such as putting smaller Agencies at a disadvantage by concentrating funding in a few larger Agencies; and limiting recipient countries’ choice of the implementing Agency.

Several Members distinguished between the issues of portfolio concentration risk and Agencies’ overdependence on GEF resources. One Member, supported by others, suggested that the decision be recast as introducing a cap on GEF resources rather than addressing implementing Agencies’ funding source risk, and that the cap be formulated as a target.

Another Member, supported by several others, said the intent, metric and methodology behind the proposal were “out of whack” due to an “imprecise mandate” given to the Secretariat by the Council.



GEF Council Member **Gabriel Yorio Gonzalez**, Mexico



Council members listen to CEO Ishii

Council Members requested that the GEF Secretariat provide additional information on, among other issues: the objectives of the proposed cap; computation methodology; consequences of no agreed ceiling; and comparative advantage of implementing Agencies.

Following CEO Ishii's proposal, a revised decision was circulated among Council Members on Wednesday evening. Several Members proposed clarifications, including on reviewing the risk of concentration of GEF resources and specifying under what modalities the dependency ratio will be applied.

On Thursday morning, Council Members provided another round of comments on the proposed decision. Many welcomed the proposed establishment of a Working Group of interested Council Members to review the concentration of resources across Agencies, asking to join the group. One Council Member, supported by several others and opposed by another Member, suggested that the group work on operationalizing the 30% threshold. Several requested that the group report annually to the Council on its progress.

One Member queried whether free choice of implementing Agencies was compatible with a concentration ceiling.

Council Members called for the Working Group to further address, among other issues, concentration dependence risk and Agencies' comparative advantage.

A revised decision was circulated on Thursday afternoon, and the Council adopted it.

**Decision:** The Council takes note of the latest information on the GEF's share of each Agency's portfolio. The Council requests Agencies to report to the Secretariat the volume of their non-GEF portfolios on an annual basis, starting on 30 June 2020, and the Secretariat to compile and present such reports for Council review and decision starting in the fall of 2020. The Council further requests the Secretariat to monitor the application of a 30% ceiling on the GEF's share of Agencies' portfolios, and report on progress and lessons learned at the 61st GEF Council meeting in the fall of 2021.

In addition, the Council requests that the Secretariat, in collaboration with a Working Group of interested Council members: consider questions around the concentration of GEF

resources across Agencies; develop further the modalities for the implementation of a 30% ceiling; and make recommendations for Council consideration at its 56th Council meeting in the Spring of 2019.

### ***Updating the GEF's Minimum Fiduciary Standards Related to Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism***

On Tuesday, 18 December, Francoise Clottes, GEF Secretariat, introduced the agenda item on Updating the GEF's Minimum Fiduciary Standards Related to Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (GEF/C.55/09), and discussed the proposed decision, through which agencies would be required to certify that they meet the approved minimum requirements or present a time-bound action plan to achieve compliance no later than 30 April 2019.

Many Council Members expressed support for the decision, with several proposing that instances in which there is concern of non-compliance should be brought "immediately" to the Council's attention, rather than in a "timely manner." Members also inquired how the GEF would ensure that the Agencies fulfill their obligations under the standards. One Member



Josceline Wheatley, UK

proposed removing a reference to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373 and substituting it with a reference to “relevant resolutions on terrorism and money laundering.” Another Member suggested regularly checking the strength of the standards.

Clottes highlighted that the guidelines were developed at the request of the GEF Council as a stopgap measure, while an ongoing review of fiduciary standards continues and will eventually help define minimum fiduciary requirements across the partnership. A Member suggested that in addition to systematically screening “individuals and/or entities to whom funds are transferred,” screening could also focus on “their beneficial owners.”

**Decision:** The Council, having reviewed document GEF/C.55/09, Updating the Minimum Fiduciary Standards on Issues Related to Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism, approves, with immediate effect, the minimum requirements for Agencies on anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism contained in Annex I of this document, and requests the Secretariat to include those minimum requirements in an updated version of the Minimum Fiduciary Standards for GEF Partner Agencies (GA/PL/02).

In addition, the Council requests Agencies to certify that they meet the approved minimum requirements, or present a time-bound action plan to achieve compliance, no later than April 30, 2019. The Council requests the Secretariat to compile Agencies’ certifications and any action plans for the Council’s review and decision at its 56th meeting in the Spring of 2019.

### **GEF-7 Non-Grant Instrument Program**

On Wednesday, 19 December, Gustavo Fonseca, GEF Secretariat, introduced the GEF-7 Non-Grant Instrument (NGI) Program (GEF/C.55/12), noting that this document proposes measures to complement the existing NGI Policy to: strengthen transparency; address constraints identified during the pilot; formalize the ad hoc advisory group of financial experts supporting the NGI Program; and enhance the GEF Secretariat’s capacity related to the Program.



**Gustavo Fonseca**, Director of Programs, GEF Secretariat



GEF Council Member **Nuritdin Inamov**, Russian Federation

Fonseca stressed that the Program will continue to support facilities to strengthen and sustain linkages between investors and project developers to provide seed capital and encourage project incubation and deal origination in “frontier sectors” such as marine plastics, sustainable agriculture, and blue carbon.

Council Members welcomed the paper, but sought more information on: how the Secretariat plans to overcome identified constraints; the criteria for exceeding the USD 15 million NGI project cap; the leverage ratio expected over the life of the Program; and how project return on investment (ROI) will be negotiated. They also requested further information on: the terms of reference (ToR) for the advisory group; GEF focal areas that are more likely to see NGIs; whether there are plans to increase leverage through tools such as guarantees; and what will happen with reflows generated by NGIs. They also queried: what role additionality would play in selecting NGI projects; how NGI results would be monitored; and what the role of OFPs would be vis-à-vis NGIs involving their countries.

In response, Fonseca emphasized that:

- the Secretariat relies heavily on the implementing Agencies to negotiate project terms;
- reflows from the Program will go to the GEF Trust Fund;
- the kind of instruments the Program will use will be decided deal-by-deal;
- the biggest need identified during the pilot was to develop a strong pipeline of projects and promote aggregation;
- the financial advisers provide voluntary services for evaluating proposed projects and their terms against market signals;
- monitoring will be the Program’s biggest challenge;
- the option to exceed the cap is intended only to provide flexibility, not to bring in projects that will consume large percentages of Program resources;
- additionality is very important for this Program, and will influence which GEF focal areas it is used in; and
- the Secretariat will keep OFPs informed of projects affecting their countries, but OFP endorsement is not needed for NGIs.

Ishii added that while the pilot achieved a leverage ratio of 1:18, it was difficult to predict the ratio the Program would have. She said it would depend on what kinds of areas the Council



STAP Chair **Rosina Bierbaum** (center)

would like to focus on over the next four years, and indicated the Secretariat's interest in exploring issues neglected by other financial institutions because of greater risks involved, such as agroforestry or green fisheries. Regarding overcoming barriers, she suggested that the platform approach might be the most effective and the best way to explore additionalities.

**Decision:** GEF Council Members take note of the implementation framework for the NGI Program and request the Secretariat and the Trustee to provide an updated report on non-grant instrument reflows at the 57th Council meeting.

### **Report of the Chairperson of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP)**

On Wednesday, 19 December, Rosina Bierbaum, Chair, STAP, presented the Report of the Chairperson of the STAP (GEF/STAP/C.55/Inf.01). She:

- reviewed key messages from recent non-STAP scientific reports relevant to GEF work;
- noted her role as the science advisor to the new Global Commission on Adaptation;
- discussed phase 3 of STAP work on climate risk screening, looking at how Agencies screen, and developing appropriate guidance;
- summarized recently completed papers on novel entities, and on innovation and GEF, noting the latter has resulted in STAP recommendations to the GEF Partnership regarding defining their risk appetite;
- outlined what STAP will cover in a forthcoming paper on local commons for global benefits;
- outlined how lessons learned from the Integrated Approach Pilots (IAPs) are being used in the design and review of the documents for the integrated, multi-thematic GEF-7 Impact Programs (IPs) that will be submitted to the June 2019 GEF Council meeting; and
- outlined possible future STAP work, including: a possible advisory on the use of Earth observation data to improve project planning and programming; further work on land

degradation neutrality; work with the scientific community and Global Commission on Adaptation to develop adaptation metrics; an examination of issues in aquaculture; and a possible guidance on multi-stakeholder engagement.

Council Members expressed support for STAP work on climate risk screening. Some Members cautioned about STAP spending too much time on new technologies unless they were clearly relevant to GEF programming and project assessment. One questioned whether the GEF needed a policy on higher-risk projects or programs during GEF-7 or could leave that to GEF-8. The GEF-CSO Network commended STAP's interest in community engagement and ownership of projects.

Bierbaum responded that, while defining a policy on higher risk would be up to the Council, if the Council "really wants" an increased level of ambition in GEF projects, it will have to assess the risks needed to achieve that ambition, and STAP can help the Council "think that through." Ishii added that, in order to catalyze system change, GEF will need to consider what risks to take, and STAP can help the GEF better assess those risks.



GEF Council member **Jan Petter Borring**, Norway





Juho Uitto, Director, IEO

### **Semi-Annual Evaluation Report November 2018 and Management Response**

On Wednesday, 19 December, Juha Uitto, Director, IEO, presented the Semi-Annual Evaluation Report November 2018 (GEF/ME/C.55/01).

He outlined the IEO's evaluative approach to assessing the GEF's additionality, highlighting environmental, legal/regulatory, institutional/governance, innovation, financial and socioeconomic areas. He recommended a broader approach to additionality in GEF-7 programming, the theory of change as a tool to assess it, and measurement of outcomes and impacts.

Uitto discussed evaluation of the GEF's support to mainstreaming biodiversity, drawing on country studies from Colombia, India and South Africa. He noted that, at 85% satisfactory, the GEF's performance was "pretty good." He recommended, *inter alia*, adopting a longer-term perspective, improving monitoring and evaluation, and conducting a systematic analysis of benefits and trade-offs.

Uitto raised other issues including evaluation of the GEF-UNIDO Global Cleantech Innovation Programme (GCIP), evaluation work in progress, knowledge management, and peer review of the independent evaluation function. On the latter, he outlined the options of internal peer review and external review.

Ishii fully supported the IEO's recommendations, noting that IEO work on additionality was aligned with GEF-7 strategy and policies.

Council Members welcomed the report, its findings on additionality, and the proposal for IEO peer review.

Urging further work on additionality, several Members suggested that it be considered during *ex ante* assessment of projects, which, Uitto explained, is done by the Secretariat and not by the IEO. One Member said additionality should be "a *sine qua non* for considering potential interventions." Another suggested including the additionality component in the Project Identification Form (PIF) format. Several Members called for a cautious approach to quantifying benefits and co-benefits, given the GEF's environmental core mandate, with one calling for a running commentary on sustainability. Geeta Batra, IEO, noted that Strategic Country Cluster Evaluations (SCCEs) focused on the sustainability issue.

On peer review, Council Members suggested drawing on the experience of other institutions, including the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and multilateral development banks (MDBs).

**Decision:** The Council endorses the recommendations of the evaluations included. The Council also endorses the proposal for the peer review of the IEO.

### **Work Program**

On Tuesday, 18 December, GEF CEO and Chairperson Ishii opened the discussion on the Work Program (GEF/C.55/10). Gustavo Fonseca, GEF Secretariat, introduced the Work Program, noting it comprises 18 projects consistent with both the GEF 2020 strategy and the GEF-7 Programming Directions framework, for a total of USD 147.2 million from the GEF trust fund and USD 10.6 million in associated Agency fees, with an indicative USD 819.7 million in co-financing. He explained that if the Work Program is approved, it would benefit 25 recipient countries, four of which are least developed countries (LDCs), with USD 46.5 million programmed for biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation, USD 24.3 million for international waters, USD 22.9 million for chemicals and waste, and USD 64 million for the Small Grants Programme (SGP).

Several Council Members questioned projects that include upper- and middle-income countries that are not eligible for official development assistance (ODA) under Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) rules. Others expressed concern about: the lack of small island developing States (SIDS) in the Program and the small number of LDCs; the geographic imbalance in the Program; the concentration of projects among just a few Agencies; the co-financing ratio being lower than desired for GEF-7; and the lack of gender indicators.

One Council Member said that, because of his country's policies on human trafficking, state-sponsored terrorism and transparent military audits, it could not support several of the projects proposed in the Program. He said his country would not seek to block consensus, but wanted its objections reflected in the Co-Chairs' Summary.

The GEF-CSO Network called for: more co-financing from the private sector; participation of the private sector in project design; more projects in GEF-7 such as the one on land degradation proposed in this Work Program; and a wider distribution of countries in future programs.



Dan Bakoye Chaibou, Niger



L-R: **William Ehlers**, GEF Council Secretary; GEF Council Co-Chair **Abdul Bakarr Salim**, Sierra Leone; and **Naoko Ishii**, GEF CEO and Chairperson

In response, Fonseca explained that, due to the timing required to develop a project, many of this Program's projects were "left over" from GEF-6 and should not be considered reflective of Programs going forward in terms of SIDS and LDC participation, geographic, Agency and thematic balance, and co-financing ratios. Regarding the inclusion of countries not eligible for ODA under OECD rules, he pointed out that the Conferences of the Parties to the MEAs that the GEF serves determine which countries are eligible for funding in the areas they cover.

**Decision:** The Council approves the Work Program, subject to comments made during the Council meeting and additional comments that may be submitted in writing to the Secretariat by 7 January 2019. Total resources approved in the Work Program amount to USD 157.8 million, which includes GEF project financing and Agency fees.

Single country projects include: Strengthening the Protected Area Network for Migratory Bird Conservation Along the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF) in China; Strengthening Management and Governance for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Globally Significant Biodiversity in Coastal Marine Ecosystems in Chile; Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation Criteria in Sectoral and Intersectoral Public Policies and Programs to Safeguard Threatened Wildlife in Argentina; AIM-WELL: Algeria Integrated Management of Waste Energy at the Local Level; Accelerating Investment in Efficient and Renewable District Energy Systems in Chile; Promoting Low Cost Energy Efficient Wooden Buildings in Turkey; Sustainable Bioenergy Value Chain Innovations in Ukraine; Colombia's 2030 measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) Strategic Vision; Enhancing Environmental Performance in the Expanded and Extruded Polystyrene Foam Industries in Turkey; Reducing Global Environmental Risks Through the Monitoring and Development of Alternative Livelihood for the Primary Mercury Mining Sector in Mexico; and Environmentally Sound Management of persistent organic pollutants (POPs), Mercury and other Hazardous Chemicals in Argentina.

Regional projects include: Towards Joint Integrated, Ecosystem-based Management of the Pacific Central American Coastal Large Marine Ecosystem (PACA); Strengthening the Resilience of Central Asian Countries by Enabling Regional

Cooperation to Assess High Altitude Glacio-nival Systems to Develop Integrated Methods for Sustainable Development and Adaptation to Climate Change; and the Lake Victoria Environmental Management Programme, Phase 3.

Multi-focal area projects include: Consolidating Biodiversity and Land Conservation Policies and Actions as Pillars of Sustainable Development in Uruguay; Sustainable Natural Resource Management in Sudan; Green Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt; and core funding for the seventh operational phase of the SGP.

#### **Annual Portfolio Monitoring Report 2018**

On Tuesday, 18 December, Francoise Clottes, GEF Secretariat, introduced the Annual Portfolio Monitoring Report 2018 (GEF/C.55/03), explaining that it provides a "snapshot" of the progress and performance of the active portfolio as of 30 June 2018.

All intervening Council Members voiced concern about how much higher the Agencies rated their own management performance at project completion than the performance ratings provided by the IEO. Many Members wondered if the fact that many GEF-6 areas far exceeded expected global environmental benefits meant that target-setting had not been ambitious enough. Several Members suggested forming a working group to work with the Secretariat and IEO to update the 2010 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Policy.



GEF Council Member **Seyad Alimohammad Mousavi**, Iran

Members also requested: analysis of why the co-financing ratio is low in some areas; reporting on actual results in project mid-term reviews (MTRs); updated project sustainability numbers; new indicators on GEF project impact on the global environment; more analysis on why projects are delayed; analysis of why the land degradation area has the highest rate of overdue projects and lowest disbursement rate; a comparison of each Agency's share of the GEF portfolio, their ratings and fees; reporting on gender dimensions of projects; and an analysis on why the international waters area is not performing as expected.

In response, Clottes explained that this is a transitional report, with further improvements and analysis planned for AMPRs going forward; said the Secretariat is working with Agencies to improve data quality and comparability; welcomed the suggestion of a working group on updating the M&E policy; explained that the overshoot of expected global environmental benefits was due to the fact that the GEF only recently began accounting for co-benefits; and noted that the Secretariat fully intends to report on gender in the future.

**Decision:** The Council welcomes the overall finding that the GEF portfolio under implementation in fiscal year (FY) 2018 performed satisfactorily across all focal areas.

### ***Relations with the Conventions and Other International Institutions***

On Wednesday, 19 December, the Council was updated by representatives from the Conventions for which the GEF serves as a financial mechanism regarding recent and upcoming meetings, decisions, and other relevant activities.

Rossana Silva, Executive Secretary, Minamata Convention on Mercury, highlighted that, as of 19 December 2018, the Convention has 101 Parties. She noted that two promising projects had been approved in the GEF Work Program, with mercury issues to be addressed in Mexico and Argentina as a result. She reported that the COP President had transmitted to the GEF the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) adopted by the COP regarding the GEF's role as a financial mechanism. She said COP 3 will undertake a review of the financial mechanism.



Rossana Silva, Executive Secretary, Minamata Convention on Mercury

The Stockholm Convention welcomed the strong chemicals and waste cluster in GEF-7, and reported that the Secretariat is taking a proactive stance by holding brainstorming sessions for the implementation of priority activities under the Stockholm Convention for 2018-2022 and in the context of the Secretariat's technical assistance programme. He said the next COP will discuss, *inter alia*: the possible adoption of a compliance mechanism; the terms of reference (ToR) for the work on the review of the financial mechanism and the needs assessment for 2022-2026; and the listing of two new chemicals in the annexes.

The UNCCD reported on preparations for the January 2019 meeting of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC); welcomed the inclusion of land degradation neutrality (LDN) in the work program of the STAP; highlighted that more than 100 countries are completing the LDN target setting process and now need to transform their targets into implementation projects; and noted the role that the LDN Fund can play in "crowding in" financing for LDN.

The UNFCCC highlighted outcomes from the just-concluded Katowice Climate Change Conference, highlighting that guidance to the financial mechanism was included in several decisions, including a request that GEF continue to support the Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT). He also noted that pledges for the LDCF and SCCF were made by Switzerland, Sweden, and France.

The CBD reported that COP 14, at its November 2018 meeting, adopted the ToR for an assessment of the funds needed for the implementation of the Convention under GEF-8. She reported that the fifth review of the financial mechanism had concluded and the GEF had been invited to pursue driver-targeted approaches and projects that address conflict resolution, among others. She said the sixth review would take into account the experience of past reviews.

The Montreal Protocol reported that the Kigali Amendment, which addresses hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), will enter into force on 1 January 2019 and is expected to help prevent 0.4°C of global warming by the end of the century. He noted that implementation efforts in "economies in transition" (EITs) are supported under the Kigali Amendment.



Gilbert Bankobeza, Senior Legal Officer, Ozone Secretariat



Anar Mamdani, Canada

During the discussion, a Council Member noted that: the chemicals expected to be added under the Stockholm Convention have not received additional funding under GEF-7; the Adaptation Fund recently received a record amount of funding pledges; the transition to transparency updates under the UNFCCC needs to be smooth and not receive double funding; the CBD's work to identify priorities for GEF funding is a good example of how to collaborate with the GEF; and the GEF Secretariat should prepare Members for the eligibility issues around the Kigali implementation efforts in EITs. Council Members also inquired about the complementarities between the GCF and GEF and how the GEF addresses synergies among the Conventions. Human-wildlife conflicts were also highlighted as an important issue.

The Secretariat discussed efforts with the GCF to build on the national dialogues that the GCF and GEF are organizing, including through joint sessions. Engagements with the GCF during the climate COPs were also highlighted. Ishii noted that the GEF's role in integrating issues has been highlighted as the unique role that the GEF plays in climate funding.

**Decision:** The Council 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.



GEF Council member Brian Doherty, US

### Options for a Responsible Investment Strategy

On Wednesday, 19 December, Praveen Desabatla, World Bank, introduced the agenda item. Tapiwa Sikipa, World Bank, presented the document on Responsible Investment for the GEF Trust Fund as part of the World Bank Trust Fund Pool (GEF/C.55/13). He explained that it highlights progress made by the World Bank as Trustee of the GEF Trust Fund in developing Responsible Investment Guiding Principles, as well as the World Bank's proposal to identify Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Integration as the overarching approach for the GEF Trust Fund as part of the World Bank Trust Fund Pool, subject to approval within the World Bank's governance structures. He noted that ESG Integration represents a two-stage approach comprising ESG awareness and ESG implementation.

Council Members welcomed the document. One Council Member introduced several amendments to the draft decision, including adding a request to the Trustee to present a proposal for an ESG Investment Strategy for the GEF Trust Fund to the Council. These were supported by the Council.

Several Members sought clarification on, *inter alia*: whether the ESG Investment Strategy should be accompanied by guidelines; when the Trustee will present a proposal on the ESG Investment Strategy to the GEF Council; and the procedure for the Guiding Principles' approval within the World Bank.

**Decision:** The Council acknowledges the progress made by the World Bank as Trustee of the GEF Trust Fund in developing Responsible Investment Guiding Principles, and takes note of the World Bank's proposal to identify ESG Integration as the overarching approach for the GEF Trust Fund as part of the World Bank Trust Fund Pool, subject to approval within the World Bank's governance structures. The Council further requests the Trustee to present a proposal for an ESG Investment Strategy for the GEF Trust Fund to the Council for consideration, promptly following the approval of the overarching Responsible Investment Guiding Principles by the World Bank.

### Report from the Ad-hoc Working Group on Governance

GEF Council Member Stefan Schwager, Switzerland, reported that the Group held its organizational meeting during the GEF Assembly in Da Nang, Viet Nam, and conducted two phone conferences since. He said the Group held a series of meetings on Monday, 17 December, with the Secretariat, IEO and Agencies. He stressed that the Group is still in an information gathering mode, and will circulate a draft work plan to Council Members and their Alternates once it is developed. Schwager proposed a decision recognizing the substitution of two Group members, on which the Council agreed.

Another Group member added that the Group would welcome all inputs from Council Members.

**Decision:** The Council approves the updated membership of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Governance, with Council Member Matthew Haarsager, US, replacing Geoffrey Okamoto, US, and Adriana Flachier, Brazil, replacing Camila Zepeda Lizama, Costa Rica.



GEF Council Members consulting

### ***Strengthening Consultations with Civil Society: Proposed Topic for Discussion at the Consultations of the 56<sup>th</sup> GEF Council Meeting***

On Wednesday, 19 December, Francoise Clottes, GEF Secretariat, introduced the document titled, “Strengthening Consultations with Civil Society: Proposed Topic for Discussion at the Consultations of the 56<sup>th</sup> GEF Council Meeting” (GEF/C.55/05), explaining that the Council must choose one of the two proposed topics, since it was not possible to do justice to both in the time allotted in the CSO consultation. She added that the proposed topics, ‘Plastics Management to Avoid Pollution: Experiences by Civil Society and Community-based Organizations’ and ‘Illegal Wildlife Trade: A Civil Society Perspective,’ were chosen because of their connection to GEF-7 programming.

Most Council Members indicated that, while both issues were important, they preferred plastics management. Two said they preferred illegal wildlife trade. The GEF-CSO Network proposed selecting plastics management for the June 2019 session, and illegal wildlife trade for the fall 2019 session

**Decision:** Council Members select ‘Plastics Management to Avoid Pollution: Experiences by Civil Society and Community-based Organizations’ as the topic for the 56<sup>th</sup> Council meeting, and ‘Illegal Wildlife Trade: A Civil Society Perspective’ as the topic for the 57<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### ***Other Business***

**Sustainability:** Francoise Clottes, GEF Secretariat, presented the document, “Measures to Enhance the Sustainability of GEF Projects and Programs” (GEF/C.55/Inf.14). She noted the paper’s conclusion that, based on available evidence, there are limited sources for providing recommendations for concrete measures that would be immediately actionable in GEF projects, so further research and work with the Agencies and IEO is required.

A Council Member noted the GEF-7 policy recommendations asked the Secretariat to consult Agencies and present concrete measures to be implemented at different levels of the project cycle, and asked whether the Agencies consulted have provided any advice/recommendations which the Council could act upon.

She said the Council still does not have a clear idea of how serious the situation is due to a lack of data, noting that only 4% of post-completion verification reports contain sufficient data to evaluate sustainability. She observed that single focal area projects, particularly those on climate, do well in terms of sustainability and better than the more integrated, multi-focal areas (MFA) projects to be emphasized in GEF-7. She suggested that the Council:

- request the IEO to make concrete recommendations on how the GEF could address sustainability in the project cycle and present them to the Council for decision at the fall 2019 meeting;
- request the Secretariat to provide concrete suggestions to the June 2019 Council meeting that would ensure that the revised, integrated GEF programs achieve a high score on climate resilience and other sustainability indicators; and
- request that post-completion evaluations be required to assess sustainability in a systematic and comparable way, and this be reflected in the revised evaluation policy.

All other intervening Members supported these suggestions. One disagreed with the Secretariat’s conclusion that it is not yet possible to provide concrete, actionable recommendations, saying her country has already done so in its water and sanitation project portfolio and would be happy to share information on their approach with the Secretariat and IEO. Calling sustainability “the GEF’s Achilles heel,” another Member stressed the need for action soon, and suggested that the Secretariat propose to the June 2019 Council session a plan on how to move methodically forward on the issue over the term of GEF-7.

CEO Ishii agreed on the issue’s importance, but asked for more time for the Secretariat to reflect on how best to proceed, and indicated that there may be some “sequencing problems,” especially regarding the IEO’s role in making recommendations. Juha Uitto, Director, IEO, explained that the IEO’s current work plan does not call for a generic study of the sustainability issue, but rather approaches it case-by-case. He highlighted the IEO’s plans to produce for the June 2019 meeting of the Council a paper on scaling up impacts, which is related, and to present at the fall 2019 Council meeting three Strategic Country Cluster Evaluations, on LDCs, SIDS and African biomes, where



GEF CEO and Chairperson Naoko Ishii addresses the Council

sustainability has been identified as a particular challenge. Uitto said the cluster evaluations will explicitly address determinants and challenges of sustainability.

The Member opening the discussion said ideally she would like the IEO to come forward soon with recommendations on two aspects: how to promote sustainability during the project cycle; and how to measure sustainability.

CEO Ishii reiterated her concerns about sequencing, but agreed that since the first IP proposals are scheduled for Council consideration in June 2019, it would be good to take sustainability measures into account in those proposals. She repeated her request to “let us think more about it and come back to the Council.”

**Sexual Exploitation and Abuse:** A Council Member emphasized the importance of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse in implementing Agencies and the GEF Secretariat.

**Dates of Future Meetings:** The Council agreed that the 58th and 59th meetings of the GEF Council would convene from 1-4 June 2020, and 7-10 December 2020, respectively.

### Report of the LDCF/SCCF Council Meeting

Naoko Ishii, GEF CEO and Chairperson, acting as Chairperson of the LDCF/SCCF Council, opened the 25th meeting of the LDCF/SCCF Council on Thursday, 20 December. She noted “emerging momentum on adaptation” from the Katowice Climate Change Conference, highlighting the need for a new adaptation narrative to shift focus from needs to opportunities, including for the private sector.

The agenda (GEF/LDCF.SCCF.25.01/Rev.01) was adopted without changes.

### Project Showcase

Moise Jean-Pierre, Minister of Environment, Haiti, delivered a presentation on moving towards climate-resilient growth in Haiti with LDCF support. He highlighted “excellent results” from five LDCF-supported projects, including a project on strengthening adaptive capacities of coastal communities in Haiti, and hoped for prompt implementation of the new LDCF Programming Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change.

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

Gustavo Fonseca, GEF Secretariat, presented this agenda item (GEF/LDCF.SCCF.25/03). He outlined the LDCF financial summary, including funding approvals for projects, CEO endorsements and expected results of approved or endorsed projects. Fonseca also provided an update on country consultations on technically cleared projects from the GEF-6 LDCF pipeline.

In response to a query from a Council Member on the application of new programming processes within the LDCF, he outlined the Secretariat’s goal for more synergistic programming.

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



Moise Jean-Pierre, Haiti, and GEF Operational Focal Point for Haiti (center), showcases an LDCF project in Haiti.

### **Least Developed Countries Fund Work Program**

Gustavo Fonseca, GEF Secretariat, presented the Work Program for the LDCF (GEF/LDCF.SCCF.25/04), noting that this is the first Work Program under the new strategy. He outlined factors for strategic LDCF prioritization, highlighting that the Program addresses all three strategic objectives for 2018-2022.

One Council Member said that because of his country's policies on human trafficking and State-sponsored terrorism, he could not support several of the projects proposed in this Program, and requested that his objections be reflected in the Co-Chairs' Summary.

**Decision:** The Council approves the work program comprising six project concepts, subject to comments made during the Council meeting and additional comments that were submitted in writing to the Secretariat by 7 January 2019. Total resources in this work program amount to USD 44.86 million for the LDCF, including project grants and Agency fees.

### **Update on Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation under the Special Climate Change Fund and the Least Developed Countries Fund**

Gustavo Fonseca, GEF Secretariat, introduced the discussion of the update on the Challenge Program for Adaptation Innovation under the SCCF and LDCF, for which the Council had received document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.25/Inf.04, for consideration. Fonseca highlighted that the Challenge Program is an opportunity to drive innovation above and beyond business-as-usual, noting the need to consider how to scale impacts, mobilize private sector resources, and stimulate catalytic change.

During the discussion, Council Members asked about whether there was country ownership for the Program and how many resources were directed to it. Fonseca reported that the Program comprises USD 5 million from the SCCF and USD 5 million from the LDCF. Another Council Member cautioned that innovation is a means and should not be an objective in and of itself, and recalled that the funds are meant to be for country-driven adaptation projects.

### **Pledging Session for the LDCF and SCCF**

At the conclusion of the LDCF/SCCF Council, Members announced the following pledges and contributions to the LDCF/SCCF on behalf of their governments: Walloon Region of Belgium: EUR 2.9 million to the LDCF; Denmark: DKK 150 million to the LDCF; Finland: EUR 2 million to the LDCF; France: EUR 20 million to the LDCF; the Netherlands: USD 9.1 million to the LDCF in 2018; Sweden: SEK 135 million to the LDCF in 2018; and Switzerland: USD 9.9 million to the LDCF and USD 3.3 million to the SCCF, pending parliamentary approval. Germany reported that it will finalize its contribution of EUR 25 million before the end of the year.

### **Closing of the LDCF/SCCF Council**

CEO Ishii expressed excitement with the contributions to these Funds and closed the Council meeting at 1:28 pm.



Co-Chair **Abdul Bakarr Salim** and GEF CEO and Chairperson **Naoko Ishii** at the conclusion of the Council meeting

### **Joint Summary of the Chairs**

At the conclusion of the Council meetings, on Thursday, 20 December, Council Members adopted both the Joint Summary of the Chairs for the 55th meeting of the GEF Council and 25th meeting of the LDCF/SCCF Council.

GEF Council Co-Chair Salim thanked Council Members for their hard work, saying the agenda had been challenging but Members met the challenge and developed clear consensus on most issues.

GEF CEO and Chairperson Ishii congratulated Council members on the extensive but "rich and fruitful" and "constructive" discussions paving the way for urgent action to get GEF-7 on track. Ishii closed the meeting at 1:54 pm.

### **Upcoming Meetings**

**UNCCD CRIC 17:** The Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) assists the UNCCD COP and is an integral part of the Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System (PRAIS). **dates:** 28-30 January 2019 **location:** Georgetown, Guyana **contact:** CCD Secretariat **phone:** +49 228 815 2800 **fax:** +49 228 815 2898/99 **email:** secretariat@unccd.int **www:** <https://www.unccd.int/convention/committee-review-implementation-convention-cric/cric17-28-30-january-2019-georgetown>

**Fourth Session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-4):** UNEA-4 will focus on the theme, "Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production (SCP)," particularly: better global environmental data and partnerships; sustainable and efficient resource management; and robust engagement of civil society, citizens and academia in promoting innovative approaches. **dates:** 11-15 March 2019 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** UN Environment Programme **www:** <http://web.unep.org/environmentassembly/>

**Third Meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG3) of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM):** The OEWG is to consider the results of the first two meetings of the intersessional process addressing the possible post-2020 platform for addressing

chemicals and waste, and to prepare for the Fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5). **dates:** 2-4 April 2019 **location:** Montevideo, Uruguay **contact:** SAICM Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8273 **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** saicm.chemicals@unep.org **www:** <http://www.saicm.org/About/OEWG/OEWG3/tabid/5984/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

**Basel Convention COP14, Rotterdam Convention COP9 and Stockholm Convention COP9:** The 14th meeting of the COP to the Basel Convention, the ninth meeting of the COP to the Rotterdam Convention and the ninth meeting of the COP to the Stockholm Convention will convene back-to-back. **dates:** 29 April - 10 May 2019 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** BRS Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8271 **fax:** +41-22-917-8098 **email:** brs@brsmeas.org **www:** <http://www.brsmeas.org/>

**49th Session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC):** This meeting will approve the 2019 Refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories. **dates:** 8-12 May 2018 **location:** Kyoto, Japan **contact:** IPCC Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-730-8208/54/84 **fax:** +41-22-730-8025/13 **email:** IPCC-Sec@wmo.int **www:** <http://www.ipcc.ch>

**56th 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, such as the Minamata Convention. **dates:** 10-13 June 2019 **location:** Washington D.C., US **contact:** GEF Secretariat **phone:** +1-202-473-0508 **fax:** +1-202-522-3240/3245 **email:** secretariat@thegef.org **www:** <https://www.thegef.org/council-meetings>

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

## Glossary

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSO	Civil Society Organization
GCF	Green Climate Fund
EITs	Economies in Transition
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEF-7	seventh replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund
IAP	Integrated Approach Pilot
IEO	GEF Independent Evaluation Office
IP	Impact Program
LDCs	least developed countries
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MDB	Multilateral development bank
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
NGI	Non-Grant Instrument
ODA	official development assistance
OPF	Operational Focal Point
POPs	Persistent Organic Pollutants
SCCF	Special Climate Change Fund
SGP	GEF Small Grants Programme
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
UNIDO	UN Industrial Development Organization



Family photo of GEF Council Members and Alternate Council Members with GEF CEO and Chairperson Naoko Ishii and members of the GEF Secretariat