GEF Council Bulletin

A Summary Report of the Forty-third Meeting of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council

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SUMMARY OF THE 43RD MEETING OF THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY COUNCIL: 13-15 NOVEMBER 2012

The 43rd Meeting of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council convened in Washington, DC, US, from 13-15 November 2012, at International Monetary Fund (IMF) headquarters. Representatives of governments, international organizations and civil society organizations (CSOs) attended the three-day meeting, which also included the 13th meeting of the Council for the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). The meetings were preceded by consultations with CSOs on 12 November.

GEF Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chairperson Naoko Ishii opened the Council meeting and introduced the agenda. The Council elected João Raimundo Lopes (Council member for Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and the Gambia) to Co-Chair the meeting. A keynote address by Francisco Gaetani, Vice-Minister of Environment of Brazil, helped set the stage for a discussion on the long-term vision for the GEF. Aram Harutyunyan, Minister of Nature Protection, Armenia, and Rachel Kyte, Vice President for Sustainable Development, World Bank, also contributed remarks to help frame this discussion. The Council also heard messages from two Executive Secretaries and the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP).

The Council approved decisions on: briefing on the replenishment process; relations with conventions and other international institutions; proposed framework for a financial mechanism for the future mercury convention and draft operational program for mercury; the progress report from the Director of the GEF Evaluation Office; the annual thematic evaluations report 2012 and management response; the annual impact report 2012 and management response; the annual monitoring review; streamlining of the project cycle; financial projections for GEF-5 programming options; the report of the selection and review committee; and the Work Program, which amounts to US$174 million and benefits 63 countries.

The LDCF/SCCF Council convened for its 13th meeting on Thursday afternoon, 15 November, and adopted, *inter alia*, a Work Program amounting to US$28.544 million for the SCCF and US$1.87 million for the LDCF. Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden announced new contributions to the LDCF and SCCF amounting to US$80.8 million.

On Thursday afternoon, the LDCF/SCCF and GEF Councils reviewed and approved the Joint Summary of the Chairs of the respective meetings. A Council member stressed that the highlights of the meeting should indicate that the Council had expressed its appreciation to the new CEO for her efforts to engage the Council and to renew the partnership on which the GEF was built, and that the Council found the Work Program to be well balanced, with projects that were innovative and scalable. CEO Ishii stressed that the meeting had accomplished the three goals she identified at the opening of the meeting: think of the GEF's future; begin a new way of doing business to strengthen partnerships; and ensure that resources are effectively managed. She added that the GEF 2020 visioning exercise had been a highlight for her. Ishii closed the meeting at 3:25 pm.

Naoko Ishii, GEF CEO and Chairperson, speaking during the opening session

IN THIS ISSUE

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This summary highlights the discussions and decisions reached at the 43rd meeting of the GEF Council and the 13th meeting of the LDCF/SCCF Council.

A Brief History of the GEF

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was created in 1991 as a result of mounting concern in the preceding decade over global environmental problems and in an effort to formulate financing responses to address these 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 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, and the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel. The Evaluation Office was created in 2003. The GEF Assembly first met from 1-3 April 1998 in New Delhi, India, and then subsequently met from: 16-18 October 2002 in Beijing, China; 29-30 August 2006 in Cape Town, South Africa; and 25-26 May 2010 in Punta del Este, Uruguay.

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. It is comprised of 32 appointed Council members, each representing a constituency (i.e., a group of countries, including both donor and recipient countries).

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 US$2.75 billion (GEF-1), US$3 billion (GEF-2), US$3.13 billion (GEF-3), US$3.13 billion (GEF-4) and US$4.34 billion (GEF-5). GEF-5 covers GEF operations and activities from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2014.

The GEF also administers the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (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 serves as the financial mechanism for a number of multilateral environmental agreements: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the UNFCCC, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). GEF work also focuses on sustainable forest management, international waters and ozone layer depletion.

Currently, GEF funding has been channeled to recipient countries through ten Agencies: the UN Development Programme; the UN Environment Programme; the World Bank; the UN Food and Agriculture Organization; the UN Industrial Development Organization; the African Development Bank; the Asian Development Bank; the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; the Inter-American Development Bank; and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

40th MEETING OF THE GEF COUNCIL: This meeting convened in Washington, DC, US, from 24-26 May 2011. At this meeting, Council members agreed to, *inter alia*, broaden the GEF Partnership under Paragraph 28 of the Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured GEF (GEF Instrument), which establishes criteria and accreditation procedures for allowing new entities into the Partnership during a pilot phase. Related to this decision, the Council agreed on provisional policies on environmental and social safeguards and a policy on gender mainstreaming. Council members also agreed to approve the arrangements for the operation of the Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund, which was established based on a proposal and an initial contribution by Japan.

41st MEETING OF THE GEF COUNCIL: This meeting convened in Washington, DC, US, from 8-10 November 2011. Council members discussed options for engaging with the private sector, approved a revised strategy for programming GEF-5's private sector funds, and requested the Secretariat, in consultation with the multilateral development banks, to present to the Council a detailed paper outlining clear operational modalities for private sector engagement. Council members also adopted a Work Program that reflected the needs and views of 99 beneficiary countries. The Council requested the Secretariat to establish a working group to review the fee structure, including the corporate fee, with a view to decreasing total costs, and present a proposal for a new fee policy at the 42nd GEF Council meeting. Council members also adopted a decision asking the Secretariat to organize a meeting of biodiversity-related conventions with the CBD Secretariat to facilitate the coordination of priorities for inclusion in the GEF-6 programming strategy. The Council also approved provisions on how a policy on environmental and social safeguards should be applied to existing GEF Agencies and GEF Project Agencies.

42nd MEETING OF THE GEF COUNCIL: This meeting convened in Washington, DC, US, from 5-7 June 2012. The Work Program adopted at this meeting was the largest presented to the Council to date, with 84 stand-alone project concepts and two programmatic approaches amounting to US$667.26 million in GEF project grants. GEF Council members also considered and adopted decisions on the annual performance report, the 2012 annual country portfolio evaluation report and management response, the Work Program and budget of the GEF Evaluation Office, broadening the GEF Partnership, project agencies for accreditation and the fee structure for Agencies. In addition, the Council unanimously appointed Naoko Ishii (Japan) as CEO/Chairperson of the GEF for a four-year term, beginning 1 August 2012. The LDCF/SCCF Council convened for its 12th meeting on the afternoon of 7 June, and approved decisions on: the Joint Work Program for the LDCF/SCCF; the FY2012 Work Plan and Budget for the Evaluation Office under the LDCF and SCCF; and the Administrative Budget for the LDCF and SCCF for Fiscal Year 2013. Pledges and contributions were announced by Australia (AUS$15 million) and Finland (US$5 million).

CSO CONSULTATION: The GEF Council Consultation Meeting with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) took place on Monday, 12 November 2012, at IMF headquarters in Washington, DC. GEF CEO Naoko Ishii offered opening comments and dialogued with civil society representatives, following which three panels convened. The panels comprised members of the GEF NGO Network, representatives of GEF Implementing Agencies and the GEF Secretariat, and GEF Council members. The panels: reviewed CSO engagement with the GEF; discussed global financing needs for the

A view of the audience during the opening remarks

environment; and considered enhanced implementation of the CBD and the UNCCD. For IISD RS' summary of the proceedings, see http://www.iisd.ca/gef/council43/12nov.html.

Report of the 43rd Meeting of the GEF Council

On Tuesday, 13 November 2012, Naoko Ishii, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), opened the 43rd meeting of the GEF Council by underscoring the GEF's potential and its important role. She noted that she had visited a number of project sites and held many consultations during her first 100 days, and identified lessons learned and the challenge of positioning the GEF in an evolving world. She said incremental improvements in managing the environment will not suffice; rather, transformational change is required, as is facing the fact that protecting the global commons seldom is, but should be, treated as a priority. She outlined three areas of focus: looking ahead to the GEF's future; taking decisions to strengthen GEF partnerships; and managing GEF resources prudently and effectively. She said the GEF 2020 visioning exercise would seek to: answer questions that are crucial to the GEF's future; and identify the role the institution can play in catalyzing change and supporting innovation for global environmental benefits. She noted ongoing collaboration with the environmental conventions and Implementing Agencies, and encouraged the Council to provide ideas on how to improve the way the Secretariat works with the Council. Ishii also introduced a new book, titled *Closing the Gap: GEF Experiences in Global Energy Efficiency*, which will soon be launched.

The Council then elected João Raimundo Lopes (Council member for Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and the Gambia) to Co-Chair the meeting. In response to member suggestions, the Provisional Agenda (GEF/C.43/01/Rev.01) was amended to reorganize the order of discussion, and adopted.

VISION EXERCISE FOR THE GEF

Council members discussed the "GEF 2020" vision, which incorporates the long-term vision and strategy for 2020 and beyond, on Tuesday, 13 November. To introduce this issue, CEO and Chairperson Ishii presented her ideas for carrying out a strategic visioning exercise, and said it is vital for the GEF to articulate a long-term strategy and vision. She emphasized that the GEF's core mission is to be a champion of the global commons, and that there is a need to figure out how the GEF can perform a stronger function in this regard.

In a keynote address, Francisco Gaetani, Vice-Minister of Environment of Brazil, offered a presentation titled "Global Environment Facility: Continuity and Change." He discussed Brazil's experience with environmental policy and current approach to implementing projects, and highlighted risks and challenges that need to be overcome. He said fundraising should not be an end in itself and should move beyond accountability reports. He also: highlighted the value of non-monetary contributions of donor-recipient relationships; emphasized that donors are more influential outside the environment community than they realize; and said the GEF has an impressive network, with powerful and still unexplored resources, and it is time to take advantage of this rich history.

In an opening statement, Aram Harutyunyan, Minister of Nature Protection, Armenia, said GEF investments have strengthened national and regional environmental security and assisted Armenia in becoming a reliable partner within the international community. He stressed the importance of safeguarding the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR) and of maintaining GEF support for capacity building in implementing the Rio Conventions.

Co-Chair **João Raimundo Lopes**, Guinea-Bissau

Rachel Kyte, Vice President for Sustainable Development, World Bank

Rachel Kyte, Vice President for Sustainable Development, World Bank, speaking on behalf of the Bank, UN Development Programme (UNDP) Administrator Helen Clark and UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Executive Director Achim Steiner, welcomed the 2020 exercise and offered support in shaping and articulating it. She called for, *inter alia*: clarifying GEF synergies with the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the GEF's role in chemicals and waste, and what role the GEF will play in the follow-up to Rio+20; learning to leverage other sources of finance, particularly private finance; and considering the GEF's role in stitching together broad partnerships.

Most Council members then intervened on this agenda item to discuss their constituencies' preferences. Among the suggestions made by Council members were the need to: keep the next climate regime and the post-2015 development agenda in mind during this discussion; consider what the GEF's value added is; seek leverage of sustainable development benefits, such as health and poverty reduction; and involve the private sector.

Some Council members said this discussion should consider questions, such as: why we need a GEF; what is the GEF's niche; what is the best way to build synergies across focal areas; what is the GEF's role in the implementation of the Rio+20 outcomes; if and how the GEF and the GCF can be integrated in the long run; what further management reforms might be undertaken; whether the current GEF resource allocation fits evolving global realities; how to build public-private partnerships; how the 2020 vision exercise relates to the GEF-6 replenishment deliberations; how donor and multilateral agency coordination can be improved; how the multilateral environmental conventions could provide more guidance to the Council; how the GEF can be more responsive toward the multilateral environmental agreements; what the Implementing Agencies can bring beyond resources; and whether there should be a process for recipients to become donors.

Council members also suggested: giving higher priority to small island developing States (SIDS) and least developed countries (LDCs); "realistically confronting" the realities of the current international economic and financial climate; focusing on concepts, such as green economy and food security; keeping in mind the role of the recipient countries in the GEF partnership and in implementation; recognizing that the GEF-6 replenishment process will be competing for attention with four other international fund replenishment processes beginning next year; and recognizing that the GEF has continuously evolved over its 20-year history. The GEF NGO Network encouraged Council members to keep CSOs involved in the further development of this vision.

UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) Director Jan McAlpine suggested thinking about "natural resources," rather than focusing on a single natural resource at a time. She called attention to the work by the GEF, UNFF and UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to coordinate with low forest cover countries and SIDS, and highlighted a recommendation based on this work that would promote efforts through regional groups to identify and secure financing opportunities.

STATEMENTS BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES OF THE CONVENTIONS

On Tuesday, 13 November, Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), called for the GEF to, *inter alia*: support reviews and updates of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans; support speedy ratification of the Nagoya Protocol; identify opportunities for leveraging finances at the global level; apply co-financing arrangements for biodiversity projects in ways that do not create unnecessary barriers and costs for recipient countries to access GEF funds; help incubate new national and regional financial environmental or conservation funds; consider establishing a South-South biodiversity cooperation trust fund for implementing the CBD Strategic Plan; consider making a notional allocation, or opening a special financial support window, to improve the biosafety share of the biodiversity focal area; promote coherence and synergies among the biodiversity, land degradation, international waters and climate change focal areas; and consider establishing incentive mechanisms to stimulate countries to prioritize allocation of resources and efforts to create enabling policies and economic incentives to mainstream biodiversity into national development agendas.

Jim Willis, Executive Secretary for the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, expressed his desire to build on the retreat his secretariat held with the GEF Secretariat just weeks after the new CEO took office, where they discussed building trust and communications, better use of the Basel and Stockholm Convention regional centers, synergies, and the critical need to strengthen national institutions dealing with chemicals and hazardous wastes. He then discussed efforts to promote synergies among the chemicals and waste conventions. Noting the upcoming GEF Council debate on the GEF's possible role as the financial mechanism for the mercury agreement, he reviewed how important it had been

Jim Willis, Executive Secretary of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions

Thomas Lovejoy, Chair of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel

for the Stockholm Convention negotiations to receive a clear signal from the GEF Council on its willingness to be the financial mechanism for that instrument and to provide funding for enabling initiatives.

REPORT BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY PANEL (STAP)

On Tuesday, 13 November, STAP Chair Thomas Lovejoy updated the Council on the screening of GEF projects, the STAP's role in the GEF 2020 vision exercise, changes in the Panel and new advisory products. Regarding the work programme, he said Project Identification Forms (PIFs) need to strengthen their references to such things as relevant prior GEF projects and scientific literature. He characterized the trend toward multi-focal area (MFA) initiatives as positive, but called for greater clarity in the design logic for such projects. He reported that the STAP strongly supports the 2020 exercise and its focus on innovation and transformational change. He stressed the strategic role research should play in the vision, and suggested revising the 1997 targeted research policy so that the STAP could offer more influential targeted research projects like the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.

Lovejoy also noted recent workshops on measuring carbon benefits and on soil organic carbon, as well as reports on the impacts of marine debris on biodiversity and on marine spatial planning. He highlighted the just-released STAP scientific assessment on climate change, which he characterized as an interim report between the major Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Assessment Reports. Lovejoy listed other STAP reports that are in process, including on: greenhouse gas accounting methodology for energy efficiency projects; urbanization; global nitrogen cycle disruption; mercury; the assessment of current science regarding biofuels; transboundary water assessments; the socioeconomic benefits of protected areas; and emerging chemical management issues.

Questions raised during the discussion related to, *inter alia*: strategies to encourage uptake of STAP research; possible STAP work on ocean acidification; the status of STAP work related to the GEF knowledge management platform; STAP sharing of its marine work with the World Bank-led global partnership on oceans; whether the STAP will undertake any follow-up reports on marine debris; and the possible need for policy reforms in GEF-6 regarding PIFs.

BRIEFING ON THE REPLENISHMENT PROCESS

On Wednesday, 14 November, the Council prepared for the discussion of the briefing on the replenishment process by reviewing GEF/C.43/10, *Decision on the Sixth Replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund*. During the discussion, several Council members asked for information about the framework and timetable for the expected process. One member said the Fifth Overall Performance Study (OPS5) should be concluded before beginning the replenishment process. Another member expressed concern that the need to capitalize the GCF should not be taken to mean that the GEF will be undervalued. The GEF NGO Network recalled that CSOs were invited to observe the GEF-5 replenishment negotiations, and looked forward to being able to do likewise during the GEF-6 replenishment process. The Trustee of the GEF Trust Fund suggested that logistical issues could be resolved through a virtual exchange, rather than devoting an initial meeting to organizational matters, and said three to four meetings are anticipated, with one around spring 2013, a second in July 2013, a third around November 2013, and the last meeting in March 2014.

Decision: The Council requested the Trustee of the GEF Trust Fund, in cooperation with the GEF CEO and Chairperson, to initiate discussions on negotiations for the sixth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund.

RELATIONS WITH THE CONVENTIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

To open the discussion on this agenda item, the Secretariat introduced GEF/C.43/03, *Relations with the Conventions and Other International Institutions,* on Tuesday, 13 November. The Council member from India, as Chair of the CBD Conference of the Parties (COP) Bureau, presented a statement by the CBD COP Presidency, highlighting the decision taken by the COP calling for doubling total biodiversity-related international financial resource flows to developing countries by 2015 and at least maintaining this level until 2020. He also underscored the Indian Prime Minister's announcement of the "Hyderabad Pledge," which will focus on enhancing India's human and technical resources to attain the CBD's objectives and promote capacity building in developing countries.

Council members enquired about a number of elements of the report, including whether the 54 parties to the UNCCD that have not yet received GEF assistance to complete their national reporting through the performance review and assessment of

Paula Caballero, Colombia

implementation system will be able to receive such assistance, and action has been taken following the UNCCD COP decision inviting the UNCCD Secretariat and the GEF to review their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The Secretariat responded that the GEF and UNCCD are working to ensure that those countries asking for support for national reporting will receive it, and said the heads of the GEF and UNCCD have agreed on how to follow up on the MOU question.

Several members emphasized the concept of synergies and encouraged more attention to them. The Secretariat noted that the report for this agenda item focuses on focal areas, but could provide reporting on projects that are multifocal if the Council would find it useful.

One Council member asked if the GEF finds the guidance it receives from COPs to be clear, and several members emphasized that the GEF needs to be responsive to the instructions it receives from the COPs. The Secretariat responded that COP guidance is becoming more useful as a funding strategy.

Decision: The Council welcomed the report and requested the GEF network to continue working with recipient countries to reflect the guidance and national priorities in their respective GEF programming and activities.

PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR A FINANCIAL MECHANISM FOR THE FUTURE MERCURY CONVENTION AND DRAFT OPERATIONAL PROGRAM FOR MERCURY

On Tuesday, 13 November, the Secretariat introduced GEF/C.43/04, *Proposed Framework for a Financial Mechanism for the Future Mercury Convention and Draft Operational Program for Mercury*, explaining that the document showed how the GEF might serve the functions of a financial mechanism for the mercury agreement if invited to do so by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC).

In subsequent discussion, most Council members underscored the importance of sending a positive signal to the INC regarding the GEF's willingness to consider an invitation to serve as the agreement's financial mechanism or one of the mechanisms. A few Council members expressed concern about adopting a Council decision that might "prejudge" the outcome of negotiations on the agreement's financial mechanism. Some members asked why the current document omits other financing options included in the information document provided to the 42nd session of the GEF Council (GEF/C.42/INF.10), but it was pointed out that the 42nd session had specifically requested the type of document that was presented in GEF/C.43/04.

Council members negotiated changes in the language of the recommended decision, deleting a reference to GEF/C.42/INF.10 and replacing a reference to evaluating any invitation from the INC "within the framework of the GEF Instrument" to evaluating it "within the framework of the GEF."

Decision: The Council approved a decision taking note of the progress of the negotiations for a global legally binding instrument on mercury and indicating that, if invited by the INC to become *a* or *the* financial mechanism of the future instrument on mercury, the Council would consider the invitation "within the framework of the GEF."

GEF EVALUATION OFFICE: PROGRESS REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR

On Wednesday, 14 November, Robert Van der Berg, Director, GEF Evaluation Office (EO), presented GEF/ME/C.43/01, *GEF Evaluation Office: Progress Report from the Director*, reporting that the EO is: conducting Country Portfolio

Zi Qian Liang, China

Evaluations (CPEs) in India and Sri Lanka, and a CPE of regional projects coordinated by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme and of the GEF portfolio in Vanuatu; and preparing the Annual Performance Report 2012, the mid-term review of STAR and the mid-term review of the National Portfolio Formulation Exercise (NPFE). He also noted that the Office is working with the agencies on revising the guidelines for conducting terminal evaluations for full-sized and medium-sized projects.

He discussed EO work on OPS5, the first report of which he hoped would be ready for the second meeting of the GEF-6 replenishment process, and how the EO will use the "theory of change" methodology in the report to assess whether GEF initiatives generate broader changes.

As requested by the Council at its 42nd session, Van der Berg reported on the June 2012 workshop in Paris on "comprehensive evaluations," noting that it is now considered best practice in other international organizations to have evaluations receive management responses. He suggested that the GEF begin this practice with OPS5.

In the subsequent discussion, Council members welcomed the idea of having a management response to the OPS and using the theory of change in EO reports. Several members expressed concern about the timing of the first OPS5 report and its relationship to the GEF 2020 vision exercise and the GEF-6 replenishment discussions. Many urged that the report be readied as soon as possible without sacrificing quality, perhaps at least in draft form circulated to Council members before the first GEF-6 replenishment process meeting. One member asked that the STAR mid-term review highlight performance vis-à-vis SIDS and LDCs.

Decision: The Council adopted a decision taking note of the ongoing work of the EO and the preparations for OPS5, and requesting the Secretariat to include a management response to the OPS5 recommendations in the documents for negotiation of the GEF-6 replenishment.

ANNUAL THEMATIC EVALUATIONS REPORT 2012 AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

On Wednesday, 14 November, the EO presented GEF/ME/C.43/02, *Annual Thematic Evaluations Report 2012*, which uses the theory of change, reports on the progress of the *GEF Enabling Activities Evaluation*, and presents the main conclusions and recommendations for the *Evaluation*

L-R: **Robert van den Berg**, Director, GEF Evaluation Office; **Sekou Toure**, GEF Secretariat; **Naoko Ishii**, GEF CEO and Chairperson; Co-Chair **João Raimundo Lopes**, Guinea-Bissau; and **Gustavo Fonseca**, GEF Secretariat

of the GEF Focal Area Strategies. He reviewed conclusions from the latter, as well as its recommendations that GEF Strategies should: be based on explicit discussion of envisaged causal linkages and chains of causality in line with current scientific knowledge; enable a more flexible and strategic approach to developing MFA projects; be based on systematic considerations of potential pathways from GEF activities to the broader adoption of GEF results; and revisit the GEF's overall approach to capacity development. The Report also recommended that the GEF should continue dialogue with the CBD to further define the relationship between guidance and strategies in a way that allows for responsiveness, as well as strategic coherence.

In its management response, the Secretariat said its understanding of the Focal Area Strategies (FAS) evaluation is that it is a formative evaluation rather than a performance evaluation, and an opportunity to learn from the GEF-5 process and improve the Strategies for GEF-6. He also noted other mechanisms the Secretariat already has in place to strengthen GEF and LDCF/SCCF strategies, such as contributions from Agencies on project design and implementation issues, direct dialogue with countries regarding their needs, and engagement with the STAP and other experts on the scientific and technical merits related to the different focal areas.

In the subsequent discussion, some Council members expressed skepticism about the GEF's ability to obtain less complicated guidance from the CBD. One member asked for a closer examination of the GEF response to guidance from the Stockholm Convention, while another asked if the EO could assess how well the FAS have performed vis-à-vis the programming indicators agreed in the GEF-5 replenishment, and what implications this may have for the GEF-6 programming document.

Decision: The Council adopted a decision asking the Secretariat to ensure that:

- An explicit discussion of envisaged causal linkages and chains of causality in line with current scientific knowledge forms the basis for formulating GEF-6 Strategies;
- GEF-6 Strategies enable a more flexible and strategic approach to MFA projects, which would be able to adopt elements from several focal areas in a consistent manner;
- GEF-6 Strategies include a strengthened articulation of potential pathways from activities to the broader adoption of results to maximize the GEF's catalytic role; and
- GEF-6 Strategies revisit the GEF's overall approach to capacity development in response to concerns voiced by the conventions.

The decision also calls for continued dialogue with the CBD to further define the relationship between guidance and the GEF's biodiversity strategies in a way that allows for responsiveness as well as strategic coherence in GEF-6.

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2012 AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

On Wednesday, 14 November, the EO presented GEF/ME/C.43/04, *Annual Impact Report 2012*, containing several conclusions and recommendations from an impact evaluation of GEF support in the South China Sea and adjacent areas. The Council was informed that the report, *inter alia:* concludes that the GEF has made important contributions that are relevant to addressing regional transboundary issues, and links initiatives at multiple scales to address regional environmental priorities; and recommends developing a more robust programmatic approach and mainstreaming transboundary concerns. The Secretariat delivered the management response (GEF/ME/C.43/05) indicating, *inter alia*, it will consider the findings of this evaluation when developing the GEF-6 International Waters Strategy.

During the discussion of the report and management response, many Council members commented that the South China Sea case study offers a positive model for regional cooperation. One member noted that the UN Economic Commission for Europe's water convention has urged developing cooperation with the GEF to enhance regional transboundary cooperation.

Another Council member sought clarification on a recommendation to mainstream transboundary environmental concerns within regional trade organizations, and said this should be deleted from the draft council decision. A member noted that a focus on international waters also involves conservation of marine biodiversity, poverty alleviation and other impacts, and suggested that GEF-6 could focus on activities that provide sustainable development benefits, and not only global environmental benefits.

Decision: The Council requested the Secretariat to take into account the findings and recommendations of the evaluation when screening future proposals submitted for GEF funding in the South China Sea and adjacent areas. The Council also requested the Secretariat to adopt a more robust tracking and reporting approach to ensure Agency accountability for collaboration and cooperation in the South China Sea and the East Asian Seas, and to take into account the findings of the evaluation when developing the GEF-6 International Waters Strategy. The decision requests GEF Agencies to ensure that: measurement and evaluation systems for environmental and socioeconomic impact are in place and implemented; and measurement and evaluation data on the impact of GEF projects is made available to the EO in a timely and transparent manner when requested.

ANNUAL MONITORING REVIEW FY12: PART I

On Wednesday, 14 November, the Secretariat introduced GEF/C.43/05/Rev.01, *Annual Monitoring Review FY12: Part I*, recalling that the Council decided in May 2011 that the Annual Monitoring Review (AMR) should be produced in two parts, the first providing a macro overview, the second, to be presented to the Council in June 2013, providing more in-depth analysis. He explained this AMR includes: an analysis

of GEF-5 project approvals through fiscal year 2012 (FY12); a breakdown of the active portfolio, including performance ratings; information on management effectiveness and efficiency indicators; a status update on the Enabling Activities portfolio; and information on the influence of the NPFE process on GEF-5 programming.

A Council member noted that this AMR fails to honor the request by the 38th GEF Council to include information on business standards for Agencies' engagements with recipient countries and with the GEF Secretariat, and on elapsed time standards between key project cycle milestones. The Secretariat responded that some, but not all, of that data would be provided in Part II, and that the Secretariat is working with Agencies to address this information request without creating new burdens.

Other issues raised by Council members included: data on MFAs broken down into focal areas should be provided; the NPFE exercise should be comprehensively evaluated before the GEF-6 replenishment process begins so as to guide those negotiations; and there is a need to provide analysis of how the projects approved contribute to realizing the indicative results agreed in the GEF-5 document.

Decision: In its decision, the Council welcomed: the overall finding that the GEF portfolio under implementation in 2012 performed satisfactorily across all focal areas; and the inclusion in the AMR of an annual status update on the Enabling Activities and Programmatic Approaches and the information on the NPFE. The Council also asked the Secretariat to align its reporting requirements to the streamlining measures undertaken in the project cycle.

STREAMLINING OF PROJECT CYCLE

On Wednesday, 14 November, the Secretariat introduced GEF/C.43/06, *Streamlining of Project Cycle*, recalling that the 42nd Council reduced Agency fees and requested proposals for the November 2012 meeting on "detailed streamlining measures in the project cycle and cost savings in implementing services provided by Agencies at least commensurate with the approved fee structure." He explained this has led to a pilot project with the World Bank to harmonize their project cycles, and after a review of the pilot, a similar approach may be extended to other Agencies. He also summarized eight measures to increase the efficiency of the project cycle agreed between the Secretariat and the Agencies, including, *inter alia*, simplifying the project preparation grant request, streamlining all project cycle-related templates, organizing MFA reviews to be more systematic and consistent, and increasing the grant ceiling for medium-sized projects (MSPs) to US$2 million. He emphasized that these are only preliminary measures, and said that others have been identified, and after they are fully developed, the Secretariat would report on them to the Council in June 2013.

In the subsequent discussion, several Council members questioned whether the MSP grant ceiling change should be considered a streamlining measure *per se* or must be decided separately by the Council. Others sought clarification on the rationale for setting the ceiling at US$2 million and whether this is a permanent change or something taken on a trial basis. One suggested that the ceiling be raised to US$2 million now, but that the GEF-6 replenishment process should consider carefully the optimal level to set it at. Some members cautioned about ensuring that the MSP ceiling change and template streamlining would not result in less transparency.

Maryam Niamir-Fuller, UNEP

Several members sought ways to measure whether the new steps are commensurate with the fee change, where the bottlenecks are in the GEF project cycle and how well the measures have reduced them. Some suggested using indicators, while others questioned whether there were meaningful indicators that could be applied. One member asked for the AMR to look at how the reforms have changed things.

One Council member stressed that the streamlining process should focus not just on streamlining for the benefit of the GEF and the Agencies, but also for the benefit of recipient countries.

The GEF NGO Network welcomed the MSP grant ceiling proposal, but urged steps to improve CSO access to MSPs. The World Bank said that, while it was very happy with the streamlining deliberations and the pilot project, the Bank still does not have a sustainable model for working with the GEF and many important issues remain to be addressed. UNEP noted that the Agencies have committed to streamlining their own processes, stressed the need for greater transparency and predictability, and cautioned that the World Bank pilot may not be replicable with other Agencies.

CEO Ishii urged Council members to let the Secretariat and Agencies implement the proposed measures and come back to the Council with a report in 2013. She stressed that the ongoing exercise is intended as a benefit to recipient countries, it will not reduce transparency and the CEO will keep the Council fully briefed.

Decision: The Council adopted a decision that supports the streamlining measures described in GEF/C.43/06. It agreed to raise the MSP grant ceiling to US$2 million and delegated approval authority to the CEO with the understanding that this grant ceiling will be reevaluated in the context of GEF-6. The Council also asked the Secretariat to propose relevant measures to report on the effectiveness and efficiency of the streamlining reforms for the AMR. The Council requested the Secretariat to report on progress achieved to the November 2013 Council meeting.

PROGRESS REPORT: ACCREDITATION PROCESS FOR GEF PROJECT AGENCIES

On Wednesday, 14 November, the Secretariat introduced GEF/C.43/07, *Progress Report: Accreditation Process for GEF Project Agencies*, recalling that the 42nd Council approved moving 11 agencies to a Stage II review. He explained that the Accreditation Panel has completed initial desk reviews on four applicants, and granted conditional approval to the Development Bank of Southern Africa and the World Wildlife Fund, Inc. He explained that, while the panel is making good progress, the time required, and the possible need for field

visits in some cases, will require working until June 2013 to complete reviews of all 11 applicants. For that reason, he said the Secretariat recommends postponing consideration of the second round until the June 2013 Council meeting.

In the subsequent debate, some Council members wondered if there was a way to accelerate the process without sacrificing quality, while others said the current pace was expected in a pilot phase. Responding to a query from a Council member on why applicants would have to bear the cost of any field visits, the Secretariat pointed out that the decision by the 40th Council specified this. The GEF NGO Network said some NGOs had concerns about one applicant and would submit information regarding their concerns. He expressed concern that the slow process may not allow new agencies to execute projects during GEF-5, and urged thorough verification of whether applicants meet the GEF Environmental and Social Safeguards.

Decision: The Council decided to postpone consideration of the second round of accreditation until its June 2013 meeting, pending the conclusion of all ongoing Stage II reviews by the Accreditation Panel.

FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS FOR GEF-5 PROGRAMMING OPTIONS

GEF Council members conducted an initial discussion on this topic on Tuesday, 13 November. The Secretariat distributed a revised draft decision on Wednesday, 14 November, and the Council further discussed the issue. A decision was adopted on Thursday, 15 November.

To begin the discussion, the Secretariat noted that, if financial shortfalls exist due to arrears and deferred payments, the GEF Secretariat will need guidance on how to conduct its business before the next Council meeting. Document GEF/C.43/08, *Financial Projections for GEF-5 Programming Options*, presented financial options for programming options in such a situation, and suggested three scenarios for Council consideration. The first would protect all STAR country allocations. The second would apply equal reductions to focal areas and themes. And the third would protect STAR country allocations for LDCs and SIDS only, and protect allocations for focal area set-asides. Council members were invited to discuss the principles they would want the Secretariat to respect.

Many Council members commended the Secretariat for consulting the Council on this issue. They said country obligations should be paid in an adequate and timely manner, and urged those who are in arrears to pay their obligations and those who defer their payments to refrain from doing so. A few Council members suggested introducing rules or incentives linking the payment of obligations with the opportunity to exercise power on the Council.

In the event of a funding shortfall, many Council members supported giving preference to LDCs and SIDS, with a few noting special needs of some additional lower-income countries. One Council member noted that countries have made government budget allocations based on the expected STAR allocation, and said altering it now would hurt the partnership that is being built. Several other Council members preferred to retain the STAR allocations as well.

Some Council members expressed support for specific areas, in particular chemicals, forests and international waters. Global and regional projects were highlighted as a niche where the GEF should remain active. Possibilities to shift resources out of corporate and private sector activities were also suggested. One Council member asked when these principles would be implemented.

During the discussion on Wednesday, CEO Ishii indicated that the Secretariat would take the guidance into account immediately. Council members continued to indicate their priorities, with a few noting they would like more time to consider the issue. A number of Council members highlighted their efforts to reduce their arrears, and stated their commitment to their GEF pledges. Some expressed concern about the message that would be sent to the mercury negotiations if chemicals funding was not preserved.

On Thursday, Council members emphasized the need to recognize the countries that have fulfilled their commitments and to indicate that the decision was a contingency agreement. Most Council members pointed to the difficulty of reaching an agreement on this agenda item, with one member commending the innovation and flexibility that had characterized the discussions leading to the draft decision.

Decision: The decision notes that the Council regretted that the potential shortfall is the result of some Contributing Participants not fulfilling their financial pledges and the contribution deferrals they have brought about. The Council noted its appreciation of Contributing Participants who have delivered on their pledges, and urged all to make good on their pledges.

As a contingency measure, the Council agreed that the Secretariat should undertake programming that maintains the balance among the original allocations in the GEF-5 replenishment decision, assisting LDCs and SIDS in accessing resources, and supporting core obligations to the conventions for which the GEF is a or the financial mechanism.

The Council also requests the Secretariat to report on the progress in programming and the status of any shortfalls, as well as proposed programming measures to manage the shortfall at the 44th meeting of the GEF Council, in June 2013.

WORK PROGRAM

The Secretariat introduced the proposed Work Program (GEF/C.43/09) on Wednesday, 14 November, and noted that it is relatively small, but commensurate with the funds that were available in the Trust Fund. The Work Program would benefit 63 countries.

Council members discussed the Work Program on Wednesday and Thursday. Two Council members inquired about the scope of the project for Comoros, including regarding steps that have been taken to ensure that a supportive business environment would be in place for developing the tourist industry.

Josceline Wheatley, United Kingdom, and **Annemarie Watt**, Australia

Some Council members inquired about funding for UNFCCC national communications and biennial update reports, with one member suggesting that proposals to fund these activities need to demonstrate how they will build sustained institutional and technical capacity. Several Council members indicated they would submit written comments about certain proposals. One member commended the "Mainstreaming Biodiversity into Land Use Regulation and Management at the Municipal Scale" project in South Africa as having clear indicators and objectives, and serving as a good example for how to develop a project. A Council member requested the final document for a project on strengthening national biodiversity and forest carbon stock conservation in Cambodia before the CEO approves it.

Decision: The Council decision approved the Work Program containing 28 project concepts and one programmatic approach, plus one project concept associated with a previously approved programmatic approach, totaling US$174 million, subject to comments made during the Council meeting and additional comments that may be submitted to the Secretariat by 29 November 2012. The Council requested the Secretariat to arrange to transmit draft final project documents for the Comoros and Cambodia projects to Council members, with any concerns to be transmitted to the CEO within four weeks. Final project documents are to be posted on the GEF website for information after CEO endorsement. If the CEO determines that there have been major changes to the project scope and approach, the final project document will be posted on the website for Council review for four weeks prior to CEO endorsement.

REPORT OF THE SELECTION AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Council met in Executive Session on Thursday, 15 November, to consider the *Report of the Selection and Review Committee (SRC)* (GEF/C.43/CRP.01). The Joint Summary of the Co-Chairs from the 43rd meeting of the GEF Council notes the decision taken by the Executive Session.

Decision: The Council notes the GEF CEO/Chairperson and EO Director's goals and objectives for FY12 and FY13. The decision also notes elements related to the EO Director's salary, and requests the SRC to undertake the Performance Objectives Review process for the CEO/Chairperson, as well as for the EO Director, in the spring of 2013.

REPORT OF THE LDCF/SCCF COUNCIL MEETING

On Thursday morning, 15 November, GEF CEO and Chairperson Naoko Ishii opened the 13th meeting of the LDCF/SCCF Council, urging the Council to send a strong signal that adaptation is an urgent priority and that the GEF's commitment to SIDS and LDCs is unwavering. She said the GEF 2020 vision exercise will include consideration of how the LDCF and SCCF can serve their mandate more effectively and better leverage investments through knowledge management and better tools to promote effective adaptation in both the medium and long terms.

Pa Ousman Jarju, Chair of the LDC Group, addressed the Council. He noted that, to date, LDCs have accessed some US$380 million from the LDCF for preparing and implementing their national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs) and, in FY12, 27 projects for US$142 million were approved, compared to 11 for US$52 million in FY11. He highlighted two LDC-related issues relevant to this Council: the revision of the LDCF operational guidelines, and the implications vis-à-vis the COP mandates and the ability of the LDCs to access LDCF funding; and the new GEF CEO's stated commitment of US$2 million to support LDCs with their national adaptation plans (NAPs).

JOINT WORK PROGRAM FOR THE LDCF/SCCF

A proposed Joint LDCF/SCCF Work Program containing four SCCF Adaptation (SCCF-A) full-sized projects in Georgia, the Kyrgyz Republic, Lebanon and Tunisia, and one multi-trust fund project on climate change resilience in southern Africa, totaling US$28.544 million for the SCCF and US$1.87 million for the LDCF, was circulated to Council members as document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.13/03. The Secretariat also reviewed some highlights from GEF/LDCF.SCCF.13/INF.02, *Progress Report of the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund*.

Several Council members posed questions regarding the SCCF-A projects in Georgia, the Kyrgyz Republic and Lebanon, and some indicated they would submit written comments on these. The GEF NGO Network praised the UNDP project in Tunisia as a model of best practice in terms of engaging stakeholders, and indicated concern about the lack of details about stakeholder engagement in the other three SCCF-A projects. A Council member stressed that the Secretariat's Progress Report was "procedure- and diligence-centric" and needed a results section.

Decision: The Council approved the Work Program, subject to comments made during the Council meeting and additional comments submitted in writing to the Secretariat by 29 November 2012. Regarding the Lebanon project, the Council requested that the Secretariat arrange for Council members to receive final draft project documents and to transmit to the CEO, within four weeks, any concerns that they may have prior to the CEO endorsement. The Council also requested that the Secretariat include in its next Progress Report on the LDCF and SCCF a report on the expected portfolio-level results.

UPDATED OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE LDCF

The Secretariat introduced GEF/LDCF.SCCF.13/04, *Updated Operational Guidelines for the Least Developed Countries Fund*, explaining that it updates the 2006 version, to reflect recent COP guidance, programmatic approaches for NAPA implementation, the phase-out of outdated concepts, and a more flexible and streamlined project cycle.

In response to queries from some Council members, the Secretariat explained that the sliding scale approach had been

Pa Ousman Jarju, Chair of the LDC Group

is no longer used. The Secretariat indicated it would be flexible and use common sense in applying the principle that national priorities must be reflected in NAPAs in cases where a NAPA is old or outdated.

Decision: The Council approved the updated Guidelines.

UPDATED OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SCCF

The Secretariat introduced GEF/LDCF.SCCF.13/05, *Updated Operational Guidelines for the Special Climate Change Fund for Adaptation and Technology Transfer*, explaining that it updates the 2004 version, complements existing SCCF operational documents and reflects recent COP guidance, financing modalities and programmatic approaches, as well as a more streamlined project cycle.

Decision: The Council approved the updated Guidelines.

OTHER BUSINESS

Several Council members expressed puzzlement over a GEF Secretariat report to UNFCCC COP18 indicating that any LDCF or SCCF support for NAPs might require new and additional funding, and some asked whether the two funds could provide NAP funding under existing mandates, guidelines and COP guidance. The Secretariat agreed to produce a paper for the next Council meeting on how the GEF might support NAPs.

Announcements regarding pledges and contributions to the LDCF and SCCF were offered by Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, totaling approximately US$80.8 million.

Decision: The Council requested that the GEF Secretariat prepare a paper for the next Council meeting on how the GEF will operationalize support to enable activities for the preparation of national adaptation planning processes.

Joint Summary of the Chairs and Closing

On Thursday afternoon, 15 November, Council members received a draft Joint Summary of the Chairs for both the GEF and the LDCF/SCCF Council meetings, both of which included the decisions adopted during the meetings. CEO Ishii noted that the 44th meeting of the GEF Council would convene from 18-20 June 2013, with the 45th meeting of the GEF Council tentatively scheduled to meet from 5-7 November 2013.

One Council member indicated he would like the highlights of the meeting to indicate that, on agenda item 14, Progress Report: Accreditation Process for GEF Project Agencies, he had noted that, while the decision calls for verifying compliance of GEF Agencies with minimum GEF fiduciary standards and environmental and social safeguards, such verification has not been confirmed for existing Agencies and this should be implemented in a balanced way. Another Council member said the highlights should only include what was raised during the discussion of the agenda item.

A Council member stressed that the highlights should indicate that the Council had expressed its appreciation to the new CEO for her efforts to engage the Council and to renew the partnership on which the GEF was built, and that the Council found the Work Program to be well balanced, with innovative and scalable projects.

CEO Ishii recalled that she had outlined three objectives at the opening of the meeting: think of the GEF's future; begin a new way of doing business to strengthen partnerships; and ensure that resources are effectively managed. She said she thought the 43rd meeting of the GEF Council had accomplished these goals, and added that the GEF 2020 discussion had been a highlight for her. She welcomed suggestions for how the Secretariat can improve its methods of working with the Council, and said she hoped to find more time at future Council meetings to discuss GEF 2020 and GEF-6. She closed the meeting at 3:25 pm.

Upcoming Meetings

UNFCCC COP 18: The 18th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 18) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP 8), among other associated meetings, are scheduled to take place in Doha, Qatar. **dates:** 26 November-7 December 2012 **location:** Doha, Qatar

GEF CEO Naoko Ishii and members of the GEF Secretariat consult with GEF Council members prior to the final day's session

contact: UNFCCC Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-1000 fax: +49-228-815-1999 **e-mail:** secretariat@unfccc.int **www:** http://unfccc.int/meetings/doha_nov_2012/meeting/6815.php

Regional Consultation Workshop for Asia on Groundwater Governance Project: A project on "Groundwater Governance: A Global Framework for Action" was initiated by the International Hydrological Programme of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the GEF, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Association of Hydrogeologists and the World Bank. The Asian regional consultation is the fourth in a series. **date:** 3-5 December 2012 **location:** Shijiazhuang, China **contact:** UNESCO IHP **phone:** +33 (0)1 45 68 10 00 **e-mail:** m.rubio@unesco.org **www:** http://www.unescobej.org/natural-sciences/resources/news-and-upcoming-events/2012/groundwater-governmance/

GEF Expanded Constituency Workshop (ECW) Turkey: The ECW for Afghanistan, Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Pakistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Syria and Yemen will bring together GEF focal points from the CBD, UNCCD, UNFCCC and Stockholm Convention, representatives from civil society and representatives from the GEF Secretariat and the GEF Agencies, to strengthen participants' knowledge of GEF-5 strategies, programs, policies and procedures. **dates:** 11-13 December 2012 **location:** Antalya, Turkey **contact:** GEF Secretariat **e-mail:** secretariat@thegef.org **www:** http://www.thegef.org/gef/ECW-Turkey

19th Meeting of the Adaptation Fund Board: The Adaptation Fund Board supervises and manages the Adaptation Fund under the authority and guidance of the countries that are parties to the Kyoto Protocol. **dates:** 11-14 December 2012 **location:** Bonn, Germany **contact:** Jeannette Jin Yu Lee **phone:** +1 (202) 473-7499 **fax:** +1 (202) 522-2720 **e-mail:** jlee21@thegef.org **www:** http://www.adaptation-fund.org/page/calendar

Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia Capacity-Building Workshop on the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS): This workshop is being organized by the CBD Secretariat and hosted by the Hungarian Ministry of Rural Development under the framework of the medium-sized project on capacity building for the early entry into force of the Nagoya Protocol on ABS, funded by the GEF and the Japan Biodiversity Fund. **dates:** 11-13 December 2012 **location:** Budapest, Hungary **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1 514 288 2220 **fax:** +1 514 288 6588 **e-mail:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2012/ntf-2012-132-abs-en.pdf

Joint Meeting of the Bureaux of the Stockholm, Basel and Rotterdam Conventions: The joint bureaux meeting will determine the schedule for the Ordinary and Extraordinary Meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, which are scheduled to be held back-to-back from 28 April-10 May 2013, in Geneva, Switzerland. **dates:** 13-14 December 2012 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8729 **fax:** +41-22- 917-8098 **www:** http://synergies.pops.int/Implementation/MeetingsCalendar/tabid/2643/language/en-US/Default.aspx

Fifth Session of the INC to Prepare a Legally Binding Instrument on Mercury: This meeting is scheduled to be the final of five INC meetings to negotiate a legally binding instrument on mercury. **dates:** 13-18 January 2013 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **phone:** +41 22 917 8192 **fax:** +41 22 797 3460 **e-mail:** mercury@chemicals.unep.org **www:** http://www.unep.org/hazardoussubstances/MercuryNot/MercuryNegotiations/tabid/3320/language/en-US/Default.aspx

CBD Sustainable Ocean Initiative Capacity-Building Workshop for West Africa: Established during the 10th meeting of the CBD COP, the Sustainable Ocean Initiative provides a global platform to build partnerships and enhance capacity to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets related to marine and coastal biodiversity in a holistic manner. **dates:** 14-18 January 2013 **location:** Senegal **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1 514 288 2220 **fax:** +1 514 288 6588 **e-mail:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2012/ntf-2012-134-marine-en.pdf

IPBES-1: The first meeting of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES-1) will be hosted by the Government of Germany. The meeting will aim to agree on the remaining rules of procedures for the meetings of the platform, consider other rules of procedure for the platform, elect Bureau and Multidisciplinary Expert Panel members, and agree on the next steps by which the IPBES work programme can become operational as soon as possible. **dates:** 21-26 January 2013 **location:** Bonn, Germany **contact:** Makiko Yashiro **e-mail:** Makiko.Yashiro@unep.org **www:** http://www.ipbes.net/plenary/ipbes-1.html

CBD Regional Workshop for African Least Developed Countries on the Fifth National Report: The purpose of this workshop is to strengthen capacities of African LDCs for preparing their fifth national reports to the CBD, which are due by 31 March 2014, specifically in assessing the status and trends of biodiversity, reviewing implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and measuring progress towards the 2020 Aichi Targets. **dates:** 21-25 January 2013 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1 514 288 2220 **fax:** +1 514 288 6588 **e-mail:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2012/ntf-2012-136-nr-gbo-en.pdf

UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference and CST S-3: The UN Convention to Combat Desertification 2nd Scientific Conference will be held in Fortaleza, Brazil, during the 3rd special session of the Committee for Science and Technology (CST S-3). The scientific conference will consider the theme "Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas," with a focus on two sub-topics: economic and social impacts of desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD); and costs and benefits of policies and practices addressing DLDD. **dates:** 4-7 February 2013 **location:** Fortaleza, Brazil **contact:** UNCCD Secretariat **phone:** +49 228 815 2800 **fax:** +49 228 815 2898/99 **e-mail:** secretariat@unccd.int **www:** http://2sc.unccd.int/home/?HighlightID=111

27th Session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum: The Governing Council constitutes the annual ministerial-level global environmental forum in which participants gather to review important and emerging policy issues in the environmental field. **dates:** 18-22 February 2013 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** Secretary, Governing Bodies, UNEP **phone:** +254-20 7623431 **fax:** +254-20 7623929 **e-mail:** sgc.sgb@unep.org **www:** http://www.unep.org/ecalendar/contents/upcoming_events.asp

Third Meeting of the Board of the Green Climate Fund: The Board of the GCF will meet to continue work on the budget, work programme and other administrative and

operational aspects of the new Fund. **dates:** 12-15 March 2013 **location:** Berlin, Germany **contact:** interim Secretariat **phone:** +49 228 815-1371 **e-mail:** isecretariat@gcfund.net

CBD South-Eastern Atlantic Workshop to Facilitate Description of EBSAs: This workshop will aim to: facilitate the description of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) through application of the CBD's scientific criteria and other relevant criteria, as well as the scientific guidance on the identification of marine areas beyond national jurisdiction; collate, review, analyze and synthesize relevant scientific data collected through the CBD EBSA repository system; and compile and produce regional EBSA reports for consideration by the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice. **dates:** 25-29 March 2013 **location:** Namibia **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1 514 288 2220 **fax:** +1 514 288 6588 **e-mail:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2012/ntf-2012-134-marine-en.pdf

UNCCD CRIC 11: The eleventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 11) is scheduled to convene from 15-19 April 2013. **dates:** 15-19 April 2013 **location:** Bonn, Germany **contact:** UNCCD Secretariat **phone:** +49 228 815 2800 **fax:** +49 228 815 2898/99 **e-mail:** secretariat@unccd.int **www:** http://www.unccd.int/en/Pages/default.aspx

Coordinated Ordinary and Extraordinary Meetings of the Conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions: The ordinary and extraordinary meetings of the COPs to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions will convene back-to-back from 28 April-10 May 2013, in Geneva, Switzerland. **dates:** 28 April - 10 May 2013 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8729 **fax:** +41-22-917-8098 **e-mail:** synergies@unep.org **www:** http://synergies.pops.int/Implementation/ExCOPs/ExCOPs2013/tabid/2747/language/en-US/Default.aspx

44th Meeting of the GEF Council: The GEF Council meets twice a year to approve new projects with global environmental benefits in the GEF's focal areas, and provide guidance to the GEF Secretariat and Agencies. **dates:** 18-20 June 2013 **location:** Washington, DC, US **contact:** GEF Secretariat **phone:** +1 202 473-0508 **fax:** +1 202 522-3240 **e-mail:** secretariat@thegef.org **www:** http://www.thegef.org/gef/council_meetings

GLOSSARY

AMR	Annual Monitoring Report
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEO	Chief Executive Office
COP	Conference of the Parties
CPE	Country Portfolio Evaluation
CSO	civil society organization
ECW	expanded constituency workshop
EO	Evaluation Office
FAS	Focal Area Strategy
FY	fiscal year
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEF-5	fifth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund
GEF-6	sixth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund
INC	Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee
LDCF	Least Developed Country Fund
LDCs	least developed countries
MFA	multi-focal area
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSP	medium-sized project
NAP	national adaptation plan
NAPA	national adaptation programme of action
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NPFE	National Portfolio Formulation Exercise
OPS5	Fifth Overall Performance Study
PIF	Project Identification Form
Rio+20	UN Conference on Sustainable Development
SCCF	Special Climate Change Fund
SIDS	small island developing States
SRC	Selection and Review Committee
STAP	Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel
STAR	System for Transparent Allocation of Resources
UNCCD	UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFF	UN Forum on Forests

Participants at the 43rd Meeting of the GEF Council