

Summary of the 56th Meeting of the Global Environment Facility Council: 10-13 June 2019

The 56th meeting of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council adopted the largest-ever Work Program for the GEF Trust Fund, totaling USD 865.9 million and comprising 31 projects, seven programs, and three multi-trust fund projects. The Work Program features four Impact Programs (IPs), designed to deliver transformational change, covering: food systems, land use, and restoration (FOLUR); Amazon forests; Congo Basin forests; and dryland landscapes. The Work Program will benefit 91 recipient countries, including 30 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and 32 small island developing States (SIDS).

The 56th meeting of the GEF Council convened in Washington, DC, US, from 11-13 June 2019, at World Bank headquarters. Representatives of governments, international organizations, and civil society organizations (CSOs) attended the three-day meeting, which also included the 26th 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 10 June.

Naoko Ishii, GEF Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chairperson, and Carola van Rijnsoever, the Netherlands, served as Co-Chairs for the meetings.

The GEF Council discussed and approved amended GEF policies on monitoring, evaluation, and environmental and social safeguards, and considered further work on the sustainability of GEF projects and programs.

The Council took note of the GEF business plan, and approved: a fiscal year (FY) 2020 corporate budget from the GEF Trust Fund of USD 29.273 million; a total FY2020 administrative budget for the Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund (NPIF) of USD 17,900; and a total FY2020 administrative budget for the Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency (CBIT) from the CBIT Trust Fund of USD 513,000. The Council also approved: the Independent Evaluation Office's (IEO) Work Program for GEF-7, including preparations for the seventh Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF, and the annual IEO budget for FY2020 totaling USD 6.22 million.

The Council endorsed the recommendations of the IEO included in its semi-annual evaluation report, and approved the terms of reference for the professional peer review of the IEO.

The Council reviewed the status of Agencies' compliance with minimum requirements on anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism (AML-CFT), and took note of the

self-certifications of Agencies that they meet the GEF's minimum requirements.

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 Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the Minamata Convention on Mercury prompted Council Members to reflect on ways to achieve maximum impact on the ground through synergies and collaboration.

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 56th meeting of the GEF Council and the 26th meeting of the LDCF/SCCF Council.

A Brief History of the GEF

The GEF was created in 1991 in an effort to address financing needs in response to the mounting concern over global environmental problems during the preceding decade. 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 IEO, which was created in 2003.

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The organization's main decision-making body is the GEF Council, which meets twice a year and is responsible for developing, adopting, and evaluating the GEF's operational policies and programs. It is composed of 32 appointed Council Members, each representing a constituency, that is, a regional group of countries, or a single country. Both donor and recipient countries are members of constituencies.

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 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

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

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

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

Funding from the Facility is channeled to recipient countries through 18 "GEF Agencies": the UN Development Programme (UNDP); the UN Environment Programme (UNEP); the World Bank; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO); the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); the African Development Bank (AfDB); the Asian Development Bank (ADB); the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD); the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); World Wildlife Fund US (WWF-US); 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

GEF Council Consultation with CSOs: A GEF Council Consultation with CSOs took place on Monday, 10 June 2019, at World Bank headquarters. The CSO consultation included

a dialogue with GEF CEO and Chairperson Ishii and a panel discussion on civil society contributions to higher results and impact. A dialogue on plastics pollution highlighted practical experiences and lessons learned with regard to the production, consumption, and waste management of plastics, as well as opportunities to engage with the public and private sectors in contributing to solutions at different stages of the plastics life cycle. The GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) presented a publication, "Plastics and Circular Economy: Community Solutions." For IISD RS' summary of the proceedings, see: <http://enb.iisd.org/gef/council56/10jun.html>

Report of the GEF Council Meeting

Naoko Ishii, GEF CEO and Chairperson, opened the 56th meeting of the GEF Council on Tuesday morning, 11 June. She noted increasing global attention to biodiversity loss, and said science has provided a clear message that the natural world "is under attack" and that the planet's carrying capacity is being pushed to its limits. Ishii observed that while global environmental challenges are daunting, the momentum to address them is building, with increasing engagement by non-state actors and the growth of multi-stakeholder issue coalitions.

Ishii underscored that the GEF is addressing the challenges through evolving policies and the GEF 2020 strategy, which moves from treating the symptoms of environmental damage to addressing its causes and drivers and seeks to ensure transformational change in key economic systems. She said the 56th meeting of the Council would consider the largest Work Program ever proposed, the centerpiece of which is a set of four IPs targeting drivers of environmental degradation, and noted that the Secretariat expects these to deliver more impact per dollar spent than past Work Programs. Ishii expressed satisfaction with the accomplishments achieved since the Council adopted the GEF 2020 strategy in 2014, but stressed that there is "no room for complacency" as there is still much work to do.

Carola van Rijnsoever, the Netherlands, was elected Co-Chairperson of the meeting.

The Council adopted the agenda (GEF/C.56/01/Rev.02).



GEF CEO and Chairperson **Naoko Ishii**



L-R: Françoise Clottes, Roland Sundstrom, and Peter Lallas, GEF Secretariat, respond to comments from the floor on the IEO's report on its semi-annual evaluation of the GEF.

Policy on Monitoring

On Wednesday morning, 12 June, Françoise Clottes, GEF Secretariat, introduced a draft policy (GEF/C.56/03) to update the GEF's 2010 monitoring policy. She highlighted:

- alignment with GEF-7, including new indicators and monitoring requirements;
- clear reporting requirements for programs and the SGP;
- clear time standards for project- and program-level reporting; and
- enhanced disclosure of non-confidential monitoring documents and data on the GEF website.

She noted that it: updates the reporting policy on gender and on environmental and social safeguards; comes into effect for new projects on 1 July 2019; and will include templates and guidelines. Clottes introduced a newly formatted scorecard to facilitate tracking by capturing more detailed information about progress on key issues under GEF-7.

In ensuing discussion, there was general support for the new monitoring policy, along with numerous questions and comments on, *inter alia*: the need to align now-separate monitoring and evaluation policies; recipient country and Operational Focal Point (OFP) roles; reporting on “achieved” versus “expected” results; deadlines; activities covered by the new policy; how best to ensure learning; CSO involvement; and next steps.

In response, Clottes said the GEF aimed for “perfect compatibility” on monitoring and evaluation. She noted that achievement of GEF-7 project results cannot be measured until projects’ mid-term evaluations, but indicators for GEF-7 projects will be linked to GEF-6 indicators to facilitate comparison and learning. Clottes said they will help in ensuring accountability and making recommendations to the Council but will not entail additional data collection.

On deadlines, she said templates and guidelines are largely finished but still modifiable.

On coverage, Clottes informed Members that all activities will be covered, including IPs, enabling activities, and non-grant instruments (NGIs), albeit with varying reporting requirements, and highlighted new guidelines for reporting on programs’ specific dimensions.

On learning, Clottes noted new efforts to enable dissemination of lessons learned across the Partnership, given Agencies’ differing templates. She also noted that Agencies are responsible for addressing project compliance or performance problems but the Secretariat can suggest remedial actions. On CSOs, she highlighted some changes that will empower CSOs and optimize learning from their experience.

On recipient countries’ OFPs, she noted that all relevant information will be accessible to them on the GEF portal when it is rolled out. She supported extensive, regular engagement with OFPs, saying countries can proactively manage their monitoring efforts and that Agencies will share information if the OFPs solicit it in a properly structured way.

Acknowledging a need for more consideration of recipient countries’ OFPs, Ishii postponed further discussion.

On Wednesday afternoon, Clottes presented a revised policy on monitoring (GEF/C.56/03/Rev.01), highlighting changes and additions to make explicit that OFPs have a definite role in monitoring and are to be engaged as key stakeholders. Several Council Members stressed that the portal should be opened as soon as possible. One asked whether OFPs could be given access to information before it is analyzed at higher levels. Clottes responded that the Agencies can be encouraged to provide access before analysis and that the goal of transparency will motivate them to share information in that way.

The Council then adopted the revised policy on monitoring.

Decision: The Council, having reviewed document GEF/C.56/03, “Policy on Monitoring,” approves the Policy on Monitoring contained in Annex I of the document, which supersedes the provisions of the 2010 Monitoring and Evaluation Policy that pertain to monitoring.

Report on the Working Group on the GEF Partnership

On Tuesday, 11 June, Françoise Clottes, GEF Secretariat, introduced the document titled, “Report on the Working Group on the GEF Partnership” (GEF/C.56/04), offering a summary of the deliberations of the Working Group and its proposal on next steps. Clottes reported that the Working Group did not converge on specific recommendations, citing the need for better understanding of all issues related to the concentration of GEF resources across GEF Project Agencies and the implementation



L-R: Christian Hofer, GEF Secretariat, interviews Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary, UNCCD, for #GEFlive.

of a 30% ceiling on the GEF's share of Agencies' portfolios. She said further work should be based on countries' freedom to choose the Agency they wish to work with, the fair treatment of all Agencies, and preventing any sudden disruption in the operation of the GEF. She proposed that the Working Group present recommendations for consideration by the Council at a future date.

Council Members reflected on: the role of comparative advantage in countries' choice of an Agency; the need for a "fit-for-purpose," rather than a "mechanistic, numeric," approach to the Agency selection process; and country ownership and freedom to choose, with due regard to some Agencies' regional affiliations.

Citing differences between Agencies with general and specialized mandates, several Members expressed reservations about the 30% ceiling requirement, noting that Agencies with a purely environmental mandate, such as UNEP, "will hit the ceiling immediately," and called for improved implementation and coordination among Agencies. Clottes reminded Council Members that the GEF-7 replenishment decision endorsed by the Council had set the 30% ceiling, and acknowledged that agreeing implementation modalities is a "wicked problem" cutting to the core of the Partnership and requiring further work.

One Member proposed establishing an effective date for the ceiling to ensure predictability and avoid disruption of work.

The GEF-CSO Network recommended reviewing the "relationship triangle" between the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies, and the CSO Network, and reducing rivalry between Agencies.

Decision: The Council, having reviewed document GEF/C.56/04, "Report on the Working Group on the GEF Partnership," takes note of the deliberations of the Working Group, and requests that the Secretariat continue to collaborate with the Working Group, in consultation with Agencies and other stakeholders, on issues related to the concentration of GEF resources across Agencies and the implementation of a 30% ceiling on the GEF's share of Agencies' portfolios with a view to further exploring, defining, and clarifying associated implementation modalities and presenting any associated recommendations for Council consideration at a future date.



Rachna Ramsurn, Council Member, Mauritius



Marita Olson, Council Member, Sweden

Informing the Council of Possible Non-Compliance with Environmental and Social Safeguards

Introducing the document, "Informing the Council of Possible Non-Compliance with Environmental and Social Safeguards" (GEF/C.56/05) on Wednesday morning, 12 June, Françoise Clottes, GEF Secretariat, noted that it responded to the Council's request for a procedure to inform the Council of possible non-compliance with minimum standards contained in the Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards updated in December 2018 (GEF/C.55/07/Rev.01). She noted the Secretariat's proposals that:

- the Agencies report to the Council, through the Secretariat, suspected cases of non-compliance that they determine to be within the scope of Agencies' review;
- Agency reports include a summary of cases and their status, and a link to an Agency webpage where stakeholders may access up-to-date information regarding the nature of the claim, the status of processing, associated documents, and results of any reviews; and
- the GEF Secretariat post the summaries and links in a designated space in the conflict resolution section of the GEF website.

While Council Members welcomed the proposal, many supported adding language to reflect that: Agency reporting should include information on how cases were resolved; Council Members, not just the Secretariat, should be kept informed in real time of cases possibly involving reputational risk to the GEF; and the Secretariat should be required to provide, annually or semi-annually, a summary of cases.

In response to questions, Clottes clarified that determining the scope of an Agency's review of compliance would be that Agency's responsibility and Agencies would be accountable for such determinations.

Where an Agency has minimum standards higher than those of the GEF, Clottes explained, non-compliance with those standards would be reported and reflected in any information suggested to the Council.

In response to queries about reports of possible non-compliance from third parties such as the media, Clottes recommended leaving such reports to informal mechanisms, since they would require due process, including verification and consultation, before acting on them.



Jan Petter Borring, Advisor, Norway

On requesting self-assessment reports on environmental and social safeguards in recipient countries, Clottes recommended that Agencies take that up with recipients directly.

Several Members suggested differentiating between major and minor cases in reporting to Council.

On Wednesday afternoon, Clottes introduced modified decision text reflecting Members' concerns (GEF/C.56/05/Rev.01), which called for: Agency notifications to the GEF to include information on how cases were addressed; and the Secretariat to notify the Council when new information on cases is available and provide summaries of information from Agencies in its annual reporting on safeguards policy implementation. She said it responds to Members' concerns about possible reputational risk, and announced forthcoming implementation guidelines for reporting non-compliance with the minimum standards in the safeguards policy, which would cover details on how the notification process to Council will work in practice. The Council adopted the modified decision as proposed.

Decision: The Council, having reviewed document GEF/C.56/05/Rev.01, "Informing the Council of Possible Non-Compliance with Environmental and Social Safeguards," approves the proposed amendment to paragraphs 15 and 17 of the Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards (GEF/C.55/07/Rev.01) as follows:

- Agencies report promptly to the Secretariat any cases reported to their respective accountability, grievance, and conflict resolution mechanisms in connection with GEF-financed projects or programs, which these mechanisms have determined to be within the scope of their review, and how such cases have been addressed consistent with the requirements set out in the minimum standards of the Policy; a d
- The Secretariat reports annually to the Council on the implementation of the Policy, including the type and level of environmental and social risks and impacts identified in GEF-financed projects and programs and the management of such risks and impacts during project implementation and at project completion. In addition, the Secretariat promptly makes available on the GEF website the information reported

by Agencies, notifies the Council as new information is made available, and presents a summary of such information as part of its annual reporting on the implementation of the Policy.

GEF Business Plan and Corporate Budget for FY2020

On Tuesday, 11 June 2019, Peter Lallas, GEF Secretariat, introduced the "GEF Business Plan and Corporate Budget for FY20" (GEF/C.56/06), noting that the FY2020 request of USD 23.539 million is consistent with the GEF-7 replenishment budget envelope of USD 103.5 million for the Secretariat. He said the proposed plan and budget have a strong focus on efficiency and savings, foresee zero growth in staff other than a new staff member for private sector engagement, as requested in the replenishment, and include new efficiency measures on travel and use of consultants.

There was general support for the proposed business plan and budget. Many Members requested continued efforts on cost savings and control in future plans and budgets.

Responding to Members' questions, Lallas clarified that the consultant costs reflect the GEF-7 replenishment discussions and implementation of the new monitoring policy and the gender equity policy, while information technology costs reflect work to finalize the portal. He also explained that the separate budget table and decision line used for the CBIT refer to the existing stock of CBIT projects already approved in GEF-6.

Asked about the proposal to raise the investment management fee, the World Bank, in its role as Trustee of the GEF Trust Fund, explained that the rate has not been raised since 2004 but more active and customized management has yielded greater returns, so the Bank is seeking higher fees from all fiduciary trusts it manages.

Decision: The Council, having reviewed document GEF/C.56/06, "GEF Business Plan and Corporate Budget for FY20," takes note of the business plan, and approves an FY2020 corporate budget from the GEF Trust Fund of USD 29.273 million, comprised of: USD 23.539 million for the GEF Secretariat; USD 2.725 million for STAP; and USD 3.009 million for the Trustee.

The Council also approves a total FY2020 administrative budget for the NPIF of USD 17,900, comprised of the following



Elizabeth Lien, Council Member, US



A view of the plenary session from the dais

allocations from the NPIF to cover the Secretariat's and Trustee's expenses for NPIF administration and implementation: USD 13,500 for the GEF Secretariat; and USD 4,400 for the Trustee.

The Council also approves a total FY2020 administrative budget for the CBIT from the CBIT Trust Fund of USD 513,000, comprised of: USD 475,000 for the GEF Secretariat; and USD 38,000 for the Trustee.

The Council requests the Secretariat, in consultation with STAP and the Trustee, to present a combined FY2021 corporate budget and business plan for discussion at its 2020 spring meeting.

Status of Agencies' Compliance with Minimum Requirements on AML-CFT

On Wednesday morning, 12 June, Françoise Clottes, GEF Secretariat, presented the "Status of Agencies' Compliance with Minimum Requirements on AML-CFT" (GEF/C.56/07/Rev.01) report. She reminded participants that the Council had approved minimum requirements for GEF Agencies on AML-CFT in December 2018 and had requested the Agencies to certify that they meet the approved minimum requirements by the end of April 2019 or else present a time-bound action plan to achieve compliance. She said all Agencies had responded by May, with 17 presenting self-certification without reservations. She reported that the IDB recently adopted an AML-CFT framework, expects to fully implement its controls by 2020, and will then review its compliance with the GEF's framework. Clottes also noted an ongoing comprehensive review by the Secretariat aimed at producing an updated policy on minimum fiduciary standards, for Council consideration at its 57th meeting. She said that, if approved, it will require a complete third-party assessment of Agencies' compliance, including on AML-CFT.

Several comments from Council Members revolved around the theme of ensuring that GEF money does not find its way to

terrorists and protecting GEF from risks to its reputation. The World Bank confirmed its full compliance and apologized that its letter was submitted late.

In answer to comments and questions, Clottes noted that the third-party assessment will be more rigorous than the self-certification, but that self-certification was requested in order to obtain a preliminary status report from all Agencies. She confirmed that as fiduciary standards evolve further third-party assessments will be performed.

On Wednesday afternoon, Annette Killmer, IDB, briefed Council on the IDB's self-certification process, reporting that the IDB adopted a framework on AML-CFT that is consistent with other international instruments and will be fully implemented by 2020. She said that the IDB's Office of Institutional Integrity concluded that it should not sign the self-certification letter until then, but that this does not mean that the IDB intends to engage in money laundering. She noted that the IDB is a triple A-rated Agency subject to oversight in its market investments, project supervision, and continuous audits. She recalled that the IDB shared its AML-CFT framework with the GEF Secretariat, and offered to share it with Council, noting that the IDB considers it equivalent to the action plan that Council requested.

Decision: The Council, having reviewed document GEF/C.56/07, "Status of Agencies' Compliance with Minimum Requirements on AML-CFT," takes note of the self-certifications presented in Annex I, where the following Agencies certify that they meet the GEF's minimum requirements on anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism as set out in the Minimum Fiduciary Standards for GEF Partner Agencies (GA/PL/02): AfDB; ADB; the West African Development Bank; the Development Bank of Latin America; Conservation International; the Development Bank of Southern Africa; EBRD; FAO; the Chinese Foreign Economic Cooperation Office;



Rosina Bierbaum, STAP Chair

Brazilian Biodiversity Fund; IFAD; IUCN; UNDP; UNEP; UNIDO; the World Bank; and WWF-US.

With respect to the World Bank, the Council takes note of the formulation of sub-paragraph (c) of the Agency's self-certification. With respect to IDB, the Council takes note of the information provided in Annex II of GEF/C.56/07 and the Agency's request to review its compliance in 2020, once its AML-CFT Framework is fully implemented.

Report of the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel

On Tuesday, 11 June, Rosina Bierbaum, Chair, STAP, presented the Report of the Chairperson of the STAP (GEF/STAP/C.56/Inf.01). She reported on new science – including the recent Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Global Assessment of the State of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, the UNEP Sixth Global Environmental Outlook, an upcoming report from the Global Commission on Adaptation (GCA), and the Global Chemicals Outlook II – and what it means for the GEF. Bierbaum outlined STAP criteria for IPs in such areas as: innovation; barriers to transformation; maximizing global environmental benefits; managing trade-offs such as climate risk; multi-stakeholder processes; theory of change; and monitoring, evaluation, learning, and knowledge management. She summarized three recent STAP papers, on: achieving more enduring outcomes from GEF investments; guidance on climate risk screening; and local commons for global benefits, including indigenous and community-based management, and forthcoming STAP guidelines for land degradation neutrality, which will be presented to 14th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNCCD.

During ensuing discussion, questions focused primarily on, *inter alia*, the difference between durability and sustainability; next steps for incorporating STAP's ideas into projects, child projects, and IPs; and the desirability of engaging CSOs in all GEF programs.

Responding to comments and queries from Council Members regarding durability, Bierbaum said the literature does not

consider “durable” synonymous with “sustainable,” so STAP defined “durable” narrowly to describe projects whose outcomes persist. She noted the lack of a common definition of success in scaling up projects, but indicated that STAP is interested in synthesizing concepts from the literature into common, useful definitions.

On risk screening, she said STAP's goal was to provide information on agencies' diverse approaches to this, noting that the Council must pursue consensus on how much appetite it has for risk. Bierbaum also noted that many tools exist for addressing climate risk and that work on this has not been systematized yet.

On child projects, she observed that STAP's current mandate only refers to IPs, but indicated STAP's willingness to help with any request from the Council.

Bierbaum also noted that CSOs frequently have the trust of both local communities and policymakers, and agreed that their involvement is crucial.

Semi-Annual Evaluation Report June 2019 and Management Response

On Wednesday, 12 June, Juha Uitto, IEO, introduced “Semi-Annual Evaluation Report of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office: June 2019” (GEF/ME/C.56/01), noting that it includes an annual performance report for 2019 with a special focus on sustainable transport, a “value-for-money” analysis of GEF interventions in support of sustainable forest management (SFM), and an evaluation of GEF support to scaling up impacts.

On the 2019 performance report focusing on sustainable transport (GEF/ME/C.56/Inf.01), Uitto stated that the GEF USD 500 million sustainable transport project portfolio comprises 80 projects relevant to country needs and SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities). He said 87% of 2019 projects had satisfactory outcomes, including transformed markets in China, Malaysia and South Asia, rapid transit in cities in Mexico and Tanzania, and enhanced non-motorized transit. Uitto noted, however, that greenhouse gas (GHG) emission abatement scored lower for each project than expected at project start. He recommended that: monitoring and evaluation design used for monitoring results of a sustainable transport project be consistent with the project's theory of change and that the GEF continue to prioritize funding



Juha Uitto, IEO



Geeta Batra, IEO

for capacity development, urban and transport planning, and policy and regulatory framework development activities.

Geeta Batra, IEO, outlined the main findings of the “Value for Money Analysis of GEF Interventions in Support of Sustainable Forest Management” (GEF/ME/C.56/Inf.02), and highlighted the following recommendations: improve geographic precision in recording and reporting project locations; capture socioeconomic co-benefits of interventions using a spatial approach; and select projects or programs to improve the evidence base for GEF interventions.

Batra also highlighted evaluation work in progress, including Strategic Country Cluster Evaluations on LDCs, SIDS and African Biomes.

Council Members expressed general support for the IEO’s evaluations on sustainable transport and SFM, as well as for ongoing evaluations.

Several Members were concerned about lower-than-expected GHG emissions reductions in sustainable transport projects. Uitto explained that the IEO had relied on figures reported by Agencies in their terminal evaluations.

Uitto then presented the key findings of the “Evaluation of GEF Support to Scaling up Impact” (GEF/ME/C.56/Inf.03), defined scaling up as a process to increase magnitude and



Anar Mamdani, Council Member, Canada

expand geographical and sectoral areas, and highlighted two recommendations:

- The GEF Partnership needs to develop a framework for scaling up global environmental benefits that reflects a common understanding and definition of “scaling up” in the GEF context and from which the Partnership can develop guidelines for scaling up activities at different stages of the approval process; and
- The GEF Partnership should consider measuring and reporting results against the scale of the environmental problems it is addressing, and projects and programs that are linked to achieve impacts at scale must have common indicators.

He explained that the draft decision had been revised to reflect these recommendations.

Many Council Members expressed concern about the process that led to this information being added “at the last moment,” but acknowledged that a divergence of views between the IEO and GEF Secretariat is “healthy.” Uitto agreed that such “tensions” are a sign of the IEO’s independence.

One Council Member suggested “relevant” instead of “common” indicators for linked projects and programs. Uitto explained that “common indicators” helps aggregate results at global level.

Uitto also presented on the “Third Professional Peer Review of the Independent Evaluation Function of the GEF – Terms of Reference” (GEF/ME/C.56/inf. 04), explaining that the purpose of the review is to enhance IEO’s impact and strengthen its role as an independent evaluator.

Ishii fully supported the Semi-Annual Evaluation Report and endorsed the decision as amended. She highlighted the GEF’s and IEO’s shared goal to achieve higher impact.

Decision: The Council, having reviewed “Semi-Annual Evaluation Report of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office: June 2019,” endorses the recommendations of the “Annual Performance Report 2019: Special Thematic Focus on Sustainable Transport” and the “Value for Money Analysis of GEF Interventions in Support of Sustainable Forest Management,” and approves the Terms of Reference for the Professional Peer Review of the IEO.

With respect to the “Evaluation of GEF Support to Scaling up Impact,” the Council notes with appreciation the analysis presented, and endorses the following recommendation: the GEF Partnership needs to ensure that factors influencing scaling up are identified and taken into account in program and project design and implementation, and their impact assessed at midterm and in terminal evaluations.

The GEF Evaluation Policy

On Wednesday, 12 June, Juha Uitto, GEF IEO, introduced the GEF Evaluation Policy (GEF/ME/C.56/02), informing the Council about updates reflecting new areas for measurement and clarifying principles and requirements for evaluation across the Partnership. He noted a new gender-responsive approach and new areas for evaluation, including socioeconomic co-benefits, geospatial coordinates where feasible, and GEF additionality. He



Karina Ramirez Arras, Council Member, Mexico

said updated guidelines on terminal evaluations of programs and for assessment of GEF additionality will be forthcoming.

In ensuing discussion, there was general support for the new policy. Comments stressed: expanding transparency; taking a culturally sensitive, gender-responsive and disability- and indigenous peoples-inclusive approach; and the undesirability of placing additional resource burdens on recipient countries.

Several Members recommended using evaluation findings to provide lessons learned for the entire GEF Partnership. Calls were made for harmonizing GEF and Green Climate Fund (GCF) approaches and for post-completion evaluations of scaling up and sustainability, with one Member urging cost-effectiveness.

One Member stressed evaluation of results achieved. Another called for language on GEF-7's ambition to be transformational and on evaluation of "country ownership" of a project. One Member asked how monitoring results will feed into evaluation and how countries will be selected for evaluation.

Uitto welcomed the questions, and agreed to add explicit language in response to the comments. With that, the Council adopted the decision approving the policy (GEF/ME/C.56/02/Rev.01).

Decision: The Council, having reviewed document GEF/ME/C.56/02, "The GEF Evaluation Policy," approves the proposed GEF Evaluation Policy contained in Section 2 of this document, which supersedes the 2010 Policy on Monitoring and Evaluation as it relates to evaluation (Council document GEF/ME/C.39/6/Rev.1), and authorizes the GEF IEO to proceed with its dissemination and implementation.

Four-Year Work Program and Budget of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office – GEF-7

On Wednesday, 12 June, Juha Uitto, GEF IEO, introduced the "Four-Year Work Program and Budget of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office – GEF-7" (GEF/ME/C.56/03/Rev.01), noting that the seventh comprehensive evaluation of the GEF (OPS-7) is only two years away. He said it will include information from evaluations being performed under the new evaluation policy and will then be used in negotiations on GEF-8 replenishment. He said it will also strengthen country and stakeholder evaluation capacities and project designers' learning.

Uitto noted that the IEO's budget for FY2020, starting 1 July 2019, equals one-fourth of its overall budget for GEF-7, but said the IEO's budget use is not linear. He reported that expenses include fixed costs, staff, and consultants where the IEO has no in-house expertise, noting that consultants are increasingly hired from the countries and regions where evaluations are being done as this provides familiarity with the context and helps develop evaluation capacity.

In ensuing discussion, some Council Members queried costs and IEO's efforts to apply stated efficiency goals. One Member stressed transformational change in the GEF's work. Another noted the importance of evaluation of IPs to inform GEF-8 replenishment negotiations and asked for post-completion evaluations to be included in the budget.

Uitto confirmed the IEO's efforts towards cost cutting and efficiency, but noted that the IEO's Work Program has increased.

Decision: The Council, having reviewed document GEF/ME/C.56/03, "Four Year Work Program and Budget of the Independent Evaluation Office," approves: the annual IEO budget for fiscal year 2020 for a total of USD 6.22 million; and the Work Program for GEF-7 including preparations for the seventh Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF.

Work Program for GEF Trust Fund

On Tuesday, 11 June, Gustavo Fonseca, GEF Secretariat, introduced "Work Program for GEF Trust Fund" (GEF/C.56/08/Rev.01), highlighting programming trends in the GEF resources relative to focal area strategies and objectives, distribution by regions and GEF Agencies, and innovative elements in programs and projects. He outlined the proposed USD 865.9 million Work Program, comprising 31 projects, seven programs and three multi-trust fund projects. He called the centerpiece of the Work Program the four IPs, totaling USD 495.5 million, which are designed to deliver transformational change covering: FOLUR; Amazon forests; Congo Basin forests; and dryland landscapes. Fonseca noted that, if approved, the Work Program would benefit 91 recipient countries, including 30 LDCs and 32 SIDS.

Council Members expressed general support for the Work Program, while raising numerous questions.



Gustavo Fonseca, GEF Secretariat

In his responses, Fonseca explained that:

- the sustainable cities IP still lacks a lead Agency but a resolution is anticipated which will allow inclusion of the IP in the next Work Program;
- although the Work Program includes no NGOs, some were approved in the previous Work Program, and more are expected in the future;
- accredited Agencies have a very specific role as project executors, but other participating organizations, including many coalitions and alliances, can help with implementation without being accredited. Fonseca noted that the Council strongly urges multi-stakeholder participation in projects to multiply impact;
- The Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) has a position on the steering committee for the Global Wildlife Program and directly involved in three of the Work Program's projects;
- two major producers of soy have formally indicated interest in participating in FOLUR in the context of a current second call for expressions of interest in participation;
- while plastics bans are not a direct aim of the Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-chemical Development in SIDS (ISLANDS) Program, great interest in such bans is expected, and much plastic waste will be dealt with in the solid waste management portion of projects;
- REDD+ is part of the Amazon Sustainable Landscapes 2 IP (ASL2); and
- setting tracking targets for sub-indicators has proven difficult but the Secretariat is working on this.

In answer to several questions regarding the Electric Mobility Program, Fonseca explained that: e-mobility is a GEF-7 Replenishment priority; many participating countries are unable to access other funds for e-mobility; and transport is a major component of recipient countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement on climate change. He added that the International Energy Agency (IEA) is the global knowledge leader on e-mobility but under its current mandate the IEA can only offer technical services to Organisation



Stefan Schwager, Council Member, Switzerland

for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member countries. The new GEF program, he said, will allow the IEA to work with non-OECD developing countries.

Two Council Members noted difficulties presented by projects that include high- and middle-income countries which are ineligible for official development assistance.

A Member said her country's policies on human trafficking, state-sponsored terrorism, and transparent military audits did not allow her to support several projects proposed in the program and asked that her objections be reflected in the Co-Chairs' Summary.

Many Council Members raised concerns about the lack of transparency regarding the selection process of lead Agencies and participating countries in the IPs. Many called for the Secretariat to provide the Council with such information in writing during the session. Following many interventions on the need for transparency in the IP approval process, the Council agreed to consider a new decision on this.

On Wednesday, the Secretariat provided an informal paper on the rollout process for the GEF-7 IPs, and proposed a draft decision requesting the Secretariat to share, by 1 July 2019, a report on the selection processes for the IPs already approved as well as the sustainable cities IP yet to be approved. Council Members welcomed the information provided, but expressed desire for a clearer narrative explaining the thinking behind key decisions on the IPs. With that understanding, the Council adopted the proposed decision.

Decisions: In its first decision, the Council, having reviewed document GEF/C.56/09, "Work Program for GEF Trust Fund," approves the Work Program comprising 31 projects and 7 programs, subject to comments made during the Council meeting and additional comments that may be submitted in writing to the Secretariat by 27 June 2019.

Total resources approved in the Work Program amount to USD 865.9 million, including GEF project financing and Agency fees. The Work Program comprises Project Identification Forms (PIFs) and Program Framework Documents (PFDs) contained in Annex A to the decision.

The IPs approved include: FOLUR; Sustainable Forest Management IP on Dryland Sustainable Landscapes; the Congo



Kordula Melhart, Council Member, Germany



A view of the opening session of the 56th meeting of the GEF Council

Basin Sustainable Landscapes IP; and the Amazon Sustainable Landscapes Program – Phase II.

Other global programs approved include: Global Programme to Support Countries with the Shift to Electric Mobility; ISLANDS; and Global Wildlife Program.

Full-sized standalone projects include:

- strengthening network of protected areas through advanced governance and management in Azerbaijan;
- sustaining healthy coastal and marine ecosystems in Brazil;
- economic instruments and tools to support the conservation of biodiversity, the payment of ecosystem services and sustainable development in Chile;
- implementing the National Framework on Access and Benefit Sharing of Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge in the Philippines;
- regional capacity building for enhanced transparency in climate change monitoring, reporting and verification for a common market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) member States;
- sustainable energy scale-up in Belarus;
- capacity building for establishing an integrated and enhanced transparency framework for climate actions and support measures in India;
- accelerating construction of energy efficient green housing units in Thailand;
- land degradation neutrality target setting and restoration of degraded landscapes in Ecuador;
- an agriculture competitiveness project in Moldova;
- mainstreaming sustainable land management for large-scale impact in the grazing lands of Limpopo and Northern Cape provinces in South Africa;
- environmental performance of the foam sector in China;
- strengthening national capacity to manage industrial POPs in Colombia;
- scaling-up investment and technology transfer to facilitate capacity strengthening and technical assistance for the implementation of the Stockholm and Minamata Conventions in 12 African LDCs;
- fostering water and environmental security in the Ma and Neun/Ca transboundary river basins and related coastal areas in Viet Nam and the Lao People's Democratic Republic;
- a project towards the transboundary integrated water resource management of the Sixaola river basin shared by Costa Rica and Panama;
- fostering water security in the Trifinio Region shared by El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras;
- Caribbean SIDS multi-country soil management initiative for integrated landscape restoration and climate-resilient food systems;
- combating land degradation and biodiversity loss by promoting sustainable rangeland management and biodiversity conservation in Afghanistan;
- integrated productive landscapes through land use planning, restoration, and sustainable intensification of rice crops in the Yaque Norte and Yuna watersheds of the Dominican Republic;

- protecting biodiversity and recovering degraded ecosystems in Honduras;
- transforming agricultural systems and strengthening local economies in high biodiversity areas of India through sustainable landscape management and public-private finance;
- strengthening the adaptive capacity, resilience and biodiversity conservation ability of fisheries and aquaculture-dependent livelihoods in Timor-Leste;
- biodiversity conservation and agroecological land restoration in productive landscapes of Trinidad and Tobago; and
- ecosystem conservation and community livelihood enhancement in North Western Zambia.

In a second decision on transparency in the IPs, the Council, having reviewed document GEF/C.56/09, “Work Program for GEF Trust Fund,” and with the aim to further enhance transparency about the selection of lead agencies and recipient countries in the IPs, requests the GEF Secretariat to share, by 1 July 2019, a report on the selection processes for the approved IPs as well as the one on sustainable cities not yet approved.

Relations with the Conventions and Other International Institutions

On Wednesday, 12 June, Co-Chair van Rijnsoever introduced “Relations with the Conventions and Other International Institutions” (GEF/C.56/09/Rev.01).

Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary, BRS Conventions, reviewed the results of the BRS COPs in May 2019, noting that Stockholm Convention COP 9 had listed two new POPs in its control annexes. He said the COP urged the GEF to provide a significant increase in support for the Convention in GEF-8. He highlighted the GEF’s role in helping developing countries meet their Convention obligations on legacy POPs, including on managing end-of-life DDT stocks and the elimination of PCBs in equipment by 2025 and ensuring environmentally sound management (ESM) of wastes containing or contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) by 2028. He also reviewed decisions by the Basel COP 14 and Rotterdam COP 9, noting that the Basel COP decision on plastics will have implications for the GEF



L-R: **Carola Van Rijnsoever**, Co-Chair of the 56th GEF Council Meeting; **William Ehlers**, GEF Secretariat; and **Naoko Ishii**, GEF CEO and Chairperson



L-R: **Rossana Silva Repetto**, Executive Secretary, Minamata Convention on Mercury; **Rolph Payet**, Executive Secretary, BRS Conventions; and **Ibrahim Thiaw**, Executive Secretary, UNCCD

because some plastics contain POPs and that it updated technical guidelines on ESM of wastes containing POPs or mercury.

Rossana Silva Repetto, Executive Secretary, Minamata Convention on Mercury, noted that the Convention now has 109 Parties, and thanked the GEF for assisting 110 countries in conducting their initial mercury assessments and 32 countries in preparing their national action plans on artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM). She observed that the GEF’s Global Opportunities for Long-term Development in ASGM (GOLD) Program and the just-approved ISLANDS Program have significant implications for the Minamata Convention. She noted that COP 3 in November 2019 is due to review the Convention’s financial mechanism.

Ibrahim Thiaw, Executive Secretary, UNCCD, noted three cases in which local community members’ actions achieved benefits such as restoration of soil, biodiversity, and degraded land, doubling of yields, and dissemination of organic farming techniques through the help of GEF-supported projects. He said integrated approaches to land must be encouraged, citing a 3 to 1 return on the GEF’s investments in land-related projects. Thiaw cited numerous ways in which other conventions and instruments link to land-related goals, citing in particular the upcoming Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Climate Change and Land.

GEF CEO and Chairperson Ishii said this is a “historic moment” for collaboration between the GEF Secretariat and the three Rio Conventions for realizing maximum impact on the ground.

A Council Member underscored that, given the synergies promoted by the IPs, it is an opportune time for the GEF Secretariat to encourage greater dialogue among the Conventions and between them and the Council.

In ensuing questions, one Council Member asked whether the GEF had given any assistance to UNFCCC Parties whose rates of submission of biennial update reports and national communications has been low. He cautioned against the UNCCD focusing on land degradation rather than desertification, and called for more focus on drought. He warned that the UNCCD’s Global Mechanism cannot “strengthen its links with the GEF for facilitating the process of countries accessing GEF-7 resources,” as per the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) recommendations to UNCCD COP 14 in



Ben Green, Council Member, UK



Dan Bakoye Chaibou, Council Member, Niger

September 2019, because the CRIC has no say in the work of the GEF.

Several Council Members praised growing cooperation between the GEF and the GCF, particularly their work together in a pilot project in Laos, and urged greater interaction on policy questions such as grievance mechanisms. Noting the doubling of POPs listings in the Stockholm Convention annexes since 2005, several Members lamented the Convention's lower allocation of funds under GEF-7, and welcomed the COP's call to consider a greater allocation in GEF-8. Several Members echoed Payet's calls for bearing in mind the Basel Convention's actions on plastics in GEF projects and programs involving chemicals and wastes.

A Council Member urged more GEF attention to poor national reporting to the Stockholm Convention and the lack of updated national POPs inventories.

Another Member called for greater monitoring and reporting on progress towards expected GHG emissions reduction results in GEF-funded projects. Another requested an update at the next Council on GEF support to Montreal Protocol Parties regarding implementation of the Kigali Amendment on hydrofluorocarbons.

The CSO Network called for more involvement of CSOs in the design of projects related to the Conventions.

Gertrud Sahler, President of the fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5), outlined efforts under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) to define a post-2020 framework for the sound management of chemicals and waste. She stressed that chemicals are a cross-cutting issue of importance to the GEF's IPs and achievement of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She expressed hope that the GEF could become an even stronger player in supporting countries in the sound management of chemicals and waste, both through the MEAs for which it serves as a financial mechanism and for any post-2020 framework that may be approved at ICCM5.

Decision: The Council, having considered document GEF/C.56/09/Rev.01, "Relations with the Conventions and Other International Institutions," welcomes the report, and requests

the GEF network to continue to work with recipient countries to reflect the guidance and national priorities in their GEF programming and activities.

Approval of the Memorandum of Understanding Between the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury and the Council of the Global Environment Facility

On Wednesday, 12 June, Co-Chair van Rijnsoever introduced the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Minamata Convention COP (GEF/C.56/10/Rev.01).

Council Members expressed support for the MoU.

Decision: The Council, having considered document GEF/C.56/11/Rev.01, "Memorandum of Understanding between the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury and the Council of the Global Environment Facility," approves the MoU as adopted by the second COP to the Minamata Convention on Mercury as communicated by the COP President, and requests the GEF Secretariat to transmit its approval to the COP.

Further Work on the Sustainability of GEF Projects and Programs

On Tuesday, 11 June, CEO Ishii introduced this item, noting that sustainability is closely related to the concept of durability as outlined by STAP. Citing the document titled, "Further Work on the Sustainability of GEF Projects and Programs" (GEF/C.56/Inf.08), she noted that all Agencies have some definition of sustainability, and outlined seven key factors to help increase sustainability: broad support for project preparation; effective stakeholder engagement to build ownership; private sector engagement and mobilization of private financing; institutional capacity development; robust risk assessment and management throughout the project life cycle; clearly defined exit strategies; and effective monitoring and adaptive management.

Ishii said sustainability is a key criterion for project selection in the focal areas of chemicals and waste as well as biodiversity. She noted that the new monitoring policy and co-financing could also help enhance sustainability.

Highlighting linkages with STAP's work, Council Members agreed that further work was needed on the definition of



Nguavese Tracy Ogbonna, Women Environmental Programme, Nigeria

sustainability, and requested clear recommendations on enhancing sustainability.

One Member cautioned against selective treatment of recommendations in STAP's report, and asked that three aspects be considered in building sustainability into projects and programs: selecting partners on the basis of comparative advantage; involvement of local communities; and use of technology in enhancing the quality of projects.

Responding to comments from the floor, STAP Chair Bierbaum supported interagency dialogue on monitoring and evaluation of sustainability, suggested a workshop on learning across IPs, and invited the Council to think about risk appetite.

On Wednesday, the Secretariat proposed a decision, which was adopted by the Council.

Decision: The Council, having reviewed documents GEF/C.56/Inf.08, "Further Work on the Sustainability of GEF Projects and Programs," and GEF/STAP/C.56/Inf.04, "Achieving More Enduring Outcomes from GEF Investment," notes with appreciation the information provided, and requests that the Secretariat present, for Council consideration at its 57th meeting in the fall of 2019, a summary of key factors that influence the sustainability of GEF projects and programs, and how such factors are taken into account and may be strengthened in current GEF operations.

Other Business

Dates of Future Meetings: The Council agreed that the 60th and 61st meetings of the GEF Council would convene from 14-17 June 2021, and 6-9 December 2021, respectively.

Report of the LDCF/SCCF Council Meeting

Naoko Ishii, GEF CEO and Chairperson, acting as Chairperson of the LDCF/SCCF Council, opened the 26th meeting of the LDCF/SCCF Council on Thursday, 13 June. She shared three takeaways from a recent meeting of the Global Commission on Adaptation: the idea of "doing new things differently" is gaining more traction; the temperature threshold assumption behind adaptation actions needs to be better thought through; and a more long-term, holistic, systemic, predictable

and integrated approach to adaptation needs to involve wider private sector engagement. Ishii highlighted the upcoming UN Secretary-General's Climate Summit and UNFCCC COP 25 as opportunities to accelerate action on the ground.

Ishii underscored that this "new way of doing business" will help the LDCF/SCCF Council better engage the private sector, and the proposed joint Work Program will motivate microenterprises to be incubators of ideas on the ground.

She thanked Ireland for its EUR 2 million contribution to the LDCF.

The agenda (GEF/LDCF.SCCF.26/01) was adopted without changes.

Keynote Address

Orsalia Kalantzopoulos, CEO, Europa Re Ltd., outlined the Swiss-based catastrophe risk reinsurance company's efforts to provide climate risk insurance coverage to homeowners, private enterprises and farmers in Southeastern Europe, which is highly vulnerable to natural disasters, particularly floods.

Responding to questions from Council Members, Kalantzopoulos noted that, in addition to insurance premiums, Europe Re receives funding from the GEF, World Bank, and Switzerland, but plans to become financially sustainable by the end of 2020.

She said the company was able to expand its operations to Turkey, and agreed that its experience could be replicated in regions such as Africa provided sustainability of the overall financial system is increased.

Kalantzopoulos emphasized the need for donors to prioritize compensation of the insured over those without an insurance policy.

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

Gustavo Fonseca, GEF Secretariat, presented the LDCF/SCCF progress report (GEF/LDCF.SCCF.26/03). He outlined the LDCF and SCCF financial summaries, including funding approvals for projects, CEO endorsements, and expected results of approved or endorsed projects.



Orsalia Kalantzopoulos, CEO, Europa Re Ltd, presents on climate risk insurance efforts in southeastern Europe.



Peter Elder, Council Member, Australia

Members welcomed the report and the progress in the new joint programming approach, and expressed particular appreciation for National Adaptation Plans support.

Several Members urged greater communication and outreach efforts to garner more attention and contributions to the Funds. One urged more coordination with the GCF to avoid any duplication or overlap.

One Member requested that the next report illustrate better how gender is being integrated into LDCF and SCCF work. Another, noting the keynote speech about disaster risk insurance, urged the Funds to consider further work in this area.

Decision: The LDCF/SCCF Council, having reviewed document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.26/03, Progress Report on the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund, welcomes the report, and takes note with appreciation of the progress made under the LDCF and the SCCF.

FY2018 Annual Monitoring Review of the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund

Chizuru Aoki, GEF Secretariat, presented the Annual Monitoring Review (AMR) (GEF/LDCF.SCCF.26/04). She explained that the AMR provides a snapshot of cumulative results achieved in the portfolio since inception of the two Funds, and discusses management effectiveness and efficiency measures as they relate to the Funds. She noted that 87% of the LDCF projects under implementation for which performance ratings were received were rated “moderately satisfactory” or higher in terms of their progress towards development objectives, and 80% were rated similarly in their implementation progress. For SCCF projects examined, the ratings were 94% and 87%, respectively.

Decision: The LDCF/SCCF Council, having reviewed document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.26/04, “FY18 Annual Monitoring Review of the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund,” welcomes the review, and appreciate the progress made in reporting portfolio-level performance, results, and lessons learned under the LDCF and the SCCF. The Council welcomes the overall finding that 87% and 94% of LDCF and SCCF projects under implementation in FY2018 were rated in the moderately satisfactory and above range for their progress towards development objectives, respectively.

Joint Work Program of the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund

Gustavo Fonseca, GEF Secretariat, presented the joint Work Program of the LDCF and SCCF (GEF/LDCF.SCCF.26/05/Rev.01), noting a growing demand by developing countries for action on adaptation. On the LDCF, he said the Work Program requests USD 100.61 million for 11 projects, with each LDCF dollar matched by USD 5.56 in co-financing from multiple sources, and, that of 2,053,770 beneficiaries, 1,038,367 are female.

He reported that factors for prioritization in project approval include: alignment with national plans and processes, and priorities; opportunities to leverage support in alignment with other funding sources, and providing access to LDCs with little other access to support.

He said the SCCF Work Program includes only one project, totaling almost USD 1 million, which will contribute to integrated landscape restoration and climate-resilient food systems in eight Caribbean countries that have unique adaptation challenges. He reported that every dollar from the SCCF is matched by USD 3.41 in co-financing, and said 400 of the 1,000 expected beneficiaries are female.

He observed that the joint Work Program addresses two strategic objectives in the 2018-2022 GEF Programming Strategy: reducing vulnerability and increasing resilience for adaptation through innovation and technology transfer, and mainstreaming climate change adaptation and resilience for systemic impact. He noted that all projects meet STAP expectations on scientific and technical quality.

During discussion, LDCF/SCCF Council Members generally supported the Work Program, but calls were heard for:

- more information on how gender responsiveness requirements are met and tagging the GEF’s gender strategy for the next replenishment negotiations;
- more co-financing sources;
- more information on possibilities for LDCF/SCCF alignment with the GCA;
- recognition of traditional knowledge and practices for enhancing adaptive capacity;



Gustavo Fonseca and **Chizuru Aoki**, GEF Secretariat, respond to comments from the floor on the Annual Monitoring Review of the LDCF and SCCF.

- more involvement from more Agencies;
- granular and discrete data on project beneficiaries; and
- more outreach, particularly on the concrete example of GEF-GCF joint planning.

In response, GEF CEO and Chairperson Ishii noted ongoing two-way alignment efforts between the GEF, the LDCF, and the SCCF with the GCA Strategy. Fonseca added that GEF-GCF coordination may lead to valuable opportunities for joint outreach at UNFCCC COP 25.

Decision: The Council, having reviewed document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.26/05/Rev.01, “Joint Work Program for Least Developed Countries Fund and Special Climate Change Fund,” approves the Work Program comprising 12 projects, subject to comments made during the Council meeting and additional comments that may be submitted in writing to the Secretariat by 27 June 2019. Total resources approved in this Work Program amount to USD 101.57 million for the LDCF and SCCF, inclusive of GEF project financing and Agency fees. Of this amount, USD 100.61 million is approved from the LDCF for 11 projects, and USD 967,150 is from the SCCF for one project.

FY2020 Administrative Budget for the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund

On the FY2020 Administrative Budget for the LDCF and SCCF (GEF/LDCF.SCCF.26/06), Gustavo Fonseca, GEF Secretariat, reported that the budget requests totaled USD 1,629,030 for the LDCF and USD 744,640 for the SCCF for FY2020. In response to questions, Fonseca said that any discrepancies in reported figures would be addressed, and the budget was adopted.

Decision: The LDCF/SCCF Council, having reviewed document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.26/06, “FY20 Administrative Budget for the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund,” approves the proposed budget for the

GEF Secretariat, STAP, the Trustee and the GEF IEO as follows: USD 1,047,030 (GEF Secretariat), USD 128,000 (STAP), USD 385,000 (Trustee), and USD 69,000 (GEF IEO) from the LDCF; and USD 480,640 (GEF Secretariat), USD 128,000 (STAP), USD 112,000 (Trustee), and USD 24,000 (GEF IEO) from the SCCF.

LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report: June 2019

Juha Uitto, GEF IEO, presented this agenda item (GEF/LDCF.SCCF.26/ME/01/Rev.01), noting that the LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report incorporates the LDCF/SCCF special study on completed projects, a management action record of LDCS/SCCF Council decisions, and the IEO Work Program and multiannual evaluation budget.

Anna Vighh, IEO, introduced the special study, noting that it comprises 53 completed projects and that 81% of LDCF projects and 77% of SCCF projects have “satisfactory” outcome ratings. She also reported on projects’ performance with respect to sustainability, innovation, and gender. The GEF’s project work in fragile countries was also evaluated.

Responding to comments from Council Members, Uitto explained that a 6% increase in the IEO budget was due to an increase in the number of completed projects.

Decision: The Council, having reviewed document GEF/LDCF.SCCF.26/ME/01, “LDCF/SCCF Annual Evaluation Report: June 2019,” approves the annual budget of USD 93,000 for the IEO for FY2020 for the proposed Work Program: USD 69,000 from the LDCF and USD 24,000 from the SCCF.

Other Business

No issues were raised under this agenda item.

Closing of the LDCF/SCCF Council

GEF CEO and Chairperson Ishii closed the Council meeting at 11:30 am.



L-R: William Ehlers, GEF Secretariat; Co-Chair Carola Van Rijnsoever, the Netherlands; and Naoko Ishii, GEF CEO and Chairperson, join participants in a resounding round of applause at the conclusion of the meeting.



Jozef Buys, Council Member, Belgium, receives a token of appreciation from the GEF Secretariat for his invaluable contribution to the GEF ahead of his retirement.

Joint Summary of the Chairs

At the conclusion of the Council meetings on Thursday, 13 June, Council Members adopted the Joint Summaries of the Chairs both for the 56th meeting of the GEF Council and for the 26th meeting of the LDCF/SCCF Council.

GEF CEO and Chairperson Ishii expressed appreciation for the “very constructive, collaborative and functional” atmosphere during this “landmark” Council meeting that marks “the real start of GEF-7,” and excitement about the new Work Program.

GEF Council Co-Chair Carola van Rijnssoever thanked Ishii, the GEF Secretariat, IEO, and STAP staff for all the preparatory work.

Ishii closed the meeting at 12:02 pm.

Upcoming Meetings

50th Sessions of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies: The 50th sessions of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Bodies will meet in June 2019. **dates:** 17-27 June 2019 **location:** Bonn, Germany **contact:** UNFCCC Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-1000 **fax:** +49-228-815-1999 **email:** Secretariat@unfccc.int **www:** <https://unfccc.int/event/first-sessional-period-sb-50>

23rd Meeting of the GCF Board: This is the second meeting of the GCF Board in 2019, the year of the Fund’s first replenishment. **date:** 6-8 July 2019 **location:** Incheon, Republic of Korea **contact:** GCF Secretariat **phone:** +82-32-458-6059 **email:** info@gcfund.org **www:** <https://www.greenclimate.fund/boardroom/board-meetings/documents>

HLPF 2019: The UN High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development (HLPF) will address the theme, “Empowering People and Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality.” It will conduct an in-depth review of SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 13 (climate action), and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), in addition to SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals), which is reviewed each year. Among other items, the Forum will consider the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR), which is issued every four years.

dates: 9-18 July 2019 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York, US **contact:** UN Division for SDGs **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/contact/> **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2019>

IPCC-50: The 50th session of the IPCC is expected to approve the Special Report on Climate Change and Land (SRCCL), and adopt a Summary for Policy Makers (SPM). **dates:** 2-6 August 2019 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **phone:** +41-22-730-8208/54/84 **fax:** +41-22-730-8025/13 **email:** IPCC-Sec@wmo.int **www:** <http://www.ipcc.ch/calendar>

First meeting of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework: CBD COP 14 adopted the preparatory process for the development of the post-2020 biodiversity framework (decision 14/34), and established an open-ended intersessional working group to support the preparation of the post-2020 biodiversity framework. The working group’s first meeting will convene in August.

dates: 27-30 August 2019 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/conferences/post2020/wg2020-01/>

IPCC-51: The 51st session of the IPCC is expected to approve the Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (SROCC), and adopt an SPM. **dates:** 20-23 September 2019 **location:** Principality of Monaco **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/>

UN Secretary-General’s Climate Action Summit: UN Secretary-General António Guterres is calling on all leaders to come to New York with concrete, realistic plans to enhance their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) by 2020 to reduce GHG emissions by 45% over the next decade, and achieve net zero emissions by 2050. **date:** 23 September 2019 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** <http://www.un.org/climatechange/>

SDG Summit: The UN General Assembly (UNGA) will hold a meeting of the HLPF at the level of Heads of State and Government to consider, among other items, the GSDR issued every four years. **dates:** 24-25 September 2019 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for SDGs **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/contact/> **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/summit2019>

15th Meeting of the Stockholm Convention Persistent Organic Pollutants Review Committee (POPRC-15): POPRC-15 will review the possible listing of hazardous chemicals under the various annexes of the Stockholm Convention. **dates:** 1-4 October 2019 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** BRS Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8729 **fax:** +41-22-917-8098 **email:** brs@brsmeas.org **www:** <http://www.pops.int>

Third Meeting of the Intersessional Process (IP3) for Considering the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and the Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste Beyond 2020: IP3 is

expected to continue the discussions on a possible post-2020 platform for chemicals and waste. **dates:** 30 September – 3 October 2020 **location:** Bangkok, Thailand **contact:** SAICM Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8273 **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** saicm.chemicals@unep.org **www:** <http://www.saicm.org>

15th Meeting of the Rotterdam Convention Chemical Review Committee (CRC-15): CRC-15 will address perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), its salts and related compounds, and other notifications submitted during the intersessional period. **dates:** 8-10 October 2019 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** BRS Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8729 **fax:** +41-22-917-8098 **email:** brs@unep.org **www:** <http://www.pic.int>

UNCCD COP 14: The 14th meeting of the COP to the UNCCD will examine new scientific data, including Earth observation data on trends in land degradation dating from 2000 gathered from 120 of the 169 countries affected by desertification. Delegates will also receive the first report on desertification and climate change prepared by the IPCC. **dates:** 7-18 October 2019 **location:** New Delhi, India **contact:** UNCCD Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-2800 **fax:** +49-228-815-2898/99 **email:** secretariat@unccd.int **www:** <https://www.unccd.int/>

Montreal Protocol MOP 31: The 31st Meeting of the Parties (MOP) to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer will address, *inter alia*, implementation of the Kigali Amendment, linkages between hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) in transitioning to low global warming potential alternatives, issues related to energy efficiency while phasing down HFCs, and critical and essential use exemptions. **dates:** 4-8 November 2019 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** Ozone Secretariat **phone:** +254-20-762-3851 **fax:** +254-20-762-0335 **email:** ozoneinfo@unep.org **www:** <http://ozone.unep.org/meetings>

Third Meeting of the COP to the Minamata Convention on Mercury: COP 3 is expected to discuss, *inter alia*, waste thresholds, releases, interim storage, contaminated sites, open burning of waste, review of Annexes A and B, and harmonized customs codes. **dates:** 25-29 November 2019 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** Secretariat of the Minamata Convention **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** MEA-MinamataSecretariat@un.org **www:** <http://www.mercuryconvention.org>

SBSTTA 23: The twenty-third meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) will review possible elements for the post-2020 biodiversity framework, the draft of the fifth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, as well as other relevant information and sources of knowledge. **dates:** 25-29 November 2019 **location:** Montreal, Canada **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1-514-288-2220 **fax:** +1-514-288-6588 **email:** secretariat@cbd.int **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/meetings>

2019 UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 25): COP 25, the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP), and the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA) will convene to review implementation of the Paris

Agreement and the Convention. **dates:** 2-13 December 2019 **location:** Santiago, Chile **contact:** UNFCCC Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-1000 **fax:** +49-228-815-1999 **email:** Secretariat@unfccc.int **www:** <https://unfccc.int>

57th Meeting of the GEF Council: The Council meets twice annually to develop, adopt and evaluate the operational policies and programs for GEF-financed activities. It also reviews and approves the Work Program (projects submitted for approval), making decisions by consensus. **dates:** 9-12 December 2019 **location:** Washington D.C., US **contact:** GEF Secretariat **phone:** +1-202-473-0508 **fax:** +1-202-522-3240 **email:** Secretariat@thegef.org **www:** <https://www.thegef.org/council-meetings>

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

Glossary

AML-CFT	anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism
ASGM	artisanal and small-scale gold mining
BRS	Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBIT	Capacity Building Initiative for Transparency
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSO	civil society organization
FY	Fiscal Year
FOLUR	food systems, land use, and restoration
GCA	Global Commission on Adaptation
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEF-7	seventh replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund
GHG	greenhouse gas
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IEO	GEF Independent Evaluation Office
IP	Impact Program
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LDCs	least developed countries
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
MEA	multilateral environmental agreement
NGI	non-grant instrument
OFP	Operational Focal Point
POPs	persistent organic pollutants
SCCF	Special Climate Change Fund
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	small island developing States
STAP	Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel
UNCCD	UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change