



GEF CSO Network Statement

Agenda Item 12

Progress Report of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office

47th GEF Council Meeting, Washington DC, USA

The GEF CSO Network welcomes the new head of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office. We look forward to work more actively with the IEO through GEF 6 to enhance the assessment of the engagement of CSOs and other stakeholders in the work of the GEF. We are happy to hear the commitment of the director in consulting with the Network in identifying priorities for assessment.

In GEF 5 we have worked with the evaluation office as part of our initial assessment of the GEF Public Involvement Policy. We hope that all council members have seen a copy of our report on the Review of the Public Involvement Policy which was supported by the GEF NGO Voluntary Fund and which has been made available in this meeting. Preparation of the report involved meetings with more than 400 representatives from GEF and convention Focal points from 130 countries as well as more than 250 CSOs.

In our assessment we have identified that major barriers still remain for the effective implementation of the GEF Public Involvement Policy. These include lack of clarity of several elements of the policy; lack of clear guidance to agencies and recipients on how to fully implement the PIP; poor understanding and capacity to fully implement the policy at the country level as well as insufficient mechanisms to monitor, report and evaluate the engagement of Civil society and other stakeholders in the operations of the GEF.

We are very happy to note the positive work by the GEF Secretariat in recent months to develop initial guidelines and an action plan to support the implementation of the Public Involvement Policy as detailed in the information paper to the Council GEF/C47/Inf.06.

This action plan provides a framework for advancing the implementation of the policy in a systematic manner and specifies clear responsibilities and timeframes. This should enable a more systematic implementation of the policy. While these are positive steps we feel that some additional changes are needed to fully enhance the partnership between Civil society and GEF in line with the GEF 2020 Strategy and other key policy targets of GEF.

We were also extremely happy that at the dialogue with the GEF CEO on 27th October, she informed us that the GEFSEC will work actively with the Network to advance these issues as well as establish a Committee or Working Group to look at the option of updating the public involvement policy which we understand will

include representatives of the GEF Secretariat, GEF Agencies, GEF CSO Network and GEF donor and recipient countries. We understand that this group will be tasked with supporting the implementation of the policy and guidance and also reviewing further the recommendations from the GEF CSO Network and Independent Evaluation Office on updating the policy.

We note that in the guidelines it is recommended that the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the policy be enhanced with a formal review once every four years as part of the OPS5 and that other measures are taken to enhance the gathering and analysis of information on an annual and project basis. These are important measures to help the IEO to undertake its work.

In addition we would like to request the assistance of the IEO to assess in greater detail the barriers to effective engagement of Civil society and other stakeholders in participating in GEF operations and contributing to GEF targets. We hope that this could include various strategic assessments at regional or country level in selected regions to identify potential options to significantly enhance the level of engagement of civil society. This is in line with the call by the four Executive Secretaries of the GEF-related conventions to better mobilise the efforts of CS and the public to achieve the convention goals.

Finally we are very happy to hear the intervention from Paraguay (supported by Ecuador, Finland, Mexico, Denmark, Dominica and Russia) to propose an assessment be undertaken on the importance of and barriers to the engagement of Civil society in the work of the GEF as well as exploring options to enhance further the capacity and resources of the GEF CSO Network so as to enhance its ability to work to build a partnership between CSOs and the GEF.

This is timely as those who attended the GEF Council- CSO Consultation two days ago will know – the Network is in the process of revising its strategic plan to guide the work of the network over the next 8 years (GEF6-7) and we have asked for input from all GEF-related stakeholders to this process. The Network primarily operates entirely on a voluntary basis with a contribution of about \$50,000/year from the GEF secretariat in the past for our work at global and regional levels. Although we have large voluntary contributions – there are some limitations on what we can achieve.

We would be very happy to discuss further the option and possible further scope for an assessment of the best way to enhance the engagement of CSO in the work of the GEF. We hope that in addition to looking at the Network and its work - the scope of the work should include an assessment of the barriers to CSO engagement and the work of the Network in recipient countries and regions