

Cancun Declaration of the Civil Society to the 5th Global Environment Facility (GEF) Assembly 28-29 May 2014

The Civil Society Forum was held as part of the Fifth GEF Assembly on May 27, 2014 in Cancun, Mexico, in the Yucatan Peninsula, one of the emblematic territories of the Mayan culture. It was jointly organized by the GEF CSO Network, the GEF Secretariat, the GEF Small Grants Program, and the Government of Mexico, bringing together over 200 representatives of civil society organizations and indigenous peoples groups from more than 80 countries around the world.

The Forum expressed its gratitude to the Government of Mexico and to its people for their hospitality. The Forum welcomed the valuable contributions and voices from CSOs from Latin America and from other regions of the world.

The Forum showcased under the overall objective *Partnerships for the Future* best practices and new approaches for CSO involvement in GEF processes and focal areas. Twenty six presentations were made on key issues and discussions were held on four targeted areas to strengthen the relationship with the GEF.

The participants made the following recommendations:

1. GEF must support measures to transform the current unsustainable development approaches by addressing the drivers of environment degradation, stabilize climate, eliminate perverse incentives and shift from exploitation to re-use and recycling of resources.
2. Partnerships between GEF and Civil Society Organizations need to be strengthened and consolidated as an essential means to achieve the 5th GEF Assembly mandate including the 2020 Strategy
3. More meaningful involvement of CSOs is required through participation in national GEF committees to enable civil society contributions and experiences in the programming, implementation and evaluation of the national portfolio as well as in project steering committees and in the entire GEF operations including programmes, full size projects (FSP) and medium size projects (MSP) through to the Small Grants Program (SGP).
4. GEF must urgently complete the update of the GEF Public Involvement Policy and develop guidelines targeted to both recipient countries and GEF Agencies to ensure full and effective CSO participation

5. GEF must ensure the full and effective implementation, monitoring (including setting of indicators and targets) and evaluation of policies related to civil society including the GEF's Public Involvement Policy, Gender Mainstreaming Policy, and Indigenous Peoples' Guidelines and Principles
6. GEF should ensure compliance with its transparency and accountability standards at both agency and recipient country levels.
7. GEF should strengthen capacity of CSOs in recipient countries to engage effectively and efficiently in GEF processes and projects according to specific needs and national capacities..
8. GEF and CSOs should work together to promote CSO-government, policy and planning dialogue platforms to build more trust and collaborative approaches to address environmental issues.
9. GEF and CSOs should advance a collaborative knowledge network which includes publications, electronic media, training, and outreach activities to enable sharing of CSO expertise to support up-scaling and replication.
10. GEF is urged to fully commit to the implementation of the Indigenous Peoples' Principles and Guidelines by establishing an outreach and capacity building programme, enhancing operations of the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group (IPAG) and establishment of a dedicated financial mechanism for indigenous peoples.
11. GEF should ensure that both CSO including women's organisations are involved in the preparation of the Plan of Action for enhancing gender mainstreaming in GEF projects to be presented to the Council at its November 2014 meeting.
12. GEF should catalyze opportunities for the participation of youth in GEF programs.

In conclusion, the CSOs reiterate our commitment in partnership with the GEF and recipient countries to advance these recommendations.

The report and full recommendations of the CSO Forum are currently being finalized and will be made available to the GEF Assembly participants.

Thank you very much for your attention.