

Compilation of NGO Interventions

GEF Council Meetings

June, 2005

▪ **NGO statement on the Resource Allocation Framework**
Joint NGO statement

The NGO community supports the concept of making the GEF more effective. However, in becoming more effective and efficient we must not become, as the old saying goes, “Penny Wise and Pound Foolish”.

The Rio Conventions were greeted by the world as an opportunity to bring solutions for problems we all shared. The NGOs, as an integral part of the GEF community, recognize the need for the GEF to become more responsive to the challenges.

But in so doing, let us not trade wisdom for accountancy – and let us not forget that there is a difference between accountability and accountancy. We agree that there are possibilities for improved performance, transparency and effectiveness. But let us focus on the principles we believe need to govern this.

- First, let us keep our eye on the goal of the GEF and the related conventions, and *maintain unity of vision and purpose.*
- Next, remember GEF is a facility for which the fundamental principles include *Global Benefits and a Differentiated Approach.*
- Let us not forget that, unfortunately, *environmental benefits and opportunities do not always correlate perfectly with the quality of governance or macro-economics.* Equally, good governance and economic policy do not always equate with good environmental delivery.
- And, *we should not refine the mechanism to such a degree that it becomes exclusive rather than inclusive.*

We are committed to working with you. *But let us not walk out of this meeting saying “The operation was a success, but the patient died”. And that the patient that died was multilateralism.*

Because, as we all know, one of the roles of NGOs is to draw the world’s attention to failures such as that.

▪ **Program of support to Council members/Focal Points**
By Rajen Awotar

Thank you Madam Chairperson,

First of all we should wish to congratulate the Secretariat for the excellent paper which we fully support.

At para 10 it is mentioned that "the program is having a positive but limited effect on the Capacity of Council members". Could we know the nature of "this limited effect"

At para 11 it is mentioned that the program "contributed to improved communication, increased awareness and better coordination with program Stakeholders" - and "increased the number of Stakeholder meetings and helped National Stakeholder coordination".

We believe reference here is on activities involving government officials and not other Stakeholders e.g Civil Society, NGO's etc.

Para 13 makes mention of "more interaction with government and Private Stakeholders by supporting meetings and workshops"

Here also we believe reference made is about government offices and not Civil Society/NGO'S

Para 17- reference here is made about " mainstreaming Capacity building and the integration of the GEF strategic approach to Capacity building and to NCSA'S, CDI'S etc.

We welcome this proposal, however we request that the GEF NGO'S, RFP'S be fully consulted and effectively involved in this process.

Para 20 - we welcome the decision to "review the current engagement of NGO'S with a view to creating a more effective engagement of NGO'S in GEF projects". However we request the Secretariat to fully consult the GEF NGO Network, RFP'S in the preparation of the report and to translate into reality the recommendations. We also request that the GEF NGO network, RFP'S be fully consulted and involved in all Country, Regional and Global GEF programs and activities.

Para 21 - Make mentions about "Sustaining and initiating dialogue with a broad group of GEF stakeholders"- "the GEF National dialogues etc".

This is a most welcome proposal provided national NGO'S, the GEF NGO network and RFP'S are fully consulted and involved in the " dialogues" and in the implementation of follow up activities.

We also welcome the proposal for a bi-annual status report. We request that this report as well as the annual report be circulated to the GEF NGO network, country NGO'S and the RFP'S "Ref 23 (b)"

We request that the GEF NGO'S, RFP'S be facilitated by the Secretariat to attend the constituency meetings held prior/after each council meeting.

Conclusion:

- We request that a similar support program be put in place for the GEF NGO network RFP'S to enable them effectively perform their responsibilities and of raising awareness about GEF country, Regional and Global programs/projects
- Finally we welcome the choice of UNEP to act as Coordinator/Facilitator of this program

Thank you Madam Chairperson.

▪ **Proposed Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations Conventions to Combat Desertification on those Countries experiencing serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa and the GEF**
By Khadija Razavi

With many thanks, distinguish Council Members, GEF Secretariat, Implementing Agencies, and NGOs, ladies and gentlemen.

Our comment:

We noticed that the Council in this Memorandum of Understanding changed the criteria that followed in other Conventions, in the other Convention the MOU was signed between Council and Conventions? We wish to understand why the MOU of CCD should be different from the others? For example the POPs Convention, without asking coherence! We wonder why the Conference of Parties of the Convention of Combating Desertification and Deforestation can not give guidance. If the Council is looking for Coherence they should be fair. If the Council has agreed to give \$500 million to the Sustainable Land Management for OP#15 why do they take out half of that amount for crosscutting issues? In the light of this context the allocation for OP#15 is not meeting expectations. We believe the Council must follow the same criteria observed for other Conventions. But this is not the case. Supportive activities must correspond to our NAPs and this needs to be documented by the GEF.

In article 21 of the Convention the role of Global Mechanism is to mobilize fund and not to collect fund. The GM should activate itself and CCD! We suggest that the approach of Incremental Cost be redefined in the Convention to Combat Desertification, because the baseline is difficult to be funded in developing countries. It should be applied with maximum flexibility. And finally in the context of strengthening the GEF focal points we welcome this step especially if this means more systematic involvement of the UNCCD focal point in GEF family activities and expended linkages with NGOs involved in Sustainable Land Management.

Thank you.

▪ **Scope and Coherence of the Land Degradation Activities in the GEF**
By Khadija Razavi

With many thanks, distinguish GEF Council member, GEF Secretariat, Implementing Agencies, NGOs, ladies and gentlemen.

The expression “Coherence” has got several synonyms: consistency, unity, rationality, logic, lucidity, reason. Each of the word has got as well several synonyms. Agreement, unison, concord, unanimity, judgment, common sense, harmony.

The document Scope and Coherence of the Land Degradation Activities is a responds to the Council’s decision at its May 2004 meeting requesting the “GEF Secretariat in collaboration with the Implementing Agencies to prepare an analysis of the scope, implementation focus and coherence of land degradation activities”. Council requested this clarification following a progress report on the implementation of the GEF activities in the land degradation area (covering a period of eighteen months), the discussion of projects in the focal area that were being considered by the Council.

Our comment:

Has the Council requested the GEF Secretariat in collaboration with Implementing Agencies to prepare an analysis of the Scope, implementation focus coherence of “Biodiversity”, “Climate Change”, “International Waters” and finally the very important “Persistent Organic Pollutants”? We are completely in agreement with this highlighting of the “Coherence” but with one condition that the very same strictness of Coherence should be applied and valid for other Convention with the same weight. The subject of *Scope and Coherence of the Land Degradation Activities in the GEF* should be considered one of the most important issues of the GEF as well of the World wide, means for developed and developing countries.

Distinguish GEF Council members would you kindly explain us? Why this severity for application of the OP#15? Why in other Conventions you have not break up the budget, half for Convention and half for crosscutting issues? Why, because Sustainable Land Management deals with poverty and there is not much obvious benefit out of it! If there is other solid answers please let us know. The eligibility should be considered with the same criteria than other Conventions, similar to “POPs”. It seems that there is a kind of apprehension in the Council members specially the developed Countries to allow the third world countries to have control. But actually projects lying on “Sustainable Land Management”, if correctly designed with a participatory approach involving local government and local communities in the process of decision making, implementation and M&E; walkway will be easier for all other conventions. If the platform is strong for the Convention of Combating Desertification the steps for other Conventions will be trouble-free. For the same reason, poverty alleviation, sustainable livelihood, enhancement of the ecosystems, income generation, sand dune fixation, combating desertification and drought and realization of Millennium Goals will be easier for everybody.

Comments to Background (Ch 2 and 3):

We wish to come across some root causes of land degradations in our developing countries. As the very important expression circulating everywhere is *transparency*, *good governance* and the *involvement of all stakeholders in the process of sustainable development* it is a good opportunity to have a kind of expedite evaluation for land degradation. I allow my self with your permission to ask the related question, is there any top secret reason why not the same work out has been done with other Conventions like for example POPs or Biodiversity? You don't think is a bit early to talk about Coherence? Why this brutal land degradation in Africa, Asia Latin America and as well in some developed countries? Is it not the time to raise the issue of root causes of land degradation? Is it not because the:

- Destruction of socio-cultural structure of local communities.
- Abolition by States themselves of the management systems of natural resources based on common property and not monoculture with adequate technologies based on thousand of years of experiences.

Let us all stakeholders rethink for a common solution, government, decision makers, private sector, civil society and community based organizations.

Our comment (Ch 43, 44, 45):

We suggest to redefining the position of “Civil Society” as partner in the GEF Council meeting and not only as observer. This is for having a balanced decision making process in order at the end to have a balanced implementation and monitoring and evaluation in the procedure of GEF projects. Their comments and suggestions in this way may possibly be included in the process of GEF-Council meeting. Their presence as a representative of the Civil Society without a solid institutional status could not help to have incentives for reaching more capacity building in the implementation of projects on the ground.

Our comment (Ch 55):

Has the GEF Council had the same severity with other Conventions like for example Persistent Organic Pollutants?

Our comment (Ch 56)

Further welcomes the decision of the GEF Council in May 2003 in Washington D.C., establishing a new operational program on sustainable land management. We are now in June 2005, and still discussing coherence and capacity building and so on so forth!

Our comment (Ch 62, 63, 64):

What does integrated approach mean? Means only that local community planted trees! The question is” are local people really being integrated into planning and management of land use”, or are community effort just “attached” on the side?

In which country land use planning and community driven development has been done, we are eager to visit and take positive lessons from them. Could be developing or developed one.

Our comment (Ch70 a):

Our question is, is the same inventory has been ask from other Conventions example POPs and Climate Change?

The other issue is as this Status of Land degradation as a Cross cutting issues and some other papers in the same trend are already done, why delaying the implementation and financing of this Convention.

Is it not the Cousin Pauvre of the Convention? This is our question as well?

Thank you in advance.

Our comment (Ch 79):

The solution could be Community Conserved Areas, natural ecosystems containing significant biodiversity values, ecological services and cultural values, voluntarily conserved by indigenous, mobile and local communities through customary laws and other effective means. Community Conserved Areas are an important complement to official Protected Area systems. They offer crucial lessons for participatory governance of official Protected Areas useful to resolve conflicts between Protected Areas and local people. They are part of indigenous and local community resistance to destructive “development”, example rain forests threatened by mining, dams, and logging industries, ecologically sensitive high-altitude ecosystems threatened by tourism, overexploitation of marine resource by industrial fishing.

Our comment (Ch 83):

Why there are limited available resources for OP#15 and enough available resources for Biodiversity, Climate Change and POP’s. Council has inquired that M&E has to be an independent unit; and ought to be transparent and pragmatic in the assessment of the GEF achievement. We tried to follow the same approach. The issue of “finance mobilization” is the most important condition for combating desertification and poverty alleviation. Looking forward for forceful enhancement of the priorities of the Convention for Combating Desertification and capacity and Coherence of the Land Degradation Activities in the GEF. In the context of strengthening the GEF focal points we welcome this step especially if this means more systematic involvement of the UNCCD focal point in GEF family activities and expended linkages with Community Based Organization, Civil society and NGOs.

And finally NGOs from non-African countries look forwards being associated to the next UNCCD reporting cycle for COP8 and expect continuation of GEF support to this process.

With many thanks