

Ministerial Consultation of the Global Environment Facility

16- 19 February 2010, Cotonou, Republic of Benin

Ministerial Declaration

1. Considering mutual commitments we made during our August 25-26, 2008 meeting in Cotonou during which we adopted for submission to the GEF our West Africa Programmatic Approach with a biodiversity and an energy component;
2. Noting with appreciation the GEF Council's approval of these two GEF4 programmes ;
3. Recognizing progress made in the development of projects under this GEF programmatic approach on energy and biodiversity;
4. Acknowledging the increased access to GEF resources by our countries as a result of the adopted programmatic approaches;
5. Recognizing the dedication of Madam Monique Barbut to the GEF, her leadership, her support to our countries, especially by steadfastly spearheading the development of these programmatic approaches;
6. Acknowledging the significant role played by UNIDO in its capacity as chair of UN-Energy, and the World Bank in facilitating their development with our governments, and also appreciating the commendable efforts by other GEF Agencies (UNDP, UNEP, FAO, AfDB, IFAD) in project development and support from other partners;
7. Mindful that the fifth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund is taking place in the time of great need for resources by recipient countries, hence the importance of a robust replenishment;
8. Aware of the current international climate on financing for the environment, in particular deliberations during UNFCCC COP-15 in Copenhagen;
9. Noting with satisfaction the opportune nature of the reforms under consideration which will further strengthen GEF's catalytic role in our region;
10. In further consideration that these reforms will enhance country ownership, efficiency, and flexibility, including strengthening programmatic approaches and opening up opportunities for upstream programming through Portfolio Identification Exercises;
11. In consideration of the decision by the GEF Council to replace the Resource Allocation Framework with the System of Transparent Allocation Resources (STAR) for GEF-5 and to include three focal areas - *climate change*, *biodiversity*, and *land degradation* in the STAR;
12. Appreciating the resulting increased access to GEF resources by all countries in our region and flexibility in programming for countries with smaller total allocations across the three focal areas;
13. Mindful of the need to take stock of progress made in the implementation of our GEF-4 programmatic approach, and to analyze the fifth replenishment process and associated reforms with their potentials impact on our policies;

14. We the ministers responsible for environment and energy meeting in Cotonou, February 18-19, 2010 agree as follows;
15. Concerning the programmatic approach:
 - a. Once again embrace the programmatic approach for leveraging more GEF investments in GEF-5 in our countries and at the regional level
 - b. Further express the commitment of our countries to pursue programmatic approaches. The following indicative areas have been mentioned to form programmatic approaches. They will be further refined after countries have completed their portfolio identification exercises.
 - i. Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
 - ii. Biodiversity Conservation and Natural Resources Management
 - iii. Ecosystem-based adaptation
 - iv. Integrated Chemicals Management
16. For the future of the GEF and its replenishment:
 - a. Request the GEF to increase its support for adaptation activities in the region and predictability in LDC funding
 - b. Express the commitment of our countries to increase focus on land degradation and desertification, and call upon the international community to increase financing for the GEF in this focal area
 - c. Further commit to addressing the sustainable management of the Lake Chad and the Fouta Jallon Highlands
 - d. Reaffirm our firm support for the GEF as a key component of the financial mechanism of all global environment conventions
 - e. Reiterate our confidence in the GEF and our desire to see it strengthened and well replenished
 - f. Further request that the role of the GEF Focal Points be broadened and strengthened, particularly in the monitoring and evaluation of GEF projects. In addition, GEF Agencies should better communicate with our countries in leveraging co-financing
 - g. Commit to engage with subregional entities, regional initiatives, and other partners including civil society organizations and the private sector
 - h. Recognize the need to engage more other ministries to integrate environmental challenges in their sectoral policies and approaches and to develop projects with the GEF and its agencies under the coordination of the ministry in charge of environment and the GEF focal point.
17. We welcome and commend the major reforms proposed for GEF-5, including streamlining of the project cycle, expanding the partnership and specifically the introduction of the Portfolio Identification Exercises which would help our countries strategically plan how to use their GEF financing;
18. We request GEF support for Portfolio Identification Exercises in early GEF-5 and express the commitment of our countries to identify their portfolio for GEF-5 financing as early as possible and to strengthen the GEF National Steering Committees;
19. We extend our sincere gratitude to GEF donors for their continued support;
20. Finally, we express our sincere gratitude to the Government of Benin for hosting and organizing the meeting, and for the warm African hospitality showered upon us while in Cotonou, the Republic of Benin.

Cotonou, February 19, 2010

Annex I: Report and Recommendations of the Experts

Background

During the fourth replenishment period, the GEF secretariat introduced a programmatic approach in West Africa and Chad. This programme was launched at a ministerial level meeting of the countries of the region in Cotonou, Benin, August 2008. Participants at the Cotonou meeting agreed to take stock of the status of preparation and implementation of the programme.

Organization of the meeting

The Government of Benin has offered to host a follow-up ministerial level meeting on February 18-19, 2010. An expert level meeting on February 16-17, 2010 preceded the ministerial segment. This meeting was chaired by Benin and GEF secretariat. The agenda was focused on two major issues: take stock of the status of the programme and discussion on opportunities under GEF-5.

Recommendations

Experts:

1. Received a presentation of the progress of the West Africa program under GEF-4. Fourteen months after the approval of the program, most of the projects have been approved.
2. Express a general satisfaction with the programmatic approach and the involvement of GEF secretariat and GEF Agencies. The program addressed the severe under-utilization of GEF resources in the region, allowed all West African countries and Chad to access GEF funding and provided more funding to these countries.
3. Recommend that programmatic approaches be pursued in the region under GEF-5.
4. Recommend to further strengthen country ownership of programmes. Countries should link GEF projects to their sector strategies and policies, especially to their Poverty Reduction Strategies. This integration would facilitate identification of cofinancing.
5. Recommend that national GEF committees be created to facilitate cross-ministerial governance, coordination with the focal points of international environment conventions and with other appropriate actors.
6. Recommend that the role of the GEF focal point be broadened and strengthened, particularly in the monitoring and evaluation of the projects.
7. Recommend that GEF agencies better communicate with countries and further leverage cofinancing.
8. Recommend that capacities of countries in project development be enhanced.
9. Recommend promoting private-public partnerships, sub-regional organizations and regional initiatives, especially ECOWAS and NEPAD, in close collaboration with relevant regional entities. This would facilitate the leveraging of cofinancing.
10. Recommend strengthening the GEF Small Grants Program and providing adequate resources to monitor and evaluate the program to build on its achievements.

11. Recommend supporting reforms proposed under GEF-5, especially those on direct access, on country ownership, on the GEF secretariat role on communication, and streamlining of the project cycle.
12. Recommend that resources dedicated to desertification and land degradation be increased in accordance to the commitment of our countries to focus on this area.
13. Recommend that countries identify their portfolio for GEF-5 financing as early as possible within their GEF National Committees, and receive GEF financial support to do so.
14. Recommend that these portfolio identification exercises take into account [align with] the following priority areas: renewable energy and energy efficiency, biodiversity conservation and natural resources management, ecosystem-based adaptation, integrated chemical management.
15. Report on technical discussions during the meeting of the experts. In particular, these discussion led to the identification of the following main issues:

In the area of renewable energy and energy efficiency:

- Development of renewable energy to improve energy access
- Energy efficiency in buildings, urban transports and industry
- Transfer of appropriate and relevant technologies
- Capacity building, including capacity to better access to carbon markets

In the area of biodiversity conservation and natural resources management:

- Effective management and sustainable financing of protected area, involvement of local communities and actors
- Mainstreaming biodiversity in sectors and territorial planning
- Biosafety
- Sustainable management of invasive species
- Conservation of endemic and migratory species
- Sustainable land management to improve food security, generation of sustainable flows of forest ecosystem services and adaptation to climate change
- Sustainable forest management, conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks, particularly through a better use of biomass and development of alternative livelihoods for local communities
- Integrated management of wider landscape
- Wetlands management
- Management of trans-boundary water systems, particularly Volta, Niger, Lake Chad, Senegal, Gambia, Mano, Fouta Djallon, St John's River, Ouémé and lake Nokoué
- Management of transboundary ground water of regional importance
- Management of large marine ecosystems
- Capacity building

In the area of ecosystem-based adaptation:

- Fire management
- Support to actions related to the “Great Green Wall”
- Management and restoration of mangroves
- Management of coastal areas, prevention of coastal erosion and salinization of aquifers
- Prevention of adverse impacts of climate change on human, animal and vegetal health
- Capacity building, especially development of early warning systems

In the area of integrated chemical management:

- Reduction of POPs use, production and releases
- Implementation of National Plan of Implementation on chemicals
- Disposal of obsolete chemicals,, through gaps filling in existing projects
- Definition of national regulations and harmonization of regulations in the sub-region
- Development of synergies in management of chemicals and ODS
- Human and institutional capacity building (training, information, early warning systems)

16. With regards to these main issues, priority areas have been identifies:

- Suitable areas for the development of renewable energy
- Urban areas
- Industrial areas
- Forest
- Savannas
- Sahel
- Coastal areas and large marine ecosystems
- Islands
- Sub-région for some issues (biosafety, ground water, regulations on chemicals)