

**HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COUNCIL'S DISCUSSIONS****64th GEF COUNCIL MEETING****June 26 – 29, 2023, Brasilia, Brazil**

The following is a brief record prepared by the GEF Secretariat of comments, understandings, and clarifications made by Council Members. These points are supplemental to the Joint Summary of the Chair, which records the decisions agreed by the Council. The full video of the Council Meeting can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/GEFSecretariat>

***Agenda Item 1            Opening of the Meeting***

1. The CEO and Chairperson of the GEF, Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, and Mr. Tom Bui of Canada, Elected Chairperson, opened the 64<sup>th</sup> GEF Council meeting.
2. The following Brazilian authorities participated in the opening: Ms. Marina Silva, Minister of Environment; Ms. Sonia Guajajara, Minister of Indigenous Peoples; Fernanda Machiavelli, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Family Farming; Ambassador Andre Correa do Lago, Vice Minister of Climate, Energy and Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs; Ms. Tatiana Rosito, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance; Ms. Marcia Barbosa, Vice Minister of Strategic Policies and programs, Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation.
3. In addition, the Executive Secretary of CBD, Mr David Cooper addressed the Council.

***Agenda Item 2            Adoption of the Agenda***

1. One Council Member requested that under other business there should be a discussion of a policy on disputed areas.
2. Another Council Member requested that items placed as information documents be discussed as agenda items: risk appetite; gap analysis; streamlining.
3. The Agenda was adopted.

**Agenda Item 3*****GEF Business Plan and Corporate Budget for FY24***

4. The Secretariat introduced the document GEF Business Plan and Corporate budget for FY2024 that combines the expected expenses for GEF Secretariat, STAP and the Trustee reflecting the full delivery of the program and policy agenda of GEF-8. The budget also reflects the CEO's broader vision for the future work that includes greater GEF capacity and restructuring. The CEO also mentioned the difference of views with the World Bank on cost recovery.
5. Council members presented a number of comments and questions that were answered by the Secretariat. On the issue of relations with the World Bank, some Council members stated that the GEF should pay only for services received. Another concern was how to deal with a potential negative reply from the World Bank. Proposals in the budget and restructuring were positively received by the Council, in particular the idea to have a mix of in person and virtual meetings with special attention to the time zone differences.
6. Proposals were made to strengthen the decision drafting to make the view of the Council clear to the World Bank. The amended draft decision was adopted.

**Agenda Item 04.*****Work Program for GEF Trust Fund***

7. The Secretariat presented the Work Program, the largest in the history of the GEF, requesting a total of \$1.281 billion from the GEF trust fund and \$115.9 million in associated Agency fees for a total Work Program of \$1.397 billion. It contains an indicative \$9.138 billion in co-financing, which is also a record co-financing amount for any single Work Program, meaning that each dollar provided by the GEF is matched by \$7.5 in co-financing provided by other sources.
8. The Council appreciated the largest WP ever. It also appreciated that priority had been given to SIDS and LDCs. Some comments were made concerning the distribution of the funds to different regions and agencies. Concerns were also raised on Agency and focal area distribution where GEF-8 aspirations were not yet met, especially Chemicals and Waste. A mid-term review was suggested while another asked how such a review would be structured.
9. The selection of the agencies for the Clean and Healthy Oceans IP was supported.
10. The CEO provided an explanation of how the SGP would work.

**Agenda Item 05.*****Establishment of a new trust fund: Global Biodiversity Framework Fund***

11. The Secretariat introduced the characteristics of the establishment Global Biodiversity Framework Fund Country by mentioning the relevant aspects of the decision taken at the Montreal CBD COP. Emphasis was placed on the timing required of the GEF by the COP 15. The Secretariat explained organization, structure, governance, financing and how to establish the GBFF. The Secretariat also recalled the consultations held in preparation for the meeting.

12. Council members expressed a wide range of comments and questions that allowed the Secretariat to further explain the contents of the Council document. Council members made various proposals that led to three days of negotiations on the basis that items 5 and 6 were to be agreed as a package. These negotiations achieved success. A decision was adopted.

***Agenda Item 06.           Programming Directions for the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund***

13. The Secretariat introduced the GBFF Programming Directions Document stressing that three objectives were to be achieved: advance the Kunming-Montreal global BD framework adopted at CoP 15; in complimentary fashion to other trust funds especially the GEF-8 BD focal area and integrated programs while programs and upscaling financing for BD; and streamline access to the resources.
14. Council members made many comments and suggestions; and asked for clarifications. The Secretariat responded following which the Council was suspended while Constituencies discussed these exchanges internally. The objective was to achieve an agreement on this and the previous item agenda as a package. The negotiations were successful, and a decision was adopted.

***Agenda Item 07.           Global Environment Facility Strategy for Knowledge Management and Learning***

15. The issue was postponed to the 65<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting.

***Agenda Item 08.           Enhancing Policy Coherence through GEF Operations***

16. The issue was postponed to the 65<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

***Agenda Item 09.           Annual Performance Report 2023 - Special Themes: Behavioral Change***

17. The GEF IEO presented the Annual Performance Report 2023, and specially its analysis of how projects were delivering and measuring behavioral change. The Secretariat added its own perspective on the resilience of the system. The Council welcomed the report and offered a range of comments.

***Agenda Item 10.           Evaluation of The GEF's Approach and Interventions in Water Security and Management Response***

***Agenda Item 11.           Strategic Country Cluster Evaluation of the Lower Mekong River Basin Ecosystem and Management Response***

18. Items 10 and 11 were considered together.
19. The IEO presented the first document stressing that this was the first comprehensive analysis of GEF action on water security. The Secretariat welcomed the report and pointed to the moves

already made towards a systems approach. It also reflected its positive views on the recommendations.

20. The IEO presented the second report on the Lower Mekong River Basin ecosystem. In its response the Secretariat welcomed the report and expressed overall agreement with the recommendations.
21. The Council welcomed the reports and expressed a variety of comments and questions that were answered by the IEO and Secretariat. Some Council members encouraged a pragmatic approach in incorporating water security in the GEF-8 projects and programs. Some concerns were also expressed. Both draft decisions were adopted.

**Agenda Item 12.        *Four-Year Work Program and Budget of the GEF Independent Evaluation Office***

22. The IEO presented its budget for the coming year and the activities that it was planning to carry out to use that budget most of which is geared towards preparing the comprehensive evaluation of GEF-8 that will be used during the replenishment discussions of GEF-9. Strategic country cluster evaluations will continue on drylands.
23. The Council welcomed the presentation, made some comments and approved the revised decision.

**Agenda Item 14.        *Relations with Conventions & Other International Institutions***

24. The issue was postponed to the next Council meeting.

**Agenda Item 15.        *Preparing the GEF to serve as part of the financial mechanism of the internationally legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ)***

25. The Secretariat introduced the document on this issue recalling that the adopted agreement establishes “a mechanism for the provision of adequate, accessible, new and additional and predictable financial resources under [the] Agreement [...]” It designates the GEF Trust Fund as part of the Financial Mechanism, along with a special fund, and a voluntary trust fund to facilitate participation of representatives of developing States Parties in the meetings of the bodies under the Agreement. The Secretariat also explained that document presents the implications for the GEF to be part of the BBNJ Financial Mechanism, puts forward a proposal to operationalize GEF support to national ratification and early implementation of the Agreement, and summarizes the GEF’s past and ongoing support for topics relevant to the BBNJ. The draft decision contains an amendment to the Instrument to be considered by the Seventh GEF Assembly.
26. The Council welcomed the report, the proactive work of the Secretariat. After supportive comments the Council adopted the proposed amended draft decision.

**Agenda Item 16.        *Improving the visibility of the GEF: New communication and visibility policy***

27. The Secretariat introduced the item explaining that the GEF Communication and Visibility Policy, is to be applied in conjunction with the updated Brand Guidelines accompanying the GEF's new logo, that it covers how and when all recipients shall describe the GEF's role and contribution to project and program outcomes and includes how the GEF logo shall be used in publications, documents, web pages, in social media, or in other public-facing media.
28. The Council welcomed the policy and posed a few questions that were answered by the Secretariat.

**Agenda Item 17.            Assessing the Strength of the GEF Partnership: Coverage by GEF Agencies**

29. The secretariat introduced the item recalling that during the Eighth Replenishment, Participants requested the Secretariat to explore possibilities, where necessary, to improve the thematic and geographic coverage of the 18 Implementing Agencies. The four steps requested were to continue to monitor coverage by agencies; to propose improvements where necessary; to provide information to OFPs so countries could make more informed choice of agency and to simplify and streamline procedures.
30. The conclusions were supported. Some concern was expressed that only 4 agencies have a very high proportion of projects. Council supported an expansion of the responsibilities and coverage of DBSA beyond the national borders of South Africa.
31. A workshop on agency capacities as well as a mid-term evaluation were requested. Some Council Members were of the view that no new agencies were necessary for now and others asked why the list was restricted.

**Agenda Item 18.            Report of the Selection and Review Committee**

32. This item was discussed in Executive Session.

**Agenda Item 19.            Other business**

33. One Council Member proposed that the GEF should discuss and adopt a policy on disputed areas, including along the lines of similar policies in other international organizations like the World Bank.
34. The Secretariat recalled the agreement that agenda items 7, 8 and 14 of the agenda would be discussed at a later meeting the date of which would be decided by mail. The Secretariat also recalled that the decision on the 66<sup>th</sup> meeting would be in December 2023. The 67<sup>th</sup> meeting would be in June 2024. The Council expressed a preference that the 66<sup>th</sup> meeting be held at the beginning on 2024.
35. The Council decided that a decision on future meeting dates would be done by mail, taking into account logistic arrangements.
36. Another Council Member requested that papers on gap analysis, risk and streamlining presented as information papers should be discussed or considered in the Council plenary as agreed during

the replenishment negotiations. The Secretariat explained the process it expects to follow on these issues as requested.

37. The Council was given a brief update on preparations for the Seventh GEF Assembly in Vancouver, Canada. A couple of Council Members mentioned the necessary facilitation so that all delegations could participate.