



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente
Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

联合国环境规划署



Our Ref: DGEF/SEELY

15 April 2009

Dear Council Member,

At its April 2008 meeting, the GEF Council approved my proposal to reconstitute the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) as stipulated in document GEF/C.33/13/Rev 1. Noting that the regional and gender balance of the reconstituted panel needed improvement, I will ensure that future reconstitutions of the STAP panel adhere to selection criteria, with a view to improving gender and regional balance.

In line with established practice, I convened a Search Committee to consider the Panel's composition for the coming GEF financial year and the need to adjust its composition. The Search Committee, Chaired by UNEP comprising representatives of the World Bank, UNDP and the GEF Secretariat recommended that the position of the Land Degradation Panel Member be opened for search, while retaining the remaining Panel Members for the year ending in June 2010.

The Committee considered 22 nominated candidates from all regions and recommended the appointment of Dr. Mary Seely who has lived and worked in Namibia for the past 40 years and has a track record of applied land degradation research, policy advice and science/policy network from Southern Africa. For personal reasons, Mary Seely is a US national, but for practical purposes she represents the African research community and will bring an extensive network of African and global scientists on Land Degradation. I concur with the recommendations of the Search Committee that she would improve the gender and geographical balance of the Panel.

Accordingly, I wish to seek your support, on a no-objection basis, to confirm the appointment of Dr. Seely as Land Degradation Panel Member, for an initial period of two years, renewable subject to satisfactory performance for a further two years effective 1 July 2009. Further details of the candidate are attached.

I am committed to improving the gender and regional balance in future reconstitutions of the STAP Panel, while maintaining their high scientific calibre.

Executive Office

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Finally, I wish to express my appreciation to the outgoing Panel Member for Land Degradation, Professor Michael Stocking, for his outstanding contributions to the formulation, development and guidance to implementation of the Land Degradation focal area in the last 3 years within the GEF.

Best regards.

Yours sincerely,

Achim Steiner
Executive Director

Encl. ANNEX

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Annex. Biographical sketch of Mary K. Seely

Dr Mary K. Seely is a former Executive Director (1990- 2006) of the Desert Research Foundation of Namibia now Associate, Desert Research foundation, and has for 40 years lived and worked in that country, publishing 160 papers and contributing to 20 books on desertification, environmental change and livelihoods in southern Africa. Dr Seely is a Member of the National Planning Commission, Namibia, and was until 2004 a member of the President's Vision 2030 Core Team, and holds and has held a number of official advisory positions with various government departments and their commissions concerned with desertification, water supply, planning, education and outreach.

During 40 years of research and training in ecology and environmental science, Dr Seely co-supervised over 50 Msc and PhD degrees in arid zone ecology and environmental topics and she organised and contributed to training programmes for the University of Namibia, Polytechnic of Namibia, four Colleges of Education of Namibia and varied international educational groups.

Dr Seely has advised several GEF-related agencies, including UNDP, UNEP and African Development Bank, has published work on indicators and their use for desertification monitoring and UNCCD implementation in Southern Africa, and has advised on the challenge of connecting scientific research with community action.