



## **GEF CSO Network Statement**

### **Agenda item 7: Work Program**

#### **51<sup>ST</sup> GEF Council Meeting, Washington DC, USA**

The GEF CSO Network, having reviewed document GEF/C.51/05, Work Program, along with PIF's for GEF Trust Fund comprising 19 projects and programs proposed in accordance with the GEF 2020 strategy and the GEF-6 programming directions framework, makes the following comments and recommendations.

1. We welcome the release of second and final part of GEF-6 allocation of \$ 70 million on UNDP/GEF Small Grants program, as this will help in safeguarding global environment problems through local community action. We further recommend that this allocation should be increased in GEF-7.
2. We welcome the stakeholder participation currently described in many projects, including the specification of CSO and Indigenous Peoples engagement, but recommend that the PIF section on stakeholder engagement include more detailed information and that quality and scope of participation be enhanced, including to ensure that:
  - CSOs and Indigenous Peoples fully and effectively participate in the whole process throughout the project. In order to do this, participation of these groups should start from the beginning of the PIF process, to ensure their engagement in the preparation of the GEF project with well-defined roles and responsibilities, taking into account gender considerations. In the case of the China Protected Area System Reform project, we note that not only NGO

participation was clearly specified, but the related CSO has also made a significant amount of Co-financing.

- CSOs and local community people are included as empowered partners in ways that recognize their knowledge and capacity.
3. We welcome the many gender considerations already described, and further recommend that each project in the Work Program have a clear action plan on gender equality and mainstreaming.
  4. We recommend that, in the Work Program or other appropriate places, GEF provide clear information on project accountability and grievance mechanisms, including ensuring that commitments to project involvement of CSOs and local community are followed through.
  5. From this Work Program, it seems as if GEF funding tends to go to geographical areas that have more capacity to write GEF proposals (i.e. LAC region). This has a perverse effect leaving behind areas that are in desperate need of receiving GEF funds (i.e. Africa). Special emphasis should be given for either capacity building or technical assistance to prepare GEF proposals in these disadvantaged areas.
  6. We observe that a number of projects in the Work Program include creating, expanding, and/or improving the governance or management of Protected Areas. Within this focus,
    - We highlight the importance of project compliance with the GEF Principles and Guidelines for Engagement with Indigenous Peoples at all stages, including respecting the right to free, prior and informed consent in the case of GEF-financed activities on, or significantly impacting indigenous peoples' traditional and user rights.