



GEF CSO Network Statement

Agenda Item 13. Recommendations from the Working Group on Public Involvement

51ST GEF Council Meeting, Washington DC, USA

We, the CSO Network formally welcome and endorse the ongoing work of the Working Group on Public Involvement Policy, and commend the work of the consultant on the quality of his report. We also acknowledge the input of three members of the CSO Network to the PIP Working Group and the reflection of their recommendations in the final report.

The CSO Network also supports the general recommendations of both the Working Group and the consultant report, including that stakeholders have full access to project information at the Agency level; that each GEF-financed project and program develops a stakeholder engagement plan; and that policy requirements apply to all projects irrespective of potential social and environment risks.

Further, the CSO Network recommends that a new Public Involvement Policy (PIP) should include the following:

1. The GEF PIP should take precedent in all cases where it sets a higher standard than the public policies of respective Agencies, and this should be a requirement of Agency membership.
2. A new disclosure of information policy should include commitments to publish information within agreed timeframes
3. Agencies must consider full and effective engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities during the preparation, implementation and evaluation stages of the projects.
4. A communications procedure could be established to receive and address concerns and grievances related to projects at both the design and implementation stages, including possible sanctions.

5. A formal appeals procedure would allow decisions to be explained, reviewed and revoked
6. The GEF should consider the establishment of a whistleblower policy open to all stakeholders

The CSO Network would also recommend that GEF reports refer not to only "local communities" but to "indigenous peoples and local communities", in accordance with the CBD COP decision, and that the future PIP identifies and distinguishes specific "rights holders" from wider "stakeholders".

We would also recommend that gender mainstreaming is properly addressed in the future PIP and at all stages of project development and implementation.

We call on the Council, in light of the necessity of public involvement in the GEF, to pursue concrete commitments from countries and Agencies on the above.