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**Statement by Indigenous Peoples' Task Force  
9 November 2011**

**GEF Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards  
GEF C.41/10 GEF Policy**

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Indigenous Peoples' representatives attending the 41<sup>st</sup> GEF Council Meeting (8-10 November 2011) have discussed in detail the proposed Environment and Social Safeguard Standards of the GEF that are to be adopted by the Council. We have submitted following observations and suggested amendments to strengthen the paper and ensure that it will be an effective tool in fulfilling the goals of GEF.

The requirement for Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) should not be qualified to only those countries which have ratified ILO 169. It is an accepted principle for all indigenous peoples, irrespective of the national legislation of the government in question. The FPIC principle should be in the document without the qualifications, or with the addition of 'in accordance with international obligations and domestic legislation'. This should be reflected in the relevant articles of the policy.

Madame Chairperson, Council members, we have no mandate to be flexible in changing what GEF may consider as acceptable language and wish to reiterate our issues as we have intimated in our proposal submitted for your consideration. It is our wish that you respect our situation and ask that our concerns are taken into account in your final considerations and pray that our fundamental concerns are adequately reflected in the decisions of this Council. All that we are asking is for GEF to align itself with the UNDRIP, which has received global acceptance, including the very members of the GEF Council.

We also remind the Council that the GEF is the financing mechanism of the Convention on Biological Diversity which has in various decisions recognized the principle of FPIC and it would be appropriate for the GEF to abide by such decisions. Furthermore, we have asked that the GEF adopt an absolute prohibition of the involuntary resettlement and limitation of access by indigenous peoples from their traditional lands. We believe this is a fundamental issue which the environmental and social standard should address.

Thank you!