



www.gefngo.org

GEF NGO Network Statement

9 November 2011

GEF Policy on Agency Minimum Standards on Environmental and Social Safeguards

GEF C.41/10 GEF Policy

The GEF NGO Network welcomes the revised Policy on Agency minimum standards which have incorporated a number of the suggestions that have been made by the Network and other civil society organisations submitted since the last Council meeting. We are also happy to see that a CRP paper has been circulated today which incorporates some of the issues that have been raised at the GEF Council – CSO consultation.

We welcome the reference in paragraph 15 to consider the need to update the 1996 Policy on Public Involvement in GEF. In our view the Policy is outdated and provided insufficient guidance on this extremely important aspect of GEF activities. We have highlighted a number of specific aspects that should be considered in an updated policy during the GEF –CSO Consultation.

Unfortunately there are still a number of serious issues that must be raised:

1. There is inadequate reference to the Conventions of which GEF is a Financial Mechanism which do provide some specific guidance related to safeguards.
2. We feel that if an agency is not complying with the standards and is implementing a time bound plan – we feel that there should be restrictions on their ability to develop projects in areas of non-compliance.
3. We feel that it is unacceptable that the current wording of Para 5 (d) of the policy implies that Involuntary resettlement will be the norm and only avoided “when feasible”. We believe that involuntary resettlement should be the exception in GEF projects and this should be clearly stated.
4. We are concerned that the proposal for inclusion of FPIC is restricted to the 20 countries that have ratified ILO 169. Since a number of countries have included FPIC in national legislation or recognise international obligations on FPIC. We believe this should be referenced properly in the documents.
5. We are still concerned that in line with para 41 and Para 49 that the assessment of minimum standards does not apply to the World Bank. We hope however that all other aspects of the Policy including key principles and reporting and review are applied to the Bank

On the issue of indigenous peoples I would like to hand over to a representative of indigenous peoples to highlight their views.