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GEF Network Statement 6th June 2012

Agenda 13 of the GEF Work Programme GEF/C.42/06

We welcome this - the largest Work programme of the GEF in this GEF 5 period which signals significant progress in GEF implementation and fund disbursement.

The GEF NGO Network believes that effective engagement of civil society is essential to ensure the sustainability of all GEF projects and programmes. It is important that the existing GEF public involvement policy be fully implemented along with necessary environmental safeguards. Participatory approaches to project identification, development and implementation should be hallmarks of GEF approaches and in line with the GEF 5 reforms.

We have circulated the work programme to our 479 members for comment and have received feedback on about 50% of the projects so far. While the feedback given has generally confirmed the importance of the projects – it has raised some significant concerns about the level of CSO engagement in many projects.

In north east Asia for example with 14 projects proposed in the workplan - we note that only 6 projects (43%) specifying NGOs as the key stakeholders of proposed project and describing their role in PIF. However only 3 projects (21% of the total) involved specific local/domestic groups and 4 projects (29%) didn't mention CSO's involvement at all.

For the six projects in eastern Europe and central Asia - although four projects refer to CSOs two have no reference to CSOs and in those projects where CSOs are mentioned, there is no reference to specific CSOs, and their role is not clearly defined in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the project.

In Indonesia there are a number of projects being undertaken in areas with significant populations of indigenous peoples – but there is no specific reference to mechanisms for engagement of such peoples in the project identification and design.

In Africa the Pilot African Climate Technology Finance Centre and Network makes no reference to CSO engagement – yet many CSOs are playing a key role in promotion or development of appropriate renewable energy, as well as climate mitigation and adaptation and would have much to contribute to the centre and network activities.

In some projects, profit making organisations – such as design institutes are listed as CSOs. In other cases inter-governmental organisations are involved at the expense of local CSOs. This confirms the confusion governments make when defining CSOs. Maybe we can suggest that there is engagement with the GEF-NGO Network to help identify suitable CSOs for inclusion in project development.

We have noted that project review sheets have, in a number of cases, highlighted the need for specific information on CSOs to be included. However there appears to be inconsistency in the review sheets in addressing engagement of CSOs. We therefore encourage the updating of guidelines for the project reviewers in relation to the inclusion of CSOs.

There is need for GEF agencies to ensure that the projects identify appropriate national, as well as local NGOs/CBOs to be engaged in different stages of the project, including project planning, implementation and monitoring. We further urge all project proponents agencies to rapidly initiate the development of the Project Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) in line with the council decision in November 2010.

Finally, we are concerned that almost all the projects are led by Government agencies – further reinforcing the perception of a decline in the resources for CSO led projects.

We will send some specific comments on about 20 projects in the near future.