



## **GEF NGO Network Comments on Establishment of the GEF NGO Voluntary Fund (Under Other Business)**

### **42<sup>ND</sup> GEF Council Meeting 6<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

As Council members are aware, the GEF NGO Network has been active in supporting the work of the GEF over the past 17 years. Our work has been undertaken on an almost entirely voluntary basis apart from the specific support for attending the council consultation meetings and recently the ECW meetings. However to maintain and expand the work of the Network there is a need for additional resources.

As Council members will recall, the Council in November 2008 agreed to re-establish the NGO Voluntary Fund to act as a mechanism to support the work of the GEF NGO Network including organization of regional consultations, enhancing the engagement of civil society in the GEF and other aspects of the Network's strategic plan. In November 2010, the Council reiterated its support for the establishment of the Voluntary Fund.

We are happy to note that in early 2012, the World Bank Trustee established the Voluntary Fund and initial support was provided to organise a regional CSO meeting in February for North Africa and West Asia. The remaining funds are about \$116,000.

The Network is in the process of developing the range of activities to be supported by the fund including:

- a) Enhancing CSO engagement in GEF through CSO meetings to be held back to back to selected ECW meetings;
- b) Collation of experience and lessons learned in implementing the GEF Public involvement policy with a view to providing good practice guidance for the implementation of the GEF public involvement policy;
- c) Promotion and support for implementation of the GEF Guidelines on the engagement of indigenous peoples;
- d) Enhancing engagement with CSO organizations active in the negotiation and implementation of GEF-related conventions to enhance their understanding and support for GEF and involvement in GEF-related programmes;
- e) Facilitating engagement of and outreach to various stakeholders on the CBD study on financial needs assessment for biodiversity;
- f) Enhancing the coordination and engagement of CSOs in the work of GEF in selected GEF recipient countries;

In order to support these activities in the coming year it will be important that additional resources are contributed to the fund to match and enhance the level of existing resources. We would thus like to encourage all the countries represented on the GEF Council to consider making voluntary contributions to this fund in the near future.

The Network, in association with the Secretariat, will soon provide to all the countries more information on the Fund and the mechanism to contribute and also the management arrangements of the Fund.

Finally we are grateful to the support that the governments of Switzerland and Norway have provided to the Network activity in the past and hope that in future these and additional donors can contribute to the Voluntary Fund in order to provide support to the Network to continue and expand its work.