



**GEF-NGO Network Statement during 44<sup>th</sup> GEF Council Meeting  
Item 7 Update on GEF 2020  
18 June 2013**

Firstly on behalf of the GEF NGO Network, we very much welcome the development of the GEF 2020 strategy to take a medium term view on the best strategy for addressing global environment issues.

The Networks organized a panel discussion on the GEF 2020 Strategy yesterday which identified a number of important views.

We fully support the proposal to look at the underlying drivers of environmental degradation as well as develop a broader partnership approach to generate solutions.

We also believe that in the future GEF should take an integrated, multi-stakeholder approach including the empowering of civil society as key partners of GEF in addressing the problems of our planet.

Indeed, as we heard this morning, global trends are worsening, our global environmental conditions are spiraling downwards:

we have just passed the 400 ppm, meaning that we will need to prepare for a 4 degrees global warming not a 2 degrees; global biodiversity is going down, deforestation and degradation of land continuing and our international waters are in bad shape.

Now, in addition of all this, we all are confronted with another massive, historical challenge which is the rapid urbanization.

Today, 3.5 billion people live in cities. It took us 4000 years to provide for the urban infrastructure to host this 3.5 billion population as we know it today.

However, if trends continue - we need to provide in the next 40 years for the same amount of urban infrastructure for another 3.5 billion people, all in need of water, energy, mobility, housing and food.

This vast and rapid urbanization is going to impact all we currently do or have done until now.

If the issue of cities and urban areas are not taken into account at all levels of governance and policy making, sustainable development for this planet cannot be achieved.

We welcome the proposal of GEF to consider a focus on cities as a way of enabling a more integrated approach to climate change, biodiversity and chemicals as well as engaging a broader number of partners.

At the UN level, we see parties under UNFCCC moving into recognizing and interacting with the local and sub national levels as governmental partners, a “friends of the cities” group has been set ;

in the CBD, COP decisions have been adopted by parties to support local and sub national action programmes on biodiversity;

within the SDGs dialogue, also a “friends of the cities” group was set up to work towards a SDG on cities. These represent opportunities for linkage with GEF.

We support the proposal from GEF to enhance partnership with civil society to improve knowledge of the drivers of change and establish clear collaborative partnerships to address them.

Finally, as a representative of ICLEI, an association of more than 1000 local governments and cities working towards sustainability around the world, we welcome the suggestion of the GEF CEO for a future initiative on cities to complement the other focused on ecosystems. We look forward to see further details on this and would be very happy to explore options of partnership between ICLEI and GEF in developing the proposed initiative on cities.