

Volume 5. No.1  
March, 2005

## In this issue:

- I. **Highlights of November Council Meeting**
- II. **Focal Point News**
- III. **Country Dialogue News**
- IV. **Focal Area News**
- V. **GEF-NGO Network News**
- VI. **News from the GEF Office of Monitoring and Evaluation**
- VII. **News from the Implementing Agencies**
- VIII. **News from GEF Small Grants Programme**
- IX. **News from STAP**
- X. **Good Practice Notes**
- XI. **New GEF Publications**
- XII. **Other News**
- XIII. **Focal Point Update**

## I. **Highlights of November Council Meeting**

The GEF Council Meeting was held 17–19 November 2004, in Washington, DC. The meeting agenda and a full summary of the Council Meeting are available on the GEF website at [http://thegef.org/Documents/Council\\_Documents/council\\_documents.html](http://thegef.org/Documents/Council_Documents/council_documents.html). The following are highlights of the meeting.

**Discussions on the Resource Allocation Framework** The Council discussed the document, GEF/C.24/8, *GEF Resource Allocation Framework*, and consultations were carried out between Council Members during the Council Meeting. Three motions advancing the different perspectives of the Council were tabled by Council Members for consideration at the next meeting in June 2005. The three motions are annexed to the Joint Summary of the Chairs at: [http://www.thegef.org/Documents/Council\\_Document/sJoint\\_Summary\\_of\\_the\\_Chairs\\_FINAL.doc](http://www.thegef.org/Documents/Council_Document/sJoint_Summary_of_the_Chairs_FINAL.doc)

The Council requested the GEF Secretariat to continue its work developing data and indicators necessary for implementing RAF, taking into account comments made by Council Members and keeping within budgetary resources already authorized for this purpose. The Council also requested the Secretariat to facilitate further consultations on the resource allocation framework.

The GEF Secretariat held technical consultations on the RAF in Paris on March 2, 2005. Additional technical work was presented and views were exchanged to facilitate a final decision on this issue at the June meeting.

**Pilot Program for Medium-Sized Projects** The Council reviewed the document, GEF/C.24/13, *Proposals for Enhancing GEF Medium-sized Projects*, which follows up on the recommendations of the Working Group on Medium-Sized Projects (MSPs).

The Working Group agreed to present the Council with recommendations that call for Council approval before they can be implemented. These recommendations call for (i) increasing the ceiling of PDF-A funding for MSPs up to \$50,000; and (ii) endorsing medium-sized projects project proposals by the operational focal points on a “no objection basis” within a four-week period. The Working Group also presented new approaches for smaller MSPs to the Council. In response, the Council approved:

- The introduction of the pilot global program for the financing of smaller MSPs up to \$250,000.
- The establishment of a pilot country-level program in Argentina to pilot the implementation of smaller-sized MSPs through a decentralized country mechanism.
- An increase in the ceiling of GEF financing for PDF-A from \$25,000 to \$50,000.

A number of Council Members stressed the importance of ensuring national ownership of projects and indicated that the time required to undertake adequate in-country consultations should be fully taken into account in project preparation.

*Details on the recommendations of the MSP working group and the Council's decision are contained in document, Proposals for Enhancing GEF Medium-sized Projects and in the Joint Summary of the Chairs:*

[http://thegef.org/Documents/Council\\_Documents/council\\_documents.html](http://thegef.org/Documents/Council_Documents/council_documents.html)

**Funding for Small Grants Programme** As part of the GEF Work Program, the Council considered the Third Operational Phase of the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP). In response to the recommendations in the report of the Third Independent Evaluation of the SGP, as well as mandates from the GEF Assembly and Council, the SGP proposed increasing its global reach, especially in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and strengthening existing country programs for greater impact and as a base for replication and expansion. The SGP also proposed more dissemination of information on the SGP's local and global benefits and the broader application of lessons learned and good practices to enhance the sustainability of SGP-funded programs and projects.

Council Members expressed support for expanding the program, recognizing the role of the SGP in the development of country-driven projects. The Council approved an increase in funding to \$47 million for the first year of the SGP's Third Operational Phase (that is, mid-February 2005 to mid-February 2006). Furthermore, the Council agreed that the increase in the ceiling from \$50,000 to \$150,000 for strategic projects in the SGP should be conducted on a pilot basis for one year and should be limited to five percent of the total allocation of grants for the year.

*More details on the SGP work program can be found at:*

[http://thegef.org/Documents/Council\\_Documents/GEF\\_C24/c24\\_wp.html](http://thegef.org/Documents/Council_Documents/GEF_C24/c24_wp.html)

## II. Focal Point News

**Benin: A Participatory Approach** On December 28 and 29, 2004, the Minister of Environment, Housing, and Urban Development, through the GEF unit, organized a national awareness briefing and training workshop on the GEF's activities in Benin. The workshop, which was opened by André Deguenon, Directeur Adjoint de Cabinet of the Ministry, brought together the national NGOs working in the environment sector, the GEF project coordinators, and the programming and long-term planning directors of all ministries involved in the GEF's activities in Benin, among others.

Over the two-day period, Pascal Yaya, operational focal point, presented background information on the GEF; Roger Dovonou, consultant, presented an overview of the GEF's activities in Benin; and Armande Zanou, desertification control focal point, presented methods for preparing GEF-eligible projects. During the discussions, Jean Jacob Sahou of the UNDP clarified GEF's procedures and the different factors to be considered during the preparation of projects for submission to the GEF, such as incremental costs and poverty alleviation.

The presence of a large numbers of reporters resulted in widespread media coverage, both television and radio. A local radio station (Radio WÉKÉ) has agreed to carry post-workshop extension programs and a GEF documentary is planned for 2005.

Following the workshop, participants made recommendations on ways in which the GEF could simplify its procedures, and improve and support capacity building activities at the local level. They urged the GEF to provide special training for NGOs working in the environment sector.

*Report Provided by Pascal Yaya, GEF Operational Focal Point, Benin.*

**Indonesia: New Tools and Mechanisms to Disseminate GEF Information** In February, 2005, representatives from Indonesia's Ministry of Environment and the World Bank-GEF convened a series of workshops in Jakarta, Pekanbaru, and Makassar.

The objective of the workshops was to enhance stakeholders' knowledge of GEF policies and procedures. The workshops also served as a means to share information on the development of new GEF information products.

The Ministry of Environment launched a new GEF website ([www.gef-indonesia.org](http://www.gef-indonesia.org)) and disseminated a new publication in the local language (Bahasa) to provide information on the policies and processes of the GEF. In addition, a Resource Center for GEF

publications was established at the Ministry. These new products were funded through the use of focal point support funds.

GEF Regional Coordinator for East Asia, Robin Broadfield, and Kathy McKinnon, World Bank Biodiversity Expert, both participated in the workshops.

*Effendy Sumardja, GEF Council Member for the constituency comprising Cook Islands, Fiji, Indonesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and GEF Operational Focal Point in Indonesia, provided information for this article.*

### III. Country Dialogue News

**Guatemala, Lesotho and Timor-Leste Host National Dialogues** In December 2004, Guatemala and Lesotho hosted national dialogues on the GEF, wrapping up the first year of implementation of the GEF National Dialogue Initiative. Timor-Leste, the GEF's newest participating country, hosted its GEF National Dialogue in January 2005.

**Guatemala** Guatemala's National Dialogue took place from December 2–3, 2004, in Antigua and was organized by the Ministerio de Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (MARN) with support provided by UNDP Guatemala. There were more than 55 participants, representing national and local government, civil society (including indigenous group representatives), the private sector, the donor community, and the press. The Dialogue recommendations focused on the following:

- (a) establishing an ad-hoc multi-stakeholder National Coordinating Committee comprised of government and civil society for the purpose of sharing information in project design, implementation, and impact; and
- (b) identifying national priority areas linked to GEF's strategic priorities, largely in the framework of the government's Economic Revitalization Plan developed in 2004, "Vamos Guatemala." As part of the plan, MARN has proposed a component called "Guate Verde," a cross-sectoral process of mainstreaming environmental considerations into the country's broader economic development plans.

**Lesotho** Lesotho's National Dialogue, organized by the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture with support provided by UNDP Lesotho, was held from November 30–December 2 in Maseru. More than 100 participants attended, representing national and local government, civil society, the private sector, the donor community and the press. The main topics addressed during the Dialogue

included a review of Lesotho's current GEF portfolio, linking national development priorities to the GEF's strategic priorities, the potential role of the private sector in the GEF in Lesotho, and the process of applying to host the GEF Small Grants Programme.

The three-day Dialogue led to recommendations to convene a multi-stakeholder group of Dialogue participants to draft:

- (c) an objective evaluation of the current GEF portfolio focusing on implementation capacity and results on the ground, with the objective of drawing wider lessons learned for the future; and
- (d) a three-year GEF strategy to help articulate priorities and linkages to Lesotho's Poverty Reduction Strategy, as well as strengthen a rolling plan for evaluating and developing GEF projects.

**Timor-Leste** Timor-Leste organized its National Dialogue in Dili from January 26–28, 2005. Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri opened the Dialogue and emphasized the crucial link between poverty reduction and the environment. More than 75 stakeholders participated in the event organized by the Ministry of Development and Environment, with support provided by UNDP Timor-Leste.

The first half of the Dialogue focused on Timor-Leste's proposed accession to the conventions on biodiversity, climate change and persistent organic pollutants. One of the key dialogue themes addressed was Timor-Leste's capacity (the country has just begun to prepare its National Capacity Self-Assessment) and financing available to meet the country's obligations under the conventions. The second half of the Dialogue focused on the link between the country's development priorities and global environmental issues. Three working group sessions in biodiversity, climate change/energy, and land degradation were established to discuss broad national plans, strategies and priorities and their cross-cutting links to the GEF's strategic priorities, as well as lessons learned from the GEF's overall portfolio in the region.

Detailed outcomes of these National Dialogues are contained in recommendation summaries prepared by the respective GEF operational focal points and are available on the Initiative's website at [www.undp.org/gef/dialogue](http://www.undp.org/gef/dialogue).

UNDP-GEF implements the program on behalf of the GEF family in full consultation with participant countries.

*Information provided by Stephen Gold, Global Manager for the GEF National Dialogue Initiative, UNDP.*

## IV. Focal Area News

### Sustainable Land Management

#### Regional Workshops Help Develop Land Management Projects

Land degradation has become internationally recognized as a threat to the global commons. In 2003, the GEF Council approved an operational program on sustainable land management to address the prevention and control of land degradation.

To raise awareness and facilitate development of land degradation projects, the GEF launched a series of training workshops. UNEP took the lead in developing this project, with the other GEF Implementing and Executing Agencies contributing as well.

Nine regional training workshops were held between October 2004 and January 2005 to explore GEF's sustainable land management approach. The workshops were held in Thailand, Iran, Tunisia, Namibia, Fiji, Kazakhstan, Brazil, Jamaica, and Switzerland. About 400 participants from 130 countries attended, including GEF Operational Focal Points, regional NGO coordinators, and representatives of key subregional organizations.

The workshops focused on challenges related to degradation, sustainable land management approaches, and GEF's thinking and procedures regarding project development. The participants highlighted the importance of sharing experiences and disseminating information; similar training meetings are being held at national and local levels.

To ensure follow-up, a website will be created to address concerns raised by the participants and inform other stakeholders. Revised training material, as well as specific guidelines on the GEF's Operation Program (OP) 15, will be also posted. A shortened version of the training workshop will be held in conjunction with COP7 of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification from October 17–28, 2005, in Nairobi, Kenya.

For further information, please, contact *Daya Bragante* at [daya.bragante@unep.org](mailto:daya.bragante@unep.org) and *Andrea Kutter* at [akutter@theGEF.org](mailto:akutter@theGEF.org).

### Climate Change

**Update on the LDC Fund** The Seventh Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) established two new voluntary funds: the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF). The GEF Secretariat manages the new funds and facilitates the process to mobilize resources.

The LDCs identified adaptation to climate change as the highest priority for the LDC Fund. A first contribution of \$12 million by donor countries was allocated to meet the agreed full cost of preparing National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPAs). To date, 43 LDCs have received financing support for their NAPAs. The remaining five—Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Myanmar, Nepal and Solomon Islands—are working with UNEP and UNDP to finalize the preparatory work needed to access the funds. Most of the approved projects foresee the completion of the NAPA within a period of 12 to 18 months. In December, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania submitted the first completed NAPA.

Subsequent Climate Convention guidance calls upon the LDC Fund to support the implementation of NAPAs as soon as possible after their completion. The GEF has mobilized additional resources for implementing NAPAs. The LDC Fund currently amounts to \$32.5 million.

**References:** *Status Report on the Least Developed Countries Fund for Climate Change* (GEF/C.24/Inf.8/Rev.1). *Elements to be taken into account in funding the implementation of NAPAs under the LDC Fund* (GEF/C.24/Inf.7)

For further information please contact *Dick Hosier* at [rhosier@TheGEF.org](mailto:rhosier@TheGEF.org) and *Boni Biagini* at [bbiagini@TheGEF.org](mailto:bbiagini@TheGEF.org).

### Biodiversity

#### GEF Funding for the Preparation of Third National Reports

The GEF Secretariat, representatives from the Implementing Agencies, and the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat made a joint presentation on funding for the preparation of Third National Reports at the recent meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice in Bangkok. The GEF, through its Implementing Agencies, will provide funding to all eligible countries to assist in the preparation of their Third National Reports for the Convention on Biodiversity.

The Third National Reports will include a synthesis of biodiversity information built upon the experience of implementing national biodiversity strategies and action plans. It will also include new studies or analyses focused on areas or sectors not covered in previous reports, such as forest biological diversity. The national reporting process is instrumental to enabling the Conference of the Parties to assess the overall status of implementation of the Convention.

*Additional information on the availability of funds for the preparation of the Third National Reports in Biodiversity can be obtained from Ravi Sharma* at [rsharma5@theGEF.org](mailto:rsharma5@theGEF.org).

## **GEF Participates in Paris Biodiversity**

**Conference** Gonzalo Castro, GEFSEC Team Leader for Biodiversity, made a presentation on "Funding Trends and Opportunities for Achieving the 2010 Biodiversity Targets" at the recent international conference on Biodiversity: Science and Governance. The meeting was organized by the French Ministry for Research, and under the High Patronage of Jacques Chirac, President of France, and Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO on Biodiversity Science and Governance.

The conference is part of the ongoing global effort to curb the loss of biodiversity by 2010 and ensure its long-term conservation and sustainable use, as well as the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits that genetic resources can yield. The conference aims to contribute to and strengthen the ongoing global processes steered by the Convention on Biological Diversity, other relevant international conventions, international organizations, and programs.

## **V. GEF-NGO Network News**

**NGO Network Council Consultations** The GEF-NGO Consultations held during the GEF Council Meetings provide a forum for NGOs to exchange views and concerns related to GEF policies and projects. NGOs, the GEF Secretariat, the three Implementing Agencies, and Council members are all invited to attend these consultations.

During the last Consultation, which took place on November 16, 2004, in Washington DC, NGOs expressed their views on the following key issues:

*Resource Allocation Framework.* NGOs were anxious to move the process forward and to reach an agreement on the Resource Allocation Framework.

*Medium-Sized Projects (MSPs).* The document, *Proposal for Enhancing GEF Medium-Sized Projects*, was welcomed and strongly supported by NGOs, as it opens a new approach to address the difficulties and delays of MSP processing. Positive aspects of the proposed new approaches for processing smaller-sized MSPs include: the expected nine months for the entire process; the one stop review and appraisal mechanism; the call for proposals in periodic and competitive rounds of applications; and the inclusion of NGOs in the Technical Review Committee, as well as on outreach and capacity building activities.

*Monitoring and Evaluation:* Recognizing that NGOs play a crucial role in the implementation of GEF projects, both as partners and as executors of projects, a request was made for an active involvement of NGOs in the GEF monitoring and evaluation process, emphasizing the importance of grassroots participation. NGOs also had the opportunity to exchange opinions on the Third Overall

Performance Study (OPS3). NGO representatives are expected to participate in regional workshops, which will be organized by the OPS 3 team to obtain feedback from key stakeholders on their experiences with GEF operational programs.

Two NGO case studies were presented on: *NGO Experiences in the Implementation of a GEF Protected Areas Project: Lessons Learned from Lebanon*; and *Management of Ecologically Critical Areas in Bangladesh*.

*The full report from the consultation, a compilation of NGO interventions, and the NGO case studies are available at:*

[http://www.thegef.org/Partners/partners-Nongovernmental\\_Organ/partners-nongovernmental\\_organ.html](http://www.thegef.org/Partners/partners-Nongovernmental_Organ/partners-nongovernmental_organ.html)

*For further information on the GEF-NGO network contact Liliana Hisas, GEF NGO Central Focal Point, email: [lhisas@feu999.org](mailto:lhisas@feu999.org).*

## **VI. News from the GEF Office of Monitoring and Evaluation**

### **Towards New GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Policy**

The GEF Office of Monitoring and Evaluation (GEFME) has launched an extensive process of consultation with GEF partners, following GEF Council decisions in November 2004. The goals of the process are to review the division of labor in monitoring and evaluation within the GEF, and to promote the highest international standards and best practices in monitoring and evaluation of GEF activities.

As a first step, a brainstorming workshop with relevant GEF monitoring and evaluation partners took place in January 2005. The workshop brought together, for the first time, evaluation experts, monitoring practitioners and managers from the three Implementing Agencies, the Executing Agencies, the GEF Secretariat and the GEFME.

The participants discussed current practices and problems in monitoring and evaluation, the information needs of stakeholders, key priority areas of joint work within both monitoring and evaluation, and mechanisms of cooperation. The workshop concluded the following:

- (a) The GEF should establish "minimum standards" for monitoring and evaluation that reflect best practice, harmonization and simplification.
- (b) The responsibilities for GEF monitoring should lie with operational units. The GEFME should focus on evaluation and oversight, and consequently discontinue the use of "monitoring" in its name.
- (c) Agency evaluation offices should also be part of GEFME to enhance the combined capacity of the

GEF system to effectively meet monitoring and evaluation needs.

- (d) The GEF partners should strengthen joint initiatives, especially for impact assessments and country portfolio evaluations.
- (e) A joint evaluation of the GEF programming cycle and modalities should be undertaken.

The consultative process on monitoring and evaluation will continue over the coming months. Together, the partners will undertake an in-depth review of policies and practices in the GEF system to benchmark best practices.

Robert D. Van den Berg, the Director of the Office of Monitoring and Evaluation of the GEF, stressed in the workshop that, ultimately, this process aims to help the GEF meet demands for information, rationalization, and harmonization of tools and instruments.

Stakeholders will be kept informed of progress by updates at the GEF Council meeting in June 2005. The new GEFME policy is expected to be presented to the Council in December 2005.

*More information on the policy can be found under the GEF Monitoring and Evaluation section of the Council Documents pages of the November 2004 GEF Council meeting at [www.theGEF.org](http://www.theGEF.org), or contact Siv Tokle at [stokle@theGEF.org](mailto:stokle@theGEF.org).*

**Third Overall Performance Study of the GEF Continues on Track** Progress continues to be made on the Third Overall Performance Study of the GEF (OPS3). The study, which is being carried out by the international firm ICF Consulting, commenced in September 2004, and is expected to be completed in June 2005. The final report of the study will be presented at the June 2005 GEF Council meeting.

Both desk and field study components of the evaluation are progressing well. The desk review is practically completed and has helped the OPS3 team with stakeholder interviews and preparations for field visits. As of early-March 2005, the OPS3 team has visited 17 countries: Argentina, Brazil, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Czech Republic, Egypt, India, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Mauritius, the Philippines, Romania, Russia, South Africa, Tanzania, and Thailand. One remaining visit to Fiji is scheduled for mid-March. Most of these visits included two main activities: a review of the country's experience with the GEF, and regional consultation workshops with GEF Focal Points and NGO representatives.

Three members of the evaluation team and two members of the GEFME were present during the OPS3 visit to Egypt, which included a regional workshop with representatives from the Middle East and North African region, extensive discussions with the Egyptian government, and a visit to the GEF

project at Lake Manzala near the Mediterranean entrance of the Suez Canal.

*Further information about OPS3 is available on the GEF website, [www.theGEF.org](http://www.theGEF.org)*

## VI. News from the Implementing Agencies

### UNEP News

**UNEP and GEF Support Subregional Environmental Action Plans for NEPAD** From 2001 to 2003, through a GEF project, UNEP—in partnership with the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and the NEPAD Secretariat—helped African countries to prepare an Action Plan for the Environmental Initiative of NEPAD. Nine thematic workshops were convened, with more than 800 African experts participating. The Second Special session of AMCEN in June 2003 adopted the action plan, which was subsequently endorsed in Maputo, Mozambique, on July 12, 2003, by the Assembly of the African Union.

At the May 2004 Council meeting, the GEF Council extended its support to NEPAD. The Council members welcomed GEF's commitment to support a coordinated approach to implement the Action Plan for the Environmental Initiative of NEPAD. In June 2004, as an initial step towards fulfilling this commitment, a UNEP/GEF project on the Development of Subregional Environmental Action Plans for NEPAD, was approved by the GEF.

The first training and orientation workshop for the African Regional Economic Communities (REC) was held in September 2004. On January 10, 2005, UNEP and the NEPAD Secretariat signed a three-year agreement to enhance the human and institutional capacity of the five subregional African Economic Communities to implement the Environmental Initiative of NEPAD.

*For further information, please, contact Estherine Lisinge-Fotabong at [Estherine.Lisinge-Fotabong@unep.org](mailto:Estherine.Lisinge-Fotabong@unep.org)*

**Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building Finalized in Indonesia** The "Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building" was finalized in December 2004. The plan seeks to strengthen the capacity of developing countries, and those with economies in transition, to participate fully in the development of international environmental policy, to comply with international agreements and implement their obligations, and to achieve national environmental objectives and environment-related development goals. The plan aims to develop national capacity and infrastructure for environmental monitoring, assessment and

management, and facilitate access to environmentally sound technologies and know-how. It aims to enhance delivery by UNEP of technology support and capacity building, and strengthen cooperation among UNEP, the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements, and other bodies engaged in environmental capacity building, in particular UNDP and the GEF.

Developing countries will receive assistance based on self-identified needs for capacity-building and technology support to meet environmental priorities, drawing also on the outcomes of the GEF-supported National Capacity Needs Self Assessments (NCSA). Under the plan, UNEP activities will complement measures implemented by GEF, and will be coordinated with UNDP capacity-building activities.

A strategic partnership between UNEP and GEF will be developed and submitted for adoption by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and the GEF Council. This partnership would contribute to furthering the goals of the strategic plan.

Adoption of the plan comes at a time when the GEF has identified enhancing the capacity building of developing countries as a strategic priority for its third phase.

*For more information, please, contact Abdul-Majeid Haddad at [Abdul-Majeid.Haddad@unep.org](mailto:Abdul-Majeid.Haddad@unep.org)*

**UNEP-GEF Second Annual Review Meeting Held in Nairobi** UNEP held its second UNEP-GEF Annual Review Meeting in Nairobi from October 25-30, 2004. The purpose of the meeting was to review overall progress in implementation of the UNEP-GEF projects and to ensure that lessons identified feed back into project design and implementation. The meeting also addressed other substantive, organizational, financial and administrative matters, which affect the functioning of UNEP's Division of GEF Co-ordination, and the delivery of results on behalf of the GEF.

The meeting concluded with a number of recommendations aimed at enhancing project development and oversight. These are now being acted upon with a view to strengthening systems during 2005, including:

- (a) Establishment of a strengthened knowledge management mechanism to identify and document best practices and lessons; and development of a methodology, in combination with regular monitoring and evaluation activities, to collect such information.
- (b) Development of a new UNEP-GEF project manual to support and enhance project development and oversight throughout the project cycle.

- (c) Strengthening of the Divisional Review and Oversight Committee, including establishment of regular implementation review meetings focusing on projects identified by the "projects at risk" system, and establishment of focal-area task forces.
- (d) Efforts to further strengthen the UNEP-GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and streamline monitoring and evaluation and reporting requirements.
- (e) Development of a strategy to more effectively mobilize resources for cofinancing of UNEP-GEF projects.
- (f) Provision of training and other support for project managers and task managers.

Progress achieved in implementing all the recommendations will be reviewed throughout the year and at the next review meeting to be held towards the end of 2005.

## VII. News from GEF Small Grants Programme

**Regional and Subregional Workshops** By the close of its Second Operational Phase, the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) conducted six regional and subregional workshops in Malaysia, Kazakhstan/Kyrgyzstan, Uganda, Chile, Senegal, and Egypt. The workshops focused on:

- (a) The Central Program Management Team guidance to the national coordinators on the implementation of SGP Operational Phase III;
- (b) Exchange of lessons learned and experiences by national coordinators at regional and subregional levels, which included site visits to host country SGP projects; and
- (c) Preparation of regional strategic plans by national coordinators.

Two other subregional workshops complemented the achievement of the objectives of the regional workshops:

*Subregional consultations for South Asian countries, New Delhi, India, 16–20 January 2005.* At these workshops, national coordinators from the region declared "to work in collaboration to develop a regional body of knowledge, promote adaptation of innovative cost efficient solutions for community based initiatives, undertake joint resource mobilization and conduct action based advocacy on environmental issues."

*Barbados and Organization of Eastern Caribbean States met in Barbados January 27–28, 2005* to help chart a new direction for the SGP in the subregion. Amongst its decisions was a decentralization of the Barbados office to enable more direct contact with the communities on each island.

**Tsunami Impact on SGP Projects** In the wake of the tsunami, the national coordinators from India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand came together to help some of their affected communities restore the natural resource-based livelihoods of coastal communities. Building on the lessons learned from the Iran earthquake, they are also looking at helping revive native trees, food crops, and medicinal plants with local biodiversity contents. They are also looking at ways to help communities restore water supply systems, community centers, and schools using renewable energy to ensure more access and control for communities.

The tsunami affected three projects in India, three in Malaysia, six in Sri Lanka and three in Thailand. As for Indonesia, although the SGP does not have any projects in Banda Aceh, the SGP Indonesia team has a coordination role through its direct involvement in organizing volunteers from civil society to administer relief efforts through their network.

**SGP and the Small Island Developing States Conference** At the Small Island Developing States Conference in Mauritius January 10–17, 2005, the SGP hosted two training sessions:

- (i) “How can community, NGO, government and donor stakeholders better access SGP funds for partnerships and projects” for delegates and other meeting participants coming from SIDS that are already SGP countries; and
- (ii) “How can SIDS countries become a participant in the SGP” for government delegates and NGO participants coming from non-SGP SIDS.

The SGP also hosted a site visit to one of its projects: Sensitisation and Monitoring for Permanent Mooring Buoys. *Further information related to this project can be found at the UNDP SGP Web site:*  
<http://sgp.undp.org/index.cfm?Module=Projects&Page=ShowProject&ProjectID=3844>

**Other SGP Meetings** *SGP Central Program Management Team retreat*-February 24–25, to finalize the SGP 2005 work plan and implementation of OP#3. *SGP Global Workshop* June 19-27, Istanbul, Turkey.

**New Appointments at the SGP** *Current members* of the Central Program Management Team are the following: Delfin Ganapin, Global Manager; Laurence Reno, Deputy Global Manager, Operations; Stephen Gitonga, Environmental Specialist, Climate Change; Marie Aminata Khan, Knowledge Facilitator; Aida Liza-Mayor, Administrative Associate. Recently, four *new staff members* have joined the Central Program Management Team: Nick Remple, Deputy Global Manager, Program; Uygur Özesmi, Environmental Specialist, Land Degradation, International Waters, and Persistent Organic Pollutants; Terence Hay-Edie,

Environmental Specialist, Biodiversity; and Marie-Claire Angwa, Program Associate.

The new staff will assist in increasing the program’s global reach and strengthening its existing programs. Talking Points would like to welcome all four new staff members and wish them success.

## VIII. News from STAP

**GEF Welcomes New STAP Chair** Yolanda Kakabadse was appointed as the new Chair of STAP to serve from January 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006. Ms. Kakabadse’s nexus with the environmental conservation movement officially began in 1979 when she was appointed Executive Director of Fundacion Natura. Ms. Kakabadse helped Fundacion Natura become one of Latin America’s prominent environmental organizations.

From 1990 to 1992, Ms. Kakabadse was in charge of coordinating the participation of civil society organizations in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit). She was appointed Minister of the Environment for Ecuador during the period 1998 to 2000. Ms. Kakabadse was also the President of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) from 1996 to 2004. She is a member of several boards of trustees and directors, such as the Ford Foundation and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. Finally, Ms. Kakabadse has received a number of awards as well as decorations.

**STAP Publishes Tool to Enhance Understanding of GEF Interlinkages** In recent years, there has been increased interest in analyzing and understanding how the interlinkages among biodiversity, climate change, land degradation, and freshwater and coastal systems affect human well-being and sustainable development.

The GEF has embraced this topic more in its recent operational programs, such as ecosystem management (OP#12), and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity (OP#13). Moreover, the introduction of adaptation to climate change as a new strategic priority further indicates the GEF’s determination to tackle this issue.

As a means of enhancing the understanding of interlinkages, the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) has produced a report titled: *A Conceptual Design Tool for Exploiting Interlinkages between the Focal Areas of the GEF*. The report, which was presented to the GEF Council at its November 2005 meeting, provides a brief account of the scientific underpinnings of the interlinkages, while systematically identifying the most important ones. Furthermore, the report has presented a conceptual design tool to help incorporate interlinkages into project design, and thereby improve the delivery of



global benefits and the sustainability of GEF projects. The design tool consists of a series of questions that GEF project developers can use as a guide for ensuring that the important linkages have been addressed in the project design, thus ensuring that the project is less likely to have negative impacts on other focal areas and be able to maximize the positive effects from the synergies.

It is expected that this tool will enable the GEF to exploit potential synergies between focal areas in a more systematic way. However, further work will be conducted in order to make this design tool operational. The design tool was prepared in collaboration with the GEF Secretariat, UNEP, UNDP, and the World Bank, as well as with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention to Combat Desertification, and the RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands.

*The full report was presented to the GEF Council as an information paper at the November Council Meeting (GEF/C.24/Inf.10) and is available on the GEF website, [www.theGEF.org](http://www.theGEF.org).*

## X. Good Practice Notes

**South Africa: Integrating Biodiversity Issues into National Sustainable Development Plans** South Africa is one of the 12 biological “mega-diversity” countries of the world, due in large part to the Cape Floral Kingdom. South Africa has made impressive progress in integrating biodiversity issues and concerns into its development projects, and in the process achieving positive outcomes for both development and biodiversity. In this regard, GEF projects in South Africa have played a catalytic role in the integration process. For mainstreaming to achieve lasting impact, it must occur at a local level, and become a part of ordinary peoples’ lives.

The foundation for GEF intervention in South Africa was laid by the Cape Action Plan for the Environment (CAPE). This was a strategy and action plan prepared by South Africa with the assistance of the GEF to conserve and restore the Cape Floral Kingdom while providing significant benefits to the livelihoods of local communities through a participatory and government supported process. CAPE established a number of projects to implement the strategy and some of these projects were funded by the GEF. The CAPE project has also contributed to the development of an institutional structure for the protection of the environment in the Cape Floral Kingdom.

GEF funding has acted as a catalyst in the region, helping to mobilize other agencies and ministries resulting in the establishment of a high level of engagement within the country on environmental issues. It was able to raise the profile of

environmental issues to the national level and to get the attention of the high level political leaders, thus, obtaining “buy-in” at a national level. The CAPE program also implemented projects through existing institutions to strengthen and build their capacities and identified champions in other sectors who understand the economic and development benefits which can be gained from environmental activities. The Ministry of Environmental Affairs and Tourism became the economic driver and the activities were linked to the political commitments from the biodiversity convention, which requires states to integrate the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral plans, programs and policies.

By virtue of its funding role, the GEF was able to obtain an overview of the total environmental portfolio in the country and provide technical input on the development of projects that have contributed to the integration of biodiversity into mainstream development in South Africa in various ways.

*For more information on the CAPE Action Plan for the Environment go to <http://www.capeaction.org.za/>*

## IX. New GEF Publications

**Reducing Risks of Climate Change** (*Folder and Fact Sheets*) [Available online at: [www.theGEF.org](http://www.theGEF.org)] The ability of people and institutions in developing countries to combat climate change is highlighted in a series of fact sheets, released to coincide with the 10th Conference of the Parties of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which took place in Buenos Aires in December 2004. The fact sheets review GEF’s contribution to such issues as strengthening country capacity to support the UNFCCC, helping countries conduct national capacity self-assessments, and expanding local renewable energy programs.

**Operational Report on GEF Projects (2004)** [Available online at: [www.theGEF.org](http://www.theGEF.org) and on CD-ROM] The annual Operational Report on GEF Programs (ORGP) is a comprehensive, country-by-country guide to GEF projects. It includes entries for both active and closed projects. The ORGP provides a descriptive review and status report on all projects, as provided by GEF’s three Implementing Agencies (UNDP, UNEP, and the World Bank.)

*For copies of these publications, call (202) 473-0508; e-mail: [rodriguez@theGEF.org](mailto:rodriguez@theGEF.org); or write to the Global Environment Facility Secretariat, 1818 H St., NW, Washington, DC, 20433, USA.*

## X. Other News

**GEF Activities at Small Island Developing States Meeting** The GEF played a leading role at the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The conference was held in Port Louis, Mauritius, from January 10–14, 2005.

GEF Chairman and CEO Leonard Good led a small GEF delegation to this intergovernmental meeting on the future of SIDS. The GEF has provided \$365 million in grants to 39 different SIDS for projects totaling about \$1 billion in project costs. Mr. Good emphasized that GEF will continue its support for enabling activities and capacity building under the global environmental conventions as well as for projects that help SIDS make the transition to sustainable development.

Mr. Good also chaired a Ministerial Roundtable on building SIDS capacity and addressed several other sessions, including a seminar on the need to conserve marine systems for food security and poverty reduction, which was also attended by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and an informal session with Mauritian ministers on the importance of GEF assistance to SIDS.

Other GEF activities included the following: Side event on integrated approaches to land and water management; Side event on the GEF Small Grants Programme; Launch of a new publication, *The GEF and Small Island Developing States*, in English, Spanish, and French; GEF exhibit at the Freeport Exhibition Centre; and a reception with CARICOM and the Pacific Islands Forum for Ministers and other high-level officials.

Following the conference, there was a site visit to a SGP project to conserve the Mauritian Echo-Parakeet.

<http://sgp.undp.org/index.cfm?Module=Projects&Page=ShowProject&ProjectID=137>

*For more information, or to order the GEF publication on SIDS, please, contact Raul Rodriguez at [rrodriguez@theGEF.org](mailto:rrodriguez@theGEF.org).*

## XI. Focal Point Update

GEF country Focal Points play a key role in ensuring that GEF projects are country-driven and based on national priorities. There are two types of GEF country focal points: **Political Focal Points** are responsible for GEF governance issues and policies and communications with their constituencies. All member countries have political focal points; and **Operational Focal Points** are responsible for in-country program coordination of GEF projects and other operational activities. Only countries eligible for GEF funding are expected to designate operational focal points.

A complete listing of Council Members, Alternates, and focal points can be found on the Council Members page of the GEF Web site, [www.theGEF.org](http://www.theGEF.org). The GEF Secretariat would like to welcome all new Council Members, Alternate and Focal Points (*see attachment for list of new Members and focal points*).

*A complete listing of GEF focal points, and further information on the roles and responsibilities of focal points, can be located through the Participants page of the GEF Web site:*

[http://www.thegef.org/participants/focal\\_points/focal\\_points.html](http://www.thegef.org/participants/focal_points/focal_points.html)

<b>New GEF Council Members, Alternates and Focal Points November 2004-March 2005</b>			
<b>Council Members</b>			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Date of Nomination</b>
Ms. Amalia Garcia-Thörn	Sweden	Council Member	11/08/2004
Mr. Carlos Alberto de Sousa Monteiro	Cape Verde	Council Member / Political Focal Point	11/09/2004
Mr. Nikita B. Bantsekin	Russian Federation	Council Member	12/28/2004
Mr. Kang-ho Park	Republic of Korea	Council Member	12/28/2004
Mr. Effendy SUMARDJA	Indonesia	Council Member / Operational Focal Point	01/12/2005
Mr. Julio Prado Espinosa	Ecuador	Council Member / Political Focal Point	02/28/2005
Mr. Theophile Chabi WOROU	Benin	Council Member / Political Focal Point	03/01/2005
Ms. Jiayi Zou	China	Council Member	03/09/2005
<b>Alternates</b>			
Ms. Violeta Ivanov	Moldova	Alternate / Operational Focal Point	11/15/2004
Mr. Alan Cook	New Zealand	Alternate / Political Focal Point	12/28/2004
His Excellency Robert G. Aisi	Papua New Guinea	Alternate	01/13/2005
Mr. Donald Cooper	Bahamas	Alternate / Operational Focal Point	03/01/2005
Mr. Javad Amin-Mansour	Iran	Alternate	03/09/2005
Mr. Mogos Woldeyohannis	Eritrea	Alternate / Political Focal Point / Operational Focal Point	03/09/2005
Mr. Jinlin Yang	China	Alternate	03/09/2005
<b>Political Focal Points</b>			
His Excellency Jorge Skinner-Klée	Guatemala	Political Focal Point	01/13/2005
Dr. Lunh Heal	Cambodia	Political Focal Point / Operational Focal Point	01/14/2005
Mr. Gerimantas Gaigalas	Lithuania	Political Focal Point/	01/27/2005
Mr. Earl Nesbitt	Trinidad and Tobago	Political Focal Point	01/27/2005
His Excellency Fortunato Ofambo	Equatorial Guinea	Political Focal Point	01/27/2005
Her Excellency Ruth Elizabeth Rouse	Grenada	Political Focal Point	01/27/2005
His Excellency Zoran Shapuric	Macedonia	Political Focal Point	01/27/2005
Mr. Yeon-chul Yoo	Republic of Korea	Political Focal Point	01/27/2005
Mr. Bory Alikhanov	Uzbekistan	Political Focal Point	02/11/2005
Mr. Donald Capelle	Marshall Islands	Political Focal Point	02/11/2005
His Excellency David Holosivi	Solomon Islands	Political Focal Point	02/11/2005
Dr. Miroslav Nikcevic	Serbia and Montenegro	Political Focal Point	02/11/2005
Mr. Hugh O'Brien	Belize	Political Focal Point	02/11/2005
His Excellency Alfred Sesay	Sierra Leone	Political Focal Point	02/11/2005
Mr. Attila Korodi	Romania	Political Focal Point	02/14/2005
Mr. Nader Mirfakhrai	Australia	Political Focal Point	02/14/2005
Ms. Jette Lund	Denmark	Political Focal Point	03/09/2005

Name	Country	Category	Date of Nomination
<b>Operational Focal Points</b>			
Prof. Hasan Z. Sarikaya	Turkey	Operational Focal Point	12/13/2004
Mr. Valentine G. Stepankov	Russian Federation	Operational Focal Point	12/14/2004
Dr. Pir Mohammad Azizi	Afghanistan	Operational Focal Point	12/15/2004
Mr. Sékou Mohamed Camara	Guinea	Operational Focal Point	01/13/2005
Dr. Colmore S. Christian	Dominica	Operational Focal Point	01/13/2005
Mr. Poddiwela Marage Leelaratne	Sri Lanka	Operational Focal Point	01/13/2005
Mr. Steve Likaveke	Solomon Islands	Operational Focal Point	01/13/2005
Mr. Mahmoud M. Shidiwah	Yemen	Operational Focal Point	01/13/2005
Mr. Jose Teixeira	East Timor	Operational Focal Point	01/13/2005
Mr. Luis Molinas Belen	Paraguay	Operational Focal Point	01/14/2005
Mr. Santaigo-Francisco Engonga Esono	Equatorial Guinea	Operational Focal Point	01/27/2005
Mr. Tyrone Deiye	Nauru	Operational Focal Point	02/11/2005
Mr. Sudhir Mital	India	Operational Focal Point	02/11/2005
Mr. Sauni Tongatule	Niue	Operational Focal Point	02/11/2005
Mr. Silviu Stoica	Romania	Operational Focal Point	02/14/2005
Mr. Keith Muhakanizi	Uganda	Operational Focal Point	03/09/2005
Ms. Analiza Rebuelta-Teh	Philippines	Operational Focal Point	03/09/2005
Mr. Alamir Sinna Toure	Mali	Operational Focal Point	03/09/2005