



# Talking Points

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## News Quarterly for Global Environment Facility Focal Points

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### Part I. The Second GEF Assembly

#### 1. A brief note

The Second GEF Assembly was held in Beijing on October 16-18, 2002, at the kind invitation of the Government of China. The GEF Assembly, held every four years, is the one occasion on which all governments participating in the GEF gather to exchange views on policies and operations of the GEF.

More than 1,200 participants were registered, of which 477 country delegates, 240 Observers, 200 NGO representatives, 158 from the Media, 55 from Major Groups and 87 representatives from Implementing Agencies, Executing Agencies and the GEF Secretariat. 64 countries were represented at ministerial level.

The Assembly concluded by endorsing the **Beijing Declaration of the Second GEF Assembly**. The Declaration addresses the expanded mandate of the GEF, welcomes the third replenishment, the largest ever, and invites the GEF to assist in the implementation of the results of the World Summit on Sustainable

Development, which was held in Johannesburg in September 2002.

The Declaration also calls for the GEF to be strengthened in key areas including:

- Enhancement of GEF activities at the country level
- Capacity building
- Strategic planning
- Project cycle
- Incremental costs
- Catalytic role
- Technology transfer and private sector
- Measuring performance through strengthened monitoring and evaluation.

The Council will be reviewing at its meeting in May 2003 an action plan on concrete steps to be taken to respond to the Beijing Declaration. The full text of the Beijing Declaration has been published, together with press releases from the Assembly, on the GEF website

[www.gefweb.org](http://www.gefweb.org).

## An important “Farewell”

Mr. Mohamed El-Ashry announced his decision to step down from his position as Chairman and CEO of the GEF in July 2003, at the end of his third term. In his speech to the Assembly he thanked the numerous people who had helped to make his tenure a success, saying that it was a privilege for him to know and work together with Council Members, country and convention representatives, international and NGO leaders, colleagues in the Implementing Agencies, and the staff of the GEF Secretariat.

Quoting the Lebanese poet and philosopher Khalil Gibran, he said:

*“Farewell to you, and to the days and nights I spent with you;  
It was but yesterday when we met in a dream and we have built together towers in the sky;  
But the noon tide is upon us and the dream has turned into awakening and I need to part!”*

In his own words, the only thing he knows is environment and sustainable development, and he will continue to work for these always wherever he is.

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## 2. New GEF Focal Areas

An important and historic decision was taken at the Second Assembly to approve by consensus amendments to the *Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured GEF*, adding **Land Degradation**, primarily desertification and deforestation, and **Persistent Organic Pollutants** as two new focal areas. The other four focal areas are Climate Change, Biological Diversity, International Waters and Ozone Layer Depletion.

In accordance with the Instrument, the agreed amendments will become effective once they are

adopted by the Implementing Agencies and the Trustee. On December 18, 2002, the Executive Directors of the World Bank, in its capacity as an Implementing Agency of the GEF and in its capacity as Trustee of the GEF Trust Fund, adopted the amendments to the Instrument.

The Executive Board of UNDP is expected to approve the amendments at the end of January, and the Governing Council of UNEP will consider the amendments at its meeting in February 2003.

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## 3. Assembly Side Events

The Assembly also provided the opportunity for all countries, GEF Implementing and Executing Agencies, NGOs, the science community and the private sector, to organize workshops to exchange information on results of GEF-financed projects and on experiences with GEF at regional and country level. In total, 39 workshops were organized on a wide variety of topics related to the work of the GEF.

The information provided in these workshops is important for focal points, particularly those who were not able to attend the Assembly. Therefore, you will find, also on the GEF website a document that summarizes the workshops. If you wish to receive further information on these topics, please contact Ton Boon von Ochssee ([tboonvonochssee@worldbank.org](mailto:tboonvonochssee@worldbank.org)).

## PART II: Reports from Countries

### 4. Bangladesh and Country Dialogue Workshop: A vehicle for capacity building

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) is a major catalyst for improving the global environment. The GEF encourages partnerships by bringing together multiple sources of funding for projects. As a co-financier, it provides “new and additional” funds to address global environmental issues. However, the cycle of funding and its procedures are not always clear to many of the recipient countries.

Country Dialogue Workshops (CDWs), organized by GEF, are opportunities for recipient countries to enhance their understanding of the GEF funding cycle. CDWs can also help a country with capacity building. The CDW workshop organized in Bangladesh earlier this year clearly demonstrated the necessity for such workshops, especially in those countries that have recently started accessing GEF funds.

The GEF Secretariat, the IAs and the host country organize the CDW jointly. Representatives from all IAs, the GEF Secretariat and other agencies participate. Similarly, in Bangladesh, participants from all strata of the host country - government agencies, NGOs, civil society members, and academicians were present. The CDW enabled the operational focal point (OFP) to interact with the GEF Secretariat and IA representatives, while creating a window for the civil society representatives to understand the entire GEF cycle. This was definitely a major benefit to Bangladesh. Likewise, those countries that are starting to access GEF funds would immensely benefit from hosting a CDW in their own country.

The benefits can be summarized as follows:

- Improved and satisfactory relationship between GEF and the OFP
- Strengthening of relationship between OFP and national stakeholders

- Development of a lasting relationship between GEF, IAs and the host country’s government.

Furthermore, the CDW in Bangladesh permitted the IAs to experience firsthand the capacity and capability of Bangladesh, and more importantly the city’s limitations. This experience has improved the working relationship between all parties. While the OFP has been strengthened through the raised awareness on part of the stakeholders, the downside has been the increased expectation that has not been offset with matching funds. This can be overcome with assurances of a sympathetic response from GEF to proposals received from countries that have not been able to adequately access GEF funds.

However, to make the CDW process even more worthwhile, there are a few other issues that need to be discussed. This cannot and must not be a one-time affair. Follow-up workshops must be held both on a national and regional level. The country-level workshop should concentrate on issues of preparing more focused proposals and answering to the newer needs of the national stakeholders. I feel that the national OFP should organize this CDW with their resource.

Another series of follow-up CDW needs to be organized on a regional basis. This should be led by the GEF itself. In my opinion, such a workshop is critical since many of our problems are not confined to national boundaries. Experience of writing regional proposals remain limited, if not absent. This would help in developing regional proposals to solve regional problems.

I leave this idea open for further deliberation.

**Sabihuddin Ahmed, Operational Focal Point**  
*Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Forest,*  
*Government of the People's Republic of*  
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## 5. Cambodia's Strategic Direction

### ***Framework for a GEF strategy for Cambodia***

Article 59 of the Constitution of Cambodia states that:

“the State shall protect the environment and balance abundant natural resources and establish a precise plan of management of land, water, air, wind, geology, ecological systems, mine, energy, petrol and gas, rocks and sand, gems, forest and forestry products, wildlife, fish and aquatic resources”.

Following this Article, the Royal Decrees, Environmental Law and Sub-decrees were established to protect the quality of the environment and the natural resources in Cambodia. This legislation consists of the following documents:

Royal Decree on the Creation and Designation of the Protected Areas (1993); Law on Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Management (1996); Sub-decree on Water Pollution Control, Solid Waste Management, Environmental Impact Assessment (1999), and Air and Noise Pollution Control (2000).

Moreover, in order to solve and address the environmental problems, Cambodia signed the Convention on Wetland of International Importance (the Ramsar Convention) in 1999, the Convention on Biological Diversity in 1995 and the Convention on Marine Pollution in 1994 and ratified the Convention on Climate Change in 1995. In the near future, Cambodia will ratify the United Nations Convention on the law of the sea.

### ***Planning and Policy Framework***

For planning purposes and as a policy framework, the Government produced the First Five-Year Socioeconomic Plan (1996-2000), which concentrated on management, conservation and protection of Cambodia's environment and natural resources in an ecologically sustainable manner to assist in alleviating poverty. Furthermore, the management of environment, the protection of natural resources in sustainable use and balancing of the environment are also included

in the Second Five-year Socioeconomic Plan (2001-2005).

To achieve effective implementation of the Socioeconomic Plan, the Ministry of Environment produced the National Environmental Action Plan (NEAP) 1998-2002 in order to integrate the environmental concerns into national and local development policies, economic decision-making and investment planning. The NEAP focused on six key areas: 1) the forest policy, 2) the fisheries and floodplain agriculture in Tonle Sap region, 3) coastal fisheries, 4) biodiversity and protected areas, 5) energy development and the environment, 6) and urban waste management.

In addition, as a response to the Five-Year Socioeconomic Plan and NEAP, the Ministry of Environment also published a continuous Strategic Plan for the periods 1998-2000, and 2001-2003, to guide the institutions under the supervision of the Ministry of Environment to conduct their tasks in an effective manner. The Strategic Plan is focused on the following major areas: Strengthening the capacity of the Ministry's staff through training in Cambodia and overseas; Promoting nature protection and conservation; Preparing environmental policies and legal instruments; and Promoting environmental education and communication.

In the mid-90s, as logging and deforestation became an issue for the international and donor community, the Government of Cambodia set up a forest policy to prevent illegal logging and uncontrolled deforestation. In 1995, it requested the World Bank, UNDP and FAO to conduct a selective review of important issues in the forest sector and to initiate dialogue on sectoral development policies. In 1996, the Royal Government of Cambodia formed a National Steering Committee to manage forest reform process. Drafting of the new forest legislation began in 1998. With these actions the Royal Government of Cambodia has started a forest reform forwards better concession management.

### ***Institutional Framework***

Regarding the preserving and the protection of natural resources in Cambodia, there has to be close cooperation between all concerned institutions, especially the Ministry of Environment (MoE) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF). Connected to its mission, the MoE operates with the following principles: the recognition of the link between poverty and environmental degradation; commitment to a participatory approach in dealing with environmental issues; acceptance of the need for an integrated approach to most environmental problems; and the importance of strengthening relevant institutions and awareness building.

The mission of the MAFF is to support the economic growth of Cambodia by providing high quality services which result in a secure food supply, increased agricultural output and add value on a sustainable and cost-effective basis to the agricultural, fisheries and forest based sectors.

In order to maintain sustainable development and to address national, regional and global concerns, the cooperation between institutions and between countries are essential. In response to the ratification of the Climate Change and Biodiversity Conventions, GEF has approved funding for 15 projects in Cambodia.

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## **6. Comments from Slovenia on GEF and national coordination efforts.**

Slovenia joined the GEF in 1994, and it is gradually changing its status of recipient country to donor country in the GEF and within the international community in general. So far it has benefited from the GEF assistance in all focal areas and has worked with all three implementing agencies. The fact that none of them has its office in Slovenia, has not represented a major obstacle for successful work.

The roles of political and operational Focal Point in Slovenia have been merged from the very beginning. These tasks have been delegated to an official within the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Energy (and do not represent a major part of his working load). Important GEF-related decisions exceeding his authority (especially for the signing of endorsement letters) require approval by the superiors. The decision for this approach was adopted on presumption that the Focal Point should have first-hand knowledge and lines of communication and responsibility should be as simple and transparent as possible.

The Slovenian GEF Focal Point (FP) maintains and facilitates contacts and processes among various stakeholders in GEF activities. The

precondition for such work is a working knowledge and an awareness of priority needs in GEF-eligible areas. The FP's effectiveness strongly depends on networking and exchange of information as well as on cooperation with the Convention's Focal Points.

Many people know the GEF primarily as the most important global financial instrument for environmental projects. But the effectiveness and the advantage of GEF financing cannot always be measured by immediate financial or technological results. Building partnerships and raising public awareness can change the perception and make a long term difference. This can often be achieved by rather modest financial means and the right approach. The GEF initiative to support the Focal Point implemented in Slovenia in co-operation with the UNDP RBEC Office from Bratislava (Slovak Republic) has substantially increased the level of communication between the GEF Focal Point and the NGO's which have been fully entrusted to implement the initiative.

In 2001, the national Office of the Regional Environmental Center (REC) established the GEF website in Slovenian language,

[http://www.recj.si/projekti/gef/kaj\\_je\\_sklad.htm](http://www.recj.si/projekti/gef/kaj_je_sklad.htm), and prepared a series of workshops on key issues in biodiversity and on climate change for Slovenia. The basic idea was to launch (some) proposals for future GEF projects. There was some disappointment among those participants who worked hard to prepare proposals that failed to meet all the eligibility criteria. However, inputs provided by the participants were a mirror of the environmental situation in the country and the workshops assisted in the understanding how the GEF could play a role. The results of the workshops substantially exceeded the expectations. The outcome could be described as a synthesis of perceptions and proposals provided by the professional participants representing the public/civil society about the needs and priorities for Slovenia in specific fields of biodiversity and climate change. These results proved to be an important verification tool for the Ministry's work in these fields and quite helpful for planning further work. In addition the entire activity improved the general feeling of partnership between the NGO's and the administration.

The praxis of partnership with the NGO's with the aim for strengthening of public awareness about the GEF has continued in 2002. Through the support provided to the "Slovenian E-forum"

to implement the campaign "Save the Climate Together," an exhibition with several posters, live explanation and demonstrations were presented in several elementary schools all over Slovenia. "The Day of Climate Change" campaign was also presented in the national Parliament. Posters described GEF activities in general and the GEF's project in Slovenia are part of this presentation which is briefly promoted (in English) on the webpage: <http://www.ljudmila.org/sef/en/activities/index.htm>.

Slovenia plans to continue a similar approach towards use of the available GEF support to the Focal Point also in the year 2003. Through the partnership with NGO's, the effects of the GEF Focal Point's work are being multiplied and the mission of the GEF progressively fulfilled. It need to be recognized that the dedicated work and expertise of some devoted individuals has been key in working together in seeking solutions and increasing awareness of the local environmental issues linked to the global environment.

*Emil Ferjancic, GEF Alternate Member, Political/Operational Focal Point, Ministry of Environment, Slovenia.*

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## Part III: News from Monitoring & Evaluation

### 7. GEF/M&E and the Private Sector

The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation team (GEFME), in collaboration with the three GEF Implementing Agencies (UNDP, UNEP, The World Bank Group), is undertaking a review to assess the results of engagement between the GEF and the private sector since the inception of the GEF. Specific objectives of the review are to: (i) Identify the instruments employed by the GEF and its implementing agencies in engaging the private sector; (ii) Assess the results and impacts of projects on the private sector; (iii) Document lessons learned; and (iv) Recommend future directions.

The review is being carried out in two phases, commencing with a desk review and consultation with the implementing and executing agencies to identify the major issues emerging from the portfolio, followed by visits to selected projects to assess the issues in depth. The methodology for the study will cover the following broad areas: (i) Review of relevant documentation at the GEF Secretariat, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, the World Bank/International Finance Corporation, and the relevant Executing Agencies under Expanded Opportunities; (ii) Visits to the Implementing Agencies and Executing Agencies and

discussions with GEF regional coordinators and task managers of enabling activities; (iii) Consultations with relevant stakeholders such as private sector project proponents, business associations, relevant bilateral and multilateral agencies, international, regional and local NGOs, including academic institutions; (iv) Consultations with relevant private sector associations – national and international – who are not directly associated with the project; (v)

Preparation of project case studies on selected projects by local consultants; (vi) Visits to projects and project management units by study team members.

A issues report on the review will be presented for discussion to the GEF Council for its meeting in May 2003. A final report will be prepared by June 2003.

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## **8. SMPR: Secretariat Managed Project Reviews**

### ***Secretariat Managed Project Reviews: Pilot Phase – Calendar 2002***

Over the past few years, the GEF Secretariat and the GEF Implementing Agencies have discussed the need to balance emphasis and resources between the reviews of project quality at entry and quality of project implementation. The GEF Council has also expressed the need for a greater emphasis on the achievements and impacts of GEF-financed projects on the global environment. The Secretariat Managed Project Reviews (SMPRs) was introduced as a way to respond to these needs. The GEF Monitoring and Evaluation Unit of the Secretariat has taken the lead in this exercise, working in collaboration with the three GEF Implementing Agencies, governments, and project teams. In 2002, the SMPR was conducted as a pilot with the idea to continue in the future after a comprehensive and inclusive review is conducted in the first quarter of 2003.

The objectives of the SMPR are (1) to assess whether projects are implemented in conformity with project objectives and GEF policies, standards and procedures, especially concerning attainment of global environmental objectives, and (2) to extract lessons learned on conformity to improve portfolio quality. In particular, the SMPR reviews the following eight issues related to project implementation: implementation approach (changes in project objectives since Council approval, implementation partnerships, risk management), country ownership, stakeholder participation, sustainability, financing plans, cost effectiveness of project

implementation, replicability, and monitoring and evaluation.

In 2002, the SMPR covers 15 projects from the biodiversity, climate change and international waters focal areas which are at the mid-stage in implementation. In addition, the subset was selected from those projects that included within their objectives engagement of the private sector and involvement of beneficiaries so as to provide information for upcoming M&E reviews on those topics. From these 15 projects, 7 were selected for desk reviews and at least 8 for field visits. These two modalities have taken place in parallel between June and December 2002. Both field visits and desk reviews are conducted by panels formed specially for the SMPR exercise. These panels are composed of 3 or 4 members from the GEF M&E, GEF Secretariat technical units, an expert consultant with expertise in the technical subject matter of the project and a representative of an IA not implementing the project. Each SMPR has a final review report. In addition, the GEF M&E will prepare a summary report to be presented to the GEF Council in May 2003.

The GEF Focal points in all the countries selected for field visits have actively participated in this monitoring exercise. Their role has extended from participation in field visits and panel discussions as well as coordinating the agenda of the review panels. The GEF Secretariat would like to express its appreciation for their contribution.



## List of projects in SMPR 2002

### **Biodiversity**

\*Vietnam: Creating Protected Areas for Resource Conservation using Landscape Ecology; \*Latin America and Caribbean / Regional: Terra Capital Biodiversity Fund Syria: Conservation of Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management; Micronesia: Community Conservation and Compatible Enterprise Development in Pohnpei; \*Cambodia: Biodiversity and Protected Area Management Pilot Project for the Virachey National Park; Belize: Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Barrier Reef Complex; Georgia: Integrated Coastal Zone Management.

### **Climate Change**

Cote d'Ivoire: Energy Efficiency Market Development; \*Sudan: Barrier Removal to Secure PV Market Penetration in Semi-Urban

Sudan; \*Czech Republic: Low Cost/Low Energy Buildings in the Czech Republic; \*Global: Redirecting Commercial Investments Decisions to Cleaner Technologies; Poland: Coal to Gas conversion.

### **International Waters**

Regional: Indian Ocean Oil Spill Contingency; Regional: Program on Building Partnerships in Environmental Protection and Management for the East Asia Seas; \*Brazil: Implementation of Integrated Watershed Management Practices for the Pantanal and Upper Paraguay River Basin.

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## Part IV: Communication

### 9. GEF Focal Points: Updating names and addresses

#### **GEF Website: The Source for Accurate Focal Point Information**

In order to work effectively and efficiently, it is important for the GEF to be able to contact the individuals in governments of countries participating in the GEF. With that purpose in mind, countries were asked to nominate a *political focal point* to whom all GEF-related information and correspondence could be sent. In view of GEF's constituency representation system, focal points also serve as the points of contact between Council Members and other members of their constituency.

The Council has consistently emphasized the need to ensure that projects are country-driven and conceived in a nationally coordinated manner with the full involvement of a country's operational agencies. It is in that context that recipient Governments have been asked to identify an *operational focal point*.

It is important for all stakeholders, nationally and internationally, to be able to contact the

GEF focal points. To ensure an up-to-date listing of the focal points (political and operational), we kindly request that changes in the name(s) and address(es) of the focal points be sent by official correspondence to Mr. Ton Boon von Ochssee, the Country Relations Manager at the GEF secretariat..

The list of all focal points—operational and political—is posted on the website. Please review the names and addresses for any changes and perhaps information could be added regarding an e-mail address. In an Annex to this newsletter, we have added a form that you can use to send the secretariat any changes in the focal point information as it now appears on the website.

Your attention and cooperation is highly appreciated.



## 10. New GEF Publications.

The most recent GEF publications are available on the GEF Web site, [www.gefweb.org](http://www.gefweb.org):

- "The Challenge of Sustainability: An Action Agenda for the Global Environment" (English only);
- GEF Annual Report, 2001 (English, French, and Spanish)
- "GEF...Dynamic Partnerships, Real Solutions" (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish);

- "High Priorities: GEF's Contribution to Preserving; and
- Sustaining Mountain Ecosystems" (English only).

To access online copies of these and other recent GEF publications, click on "Outreach & Publications," then "publications." Printed copies of these publications can be ordered by writing to GEF or E-mail "rrodriguez@worldbank.org". GEF press releases are available in English, French and Spanish. Visit [www.gefweb.org](http://www.gefweb.org), then click on "Outreach & Publications," then "Press Releases" for more information.

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## GEF Contact Information

### GEF Secretariat

The Global Environment Facility  
1818 H Street, NW  
Washington, D.C., 20433 USA

The GEF website address is [www.gefweb.org](http://www.gefweb.org)  
The Secretariat telephone number is 202-473-0508.  
Faxes may be sent to 202-522-3240/3245.

### Implementing Agencies

[www.Worldbank.org/GEF](http://www.Worldbank.org/GEF)  
[www.UNDP.org/GEF](http://www.UNDP.org/GEF)  
[www.UNEP.org/GEF](http://www.UNEP.org/GEF)



**FOCAL POINT CONTACT INFORMATION**

Please complete this form and forward it, together with your letter of notification, to Mr. Ton Boon von Ochssee, Country Relations Manager, GEF Secretariat, MSN G6-602, 1818 H Street, Washington D.C., 20433. Fax: 202 522 3240/5.

CURRENT FOCAL POINT		NEW FOCAL POINT	
<b>Name &amp; Title:</b>		<b>Name &amp; Title :</b>	
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Please circle: Political Focal Point                      YES/NO Operational Focal Point                  YES/NO		Please circle: Political Focal Point                      YES/NO Operational Focal Point                  YES/NO	
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