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**DRAFT STATEMENT OF YOLANDA KAKABADSE AT THE OPENING
OF THE TWENTY SEVENTH MEETING OF THE GEF COUNCIL,
WASHINGTON D.C.
8 NOVEMBER 2005**

(Prepared by the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel)



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Mr. Leonard Good and Co-chair,
Dear Council Members,

You will recall that at your last meeting, you requested the Chair to provide an action plan for your review at this meeting, which would include steps to ensure credibility of STAP review of projects across all operation programs. Immediately after your June meeting I convened a retreat of STAP members in Papallacta in Ecuador on 24-27 June 2005. The objective of this first ever retreat convened by STAP since its establishment in 1991, was to examine how better to deliver scientific and technical advice to the GEF. The results of the STAP members' retreat facilitated by a professional were submitted to the CEO and the Executive Director of UNEP as well as Mr. Olav Kjørven, the representative of UNDP, who attended the retreat in its last day.

The recommendations were further discussed with the Executive Coordinators of the three Implementing Agencies and the GEF Secretariat on 11 October 2005, at the last meeting of STAP held at the Bolger Center in Potomac. The results of these six months of interactive and consultative process are contained in the information note entitled "Improving the effectiveness of STAP". To produce this paper before you and secure the agreement of all our GEF partners in six months is a great achievement. But it is only the beginning. We now need to translate our agreements into concrete measures in order to equip STAP to address the challenges ahead ensuring that the GEF family has the best available scientific and technical advice. I am very grateful to the GEF Secretariat and the implementing agencies and in particular to the CEO of the GEF Secretariat, and to the Executive Director of UNEP. I am confident that Len Good and Mr. Töpfer will expedite the arrangements for administrative arrangements agreed at our retreat.

Before moving to other topics I would like to highlight that the changes we have proposed are budget neutral and supported by our partners, the GEF Secretariat and the Implementing Agencies.

I am also pleased to inform you a detailed presentation on the implications of the funding of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment was made at the last meeting of STAP, which greatly contributed to assisting STAP in finalizing its annual work programme. It was agreed that the work programme would revolve around the following targeted activities:

- Energy efficiency in new buildings;
- Modern biomass;
- Adaptation under the climate change regime;

- Indicators to monitor the progress of land degradation projects and Guidelines for the development of land degradation projects in humid and semi-humid areas;
- Implications of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment for the GEF, including development of markets for ecosystem services.

The Panel has already embarked in the preparation of the STAP triennial report to be submitted in accordance with the GEF Instrument to the third GEF Assembly. The report will highlight pertinent scientific and technological environmental issues in the immediate and distant future relevant to GEF and its focal areas. The implementation of the annual STAP work programme will also lead to a better coordination between STAP and the GEF Office of Monitoring and Evaluation.

As to our work since my last report in June this year, I am pleased to inform you that STAP, in accordance with its agreed last year work programme has successfully convened a workshop on liquid biofuels for the transport sector. The workshop, held from 29 August to 2 September, and attended by 44 experts made a number of recommendations that will be sent to the GEF Secretariat and the other implementing agencies. STAP at the request of the GEF secretariat and in collaboration with UNESCO organized a workshop in New Delhi on 19-22 September on the issue of managed artificial recharge of ground water. 50 experts participated in the meeting, which was instrumental in providing guidelines to the GEF for future GEF interventions on ground water which will complement and add value to the on-going activities in particular those implemented by UNESCO. STAP also convened a workshop on genetically modified fish in collaboration with the World Fish Center in Penang, Malaysia attended by 41 experts between 17-21 October.

I am confident that STAP will enhance its effectiveness and will be better equipped to fulfil its role as part of the GEF family and will assist the GEF from a scientific and technical stand point to respond to the challenges of its fourth phase. I look forward to reporting to your next session the first results of our internal changes.

I thank you for your attention