

**STATEMENT OF JULIA CARABIAS CHAIR OF STAP AT THE GEF  
COUNCIL.**

**Beijing, China**

**14 October, 2002**

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Council members,

It is my privilege and pleasure to be with you for the first time and to share with you the results of STAP's deliberations in its first meeting two weeks ago.

First of all, on behalf of the 15 members of STAP, allow me to express my gratitude to this Council for having placed your confidence in us to form part of the GEF family.

Let me also congratulate the GEF and especially its CEO, Mohammed El Ashry, for having consolidated the most important specialized financing mechanism for the international agreements on global environmental matters and very particularly for the achievements in the third replenishment of GEF .

As former Minister of Environment in Mexico I was a "heavy " user of the GEF and I can assure you that with your support we made a big difference for the environmental and forestry policy in my country. GEF became in

Mexico a real catalyst for innovative programs; it has produced significant results to improve and conserve our environment, and has contributed to meeting our obligations under various conventions. I want to take this opportunity to thank the Council for this support.

I am confident in saying that the GEF is achieving its objectives and commitments, not without obstacles or turbulence. That is why I accepted the honour of being appointed Chair of STAP. I hope to meet your expectations.

You have recognized that the GEF is facing a great deal of pressure that comes from the need to manage a growing demand in a resource constrained environment. I want to commit myself and the rest of the STAP members, to do our best to contribute to the success of the third phase of the GEF and the new challenges arising from the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD).

I recognize the important role the STAP has played in the second phase of the GEF and would like to thank in particular our predecessors for their talented work under the leadership of Professor Madhav Gadgil. This work is laid out in the Quadrennial report of STAP II, and I have the privilege to present it to you.

The report illustrates how STAP II has advised GEF on the state of scientific, technical and technological knowledge related to each focal area, highlighting their policy and operational implications to the GEF, how it has responded to GEF demands, and how its forward-looking agenda has shaped the GEF's work.

Among its achievements, STAP provided the scientific and technical elements for the GEF policy frameworks on agro biodiversity, on biodiversity conservation in forests; on persistent organic pollutants and adaptation to climate change; and identified the interlinkages between land degradation and biodiversity, water and climate change; and alerted the GEF family to the implications of power sector reform for renewable energy.

An important conclusion drawn in the report is the need for further research in support of GEF's programmes and projects, either through targeted research projects or research components in projects, particularly in those that are complex, experimental or innovative, or carried out in areas for which few data are available. Both pathways would lead to a greater involvement in GEF of scientific and technical communities at the national level, which was one of the recommendations coming out of the first GEF Assembly, and which was emphasized again in the OPS2.

STAP II built strong relations with global, regional and national networks and institutions, which will be further expanded and strengthened by STAP III.

### **STAP work programme**

In June STAP had a familiarization seminar organized by the GEF Secretariat, with the participation of the IAs, which was very illuminating for all of us, and which allowed us to elaborate a draft proposal for a work programme in preparation for our first meeting taking into account the business plan, the policy recommendations of the replenishment and the priorities identified by STAP II.

From the 26th to the 28th of September we had our first formal meeting to discuss our proposal with the GEF Secretariat and the Implementing Agencies as well as to receive their inputs. A second version of the work program is now circulating among the members of STAP and is soon to be sent to the GEF Secretariat and the IAs to receive their comments and produce the final version. I want to thank the Executive Director of UNEP, Dr. Klaus Topfer, for the time he has already spent with STAP. His orientations have been very important for our understanding of the role of STAP.

I would like to mention some of the elements and underlying thinking of this work program.

Firstly, we took into account the analysis and recommendations of the Second Overall Performance Study (OPS2) as a very valuable instrument, and responded to it in our work programme proposal.

One of the responses of GEF to OPS2 is the new approach of programming according to agreed strategic priorities. This is a major challenge for GEF that will require the efforts of all the participants and very importantly the scientific and technical support to maximize the impacts and results. GEF programs and projects need to continue to be based on and take into account innovative methods and instruments, cutting-edge science and new scientific findings.

Secondly, the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) highlighted the need to implement actions not only at the national level, but also at the regional level, recognizing the differences between regions and

approaching them in an integrated way to contribute to the alleviation of poverty. These orientations are going to influence the GEF operational programs and will definitely need the inputs of science and technology.

STAP as the body designed to bring scientific and technical knowledge into GEF work and alert the GEF to emerging issues and gaps, has taken this context into account when elaborating the work program.

In the new stage which GEF is in, STAP considers that it can contribute :

- to identify priorities among the various demands based on a broad understanding of global environmental issues;
- to identify new issues or innovative solutions scientifically supported and socially and economically viable , considering the particularities of every situation at the regional, national and local level, that would enhance the quality of GEF interventions;
- to help to develop indicators to measure project impacts in each of the focal areas as well as the impacts of GEF projects on the global environment.
- to alert the GEF to the latest findings and developments in the continuously evolving cross-disciplinary fields of environmental science and sustainable development, at the levels of both policy and operations

In light of the new challenges faced by the GEF; being the addition of new focal areas, an increasing range of activities under the Conventions and the setting of strategic programming objectives, demands for better planning, STAP prepared a triennial work plan in alignment with the GEF's rolling three year business plan. The triennial work plan will be a planning tool that will permit a more strategic advance programming of resources, whilst allowing flexibility to make annual adjustments in response to new demands and emerging issues.

This work plan provides a conceptual framework that identifies priorities by focal areas and also a set of cross-cutting issues, with an emphasis on interlinkages and integrated approaches, and with new issues such as knowledge management and sustainable patterns of consumption and production. Five strategic objectives linked to expected outputs by 2005 articulate where and how STAP will assist the GEF to achieve its goals. The plan includes a limited set of priorities where STAP can make an important contribution in the period 2003-2005. We have also given thought to ways to improve STAP operations.

The outputs proposed by STAP are:

1. The identification of scientific and technical priorities, emerging issues and gaps relevant to the GEF strategic work plan and implementation of operational programs.
2. The promotion of targeted research relevant to the GEF strategic priorities.

3. Scientific and technical advice to the GEF Secretariat and Implementing Agencies aimed at strengthening the project cycle,
4. Improved collaboration with other scientific and technical bodies, communities and private sector of relevance to the GEF priorities.
5. A contribution to the capacity building efforts in science and technology relevant for development and implementation of GEF projects.

We are at a time that it is very important to build an integrated approach and to define as clearly as possible the interlinkages between the global problems. It is necessary to propose methodologies, tools, and indicators that take into account those interlinkages.

STAP will help the GEF to incorporate science, technology, local and indigenous knowledge to develop an integrated approach and build the capacities to address biodiversity, land degradation, international waters, climate change, persistent organic pollutants, and the interlinkages existing between them. These will also help to build synergies across conventions.

That is how we have organized, with the support of the GEF Secretariat, the Panel on Science and the Global Environment: Integrated approaches: New challenges for the GEF as one of the side events of the Assembly.

The objective of this Panel is to offer a brainstorming forum to discuss new and emerging issues in a few key areas of the GEF and possible management responses, in light of the knowledge that changes in one area are affected by multiple factors and by different processes, thereby exposing existing cross-sectoral interlinkages. In the presentations by the panelists the emphasis will be placed on the scientific tools available and required for integrated management approaches, as well as on the barriers to overcome for the successful implementation of this approach.

Three topics were selected for the presentations: the impact of climate change on biodiversity; land degradation and persistent organic pollutants. A general analysis will be presented by the vice-chair on integrated ecosystem approach and the challenges it presents to the GEF.

We hope that STAP will play an important role in helping GEF in its process of setting priorities. It is very important to understand the impact GEF has had in the achievements of reversing global environmental problems. But it is impossible to understand the impact by just evaluating the results of each of the multiple projects GEF has supported, on an issue by issue approach. A new effort is needed to move from case studies and pilot projects towards a body of comparative and critical knowledge that can be used to design more effective and sustainable projects, that take an integrated approach. The GEF is the best source of information of hundreds of local and pilot projects, with different experiences, views, methodologies. The analysis of this information can provide the empirical data for the development of an integrated approach and the indicators needed to evaluate societal - biosphere interactions.



Finally, I would like to stress the benefits of STAP inputs in the project cycle, and STAP's plans to make those more strategic in this phase of the GEF, for a maximum benefit in terms of quality of the projects.

As you know, the two instruments in place for STAP to achieve this are on the one hand the roster of experts, and on the other STAP selective reviews at the different stages of the project cycle. With regard to the roster review system, STAP will suggest, at the May Council meeting, concrete options for establishing a review system that would maximize the effectiveness and benefits of roster reviews towards strengthening projects.

STAP is of the view that the project review process should contribute to the scientific and technical content and quality of projects in a more significant way without creating an additional hurdle or delay. Instead, the technical review should be built in the project cycle so as to be helpful and beneficial for the project formulation. We are working to provide a set of practices/guidelines that will enable a more targeted/focused scientific and technical evaluation of the different types of project proposals. We are also suggesting a review at an earlier stage before the project is "cast in stone" and two complementary reviewers for certain types of projects.

STAP also looked at its role in the roster review system. STAP believes that the utility of its input into the project review system could be revised in a way that would provide greater benefit to the project team and project's success. Another major task STAP will take on immediately after the Assembly is the establishment of a new roster.

The STAP selective review is the second instrument, complementing the roster review and strategic in its scope. Especially at the concept stage, the STAP selective review has a strategic value. First, a very cost effective approach could be the review of a cluster of project proposals, to assess strengths and weaknesses with the view to formulate technical guidelines for the design of future projects. Secondly, STAP should do also a review of projects which are in serious scientific and technical difficulties, an example of which are the solar thermal projects; and of targeted research project portfolio. By all means STAP will work closely with the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit in its reviews, in particular those undertaken during the implementation phase of projects.

I want to end by expressing our desire for STAP to constitute a valuable component in the partnership that GEF is, and to make a real contribution to the achievements of the GEF to address global environmental issues, and not to be considered a mere bureaucratic procedure. We have a strong commitment to work very closely and coordinated with the GEF Secretariat and the Implementing Agencies and we look forward to receive your guidance. I hope that we can respond to your expectations and to the needs of GEF.