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STATEMENT BY JULIA CARABIAS,
STAP CHAIR, TO THE GEF COUNCIL MEETING,
MAY 14-16, 2003

(Prepared by the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel)

Statement of Julia Carabias, Chair of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) at the GEF Council meeting, Washington DC, May 14 2003.

1. Mr Chairman, distinguished Council members, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to report on what STAP has been doing since we met in Beijing.
2. Our main focus over the last six months has been on developing a work programme that deals with the strategic issues which the GEF will face over the next three years. This has not been easy. We have, of course, had extensive discussions with the GEF, and I believe we have produced a work programme which successfully captures the key priorities in each of the focal areas.
3. In addition to addressing very specific technical issues in the focal areas, STAP has responded in its work programme to a few cross-focal priorities of the GEF. Examples are: advice on the scientific and technical dimension of capacity building; knowledge management; integrated approaches, and interlinkages between the focal areas.
4. The work programme activities extend from providing strategic advice on the strategic priorities/emerging directions and operational programme development in the GEF to advice at the project level. For example, we are going to give guidance on the type of projects which should now be developed in OP 5 & 6 in order to achieve the goal of sustainable market expansion for renewables and energy efficiency technologies. This will influence GEF programmes directly.
5. I would now like to go over the main elements of the work programme.
6. In POPs, the focus is on innovative practices and technologies for the monitoring and disposal of POPs that will provide the necessary science base for future interventions. This will inform the next 5 years of POPs waste management activities of the GEF. We will also advise on priority areas for science capacity building in the POPs focal area.
7. In land degradation, GEF has asked STAP to concentrate on drylands and to assess methodologies for restoration of drylands and to participate in an evaluation of technologies and factors influencing the utilization of drylands for food production and land management.

8. In international waters, STAP will concentrate on ground water and aquifers, as this is a new area for GEF, and advise on possible ways to promote their protection and sustainable use in a way that is integrated with surface water resources.
9. In biodiversity, we hope to strengthen GEF programmes by providing very concrete advice on tools and elements for mainstreaming biodiversity and achieving sustainability in protected area systems in the face of global change. We are also addressing capacity building in biodiversity and biosafety.
10. In climate change, STAP will support the GEF in its efforts to increase its impact in all three operational programmes, through advice on market expansion and aggregation for renewables and energy efficient technologies. Knowledge management will be an important element in providing this advice, as much experience has been gained since the OPs were formulated. GEF has also asked that we examine the potential of biofuels in transportation.
11. This is not all. In addition to focal area issues, we have a programme of collaboration with Monitoring & Evaluation, and we are going to tackle a few important cross-cutting issues and interlinkages.
12. It is our intention to work very closely with M&E on science dimension of impact indicators, knowledge management and reviews that demand a science perspective. STAP will participate where necessary and strategic, in a number of M&E led reviews, evaluations and other activities.
13. As stressed in the report of second meeting, interlinkages and cross-cutting issues will be very challenging for STAP to address, not only because of their complexity and multi-sectoral nature but also because of the lack of experience and structures in the GEF to tackle this type of issues.
14. Lastly, I would like to stress that STAP will continue to bring a long-term perspective to the GEF, and bring emerging issues to its attention.
15. At the STAP meeting in March we had a very interesting brainstorming on OP7 (Reducing the Long-Term Costs of Low Greenhouse Gas-Emitting Energy Technologies), which as you know has had a number of difficulties. The GEF has not approved an OP7 project for over 3 years. A full report will be available by the next

Council meeting. But it is clear that the GEF does not have the sufficient resources available to enable it to buy down the cost of technologies: it needs therefore to operate more as a facilitator, using its convening power to bring together partners who can undertake energy projects to meet the needs of developing countries.

16. At our meeting in March we also discussed targeted research. Five years ago some principles for funding targeted research were adopted. But to date only a small number of ad hoc projects have been completed. This lack of a strategy means that we continue to have an opportunistic targeted research portfolio which can have only a limited impact.
17. I am pleased therefore that the GEF is now considering using targeted research to build scientific and technological capacity in developing countries. STAP very much supports this, and we will bring forward worked-up proposals, which focus on specific strategic needs.
18. It is my duty to report on the STAP roster of experts. The old roster is in the process of closing down. A new one will come into effect by the next financial year to ensure that the GEF continues to have available a high quality service, responsive to its needs. In accordance with the OPS2 recommendations, we have made concrete suggestions for improving the project review system and for enhancing the utility of the roster. Following extensive discussions with the Implementing Agencies, we have established new operational guidelines designed to strengthen the review system. And we have suggested a more strategic role for STAP members in the review system.
19. I would like to close with a few remarks about STAP's place in the GEF family. I think that STAP's advisory role and the contribution it can make, are now better understood than they were five years ago. But we do need to strengthen further STAP's ability to discharge its mandate. Although, STAP's potential contributions have been demonstrated many times, care has to be taken to ensure that our role and approaches evolve with the GEF.
20. Following the transfer of the STAP Secretariat from Nairobi to Washington, we have agreed on the co-ordination arrangements. I believe these will help to ensure greater STAP participation in GEF activities. This will be a useful supplement to closer involvement between panel members and focal points in the GEF and Implementing Agencies.

21. I am also pleased that the GEF has expressed its commitment to strengthen STAP's ability to discharge its mandate as articulated in the recommendations of the third replenishment.
22. Finally, I would like to conclude by paying contribute to the very great support that STAP has received and me personally from Mohamed El-Ashry during his tenure. I very much look forward to learning and working with whoever Mohamed's successor whoever he (or she) might be, and to, of course, completing the next three years of the STAP mandate.
23. Thank you.

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