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Agenda Item 7

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE ANNUAL COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION REPORT - 2011

(Prepared by the GEF Secretariat)

ANNUAL COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION REPORT 2011 MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

1. The Secretariat welcomes the fourth Annual Country Portfolio Evaluation Report -2011, prepared by the GEF Evaluation Office. The report introduces and describes the new multiannual cycle of country level evaluations for GEF-5, informs on progress to date of ongoing country portfolio evaluations in the Eastern Caribbean region, as well as in Nicaragua and in Brazil, and synthesizes the main conclusions emerging out of two Country Portfolio Studies (CPSs), which were finalized this year in El Salvador and Jamaica.
2. The Secretariat also welcomes the collaboration with UNDP's independent evaluation office and supports the recommendation that joint and/or coordinated country level evaluation work, either with GEF Agencies' independent evaluation offices or with independent national institutions with recognized expertise in both evaluation and environment, should be pursued during GEF-5.
3. The Secretariat is pleased that in terms of results, the Evaluation concluded that GEF support to El Salvador and Jamaica in all focal areas has positively contributed to global environmental benefits. The Secretariat also notes that prospects for sustainability as well as for scaling up the initial benefits achieved are mixed. Further analysis exploring the issue of sustainability in greater depth would be useful to better understand the root causes of why results from particular projects may or may not be achieved and/or scaled-up.
4. The Secretariat welcomes the conclusions that GEF support has contributed to the development of capacity in these two countries and that it has been relevant to the national environmental goals and priorities, as well as to the countries' efforts to fulfill its obligations under the international agreements to which they are signatory. The Secretariat also notes that one of the limitations of CPSs cited by the Evaluation Office is a lack of a GEF country or portfolio strategy that specifies expected achievement through programmatic objectives, indicators, and targets. The Secretariat agrees that the National Portfolio Formulation Exercise (NPFE) is one tool, introduced through the GEF-5 policy recommendations that can potentially reduce this limitation in the future.
5. The Secretariat also welcomes the conclusion that, overall, efficiency of project preparation has improved recently in these two countries. This finding is consistent with the increased efficiency for project preparation across the GEF portfolio from GEF-3 to GEF-4.
6. The Secretariat notes that GEF projects did experience delays during implementation. The Secretariat also acknowledges the finding that many Agency procedures may not be appropriate for small countries in regions with limited resources, which could be an indication that greater flexibility in Agency procedures is needed. While this is an issue of concern, the Secretariat is encouraged that some possible procedural improvements have already been suggested by Agency evaluations and reviews of GEF activities.