



Highlights of the Rio Conventions Pavilion UNCCD COP 14



9 September 2019

THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY (GEF) DAY

As other donors, the GEF and its partners, are calling for transformational change in food, urban, and energy systems. Such transformation requires investments with greater impact, integration, innovation, sustainability, and scaling effects.

What do we mean by transformational change? What does it concretely mean for programs, projects, agencies, and countries that combat land degradation? What are the different elements of this concept? Are we applying the concept the right way? How does it differ from past efforts? Do all stakeholders agree with the terms and the way forward?

The GEF Day was designed around a strategic keynote from Naoko Ishii, GEF CEO, and a discussion with business leaders. Countries and key-stakeholders involved in GEF initiatives and programs answered the afore-mentioned questions by sharing their views on how to achieve transformational change. The session addressed the following topics:

- The notion of transformation highlighting its different elements;
- The role of multiple stakeholder platforms at global, regional, national and local levels;
- The evolutions of business models for less footprints and higher levels of productivity;
- The ways to include scaling, replication, and catalytic effects in program and project design;
- The importance of effective sustainable stakeholder involvement for sustainability.



Highlight 1: Setting the stage on Transformational Change in Land Degradation projects

The session was facilitated by **Asha Bobb-Semple of GEF**. Ms. Bobb-Semple provided a brief overview of what shall be discussed during the session. She said that the GEF and its partners are calling for a Transformational Change but the question is how we are going to achieve that. Ms. Bobb-Semple further outlined the three key sessions that would be the focus of the GEF Day, which would help us to answer this question. These are multi-stakeholder platforms; replication and scalability and sustainability.



Geeta Batra, GEF IEO: Evaluation of GEF support for Transformational Change in the Land Degradation Focal Area:

Ms. Batra delivered her introductory speech by highlighting the distribution of GEF Land Degradation projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America. She stressed on the portfolios of Land Degradation by showing the proportional efforts in Africa (37%), Latin America and Caribbean (22%), Asia (17%), Global (15%), Europe and Central Asia (8%). She also talked about the strategic directions towards an integrated approach with a focus on the entire value chain, which is multifocal projects, programmatic approach and addressing the drivers of environmental degradation. She added that the GEF projects generates good value for money. Further, she

shared the following analyses:

- Lag time of 4.5 to 5.5 years for impacts to be observed.

- Access to electricity associated with higher impact.
- Higher impact observed in areas with poor initial conditions.
- Vegetation productivity and forest loss and land fragmentation.

On the case study on Sustainable Land and Ecosystem Management (SLEM) partnership program in India, she observed improvements in certain states like Uttarakhand (focused on restoration of degraded bamboo forests), Madhya Pradesh (targeted 20 micro watersheds while working with Van Panchayats) and Nagaland (sustainable shifting cultivation through participatory planning). Lastly, she provided conditions for a successful Transformational Change including (1) Ambitious objectives; (2) High quality implementations by stakeholders and agencies; (3) Self-sustaining mechanism and (5) Financially sustainable.

Highlight 2: The role of multiple stakeholder platforms at global, regional, national and local levels

Facilitator: **Jean Mac Sinnassamy, GEF.**

Graciella Metternicht, Land Degradation STAP Advisor, introduced the session by reminding that several STAP documents point the importance of multi-stakeholder platforms. In one of the last publications on “how to achieve sustainable, long-term outcomes”, the importance of these platforms was included in one of the seven key recommendations. There is a large body of literature addressing general participatory planning and policy consultation processes at national and sub-national levels in both developing and developed country contexts. Much of the established literature also focuses on community or civil society engagement in government-led processes.

Ms. Metternicht stressed that developing multi-stakeholder platforms including with local communities, not just government officials, is essential from inception and design to project completion. Ideally, these platforms build on existing mechanisms, and are flexibly structured to extend and evolve in form and membership over time towards transformational change.

Jonky Tenou, IFAD, Coordinator of the regional and cross-cutting project belonging to the GEF6 Integrated Approach Pilot on Food Security, said multi-stakeholder platforms are important to bring together stakeholders and develop more supportive policies. Large-scale initiatives include platforms at regional level like the Great Green Wall, Terrafrica etc., Under the IAP-FS, ICRAF is playing a role of coordination of several science-oriented initiatives on agroforestry, landscape resilience, and food systems.

Tom Hammond, FAO, said the Drylands Program is relatively small to meet the challenges and the geography coverage. He thinks the only way to develop sustainable investments is to ensure that all partners are fully engaged, building on existing initiatives and platforms. Global knowledge and outreach is also a goal of the GEF. On the ground, transformational change needs coalition to deploy good practices. Mr. Hammond coordinates the recently approved GEF7 Impact Program on Drylands in 12 countries (9 African countries, Kazakhstan and Mongolia).



Stephen Muwaya, UNCCD National Focal Point of Uganda, referred to the project undertaken in the Karamoja region, a remote area in North-East Uganda. The project aims at empowering local communities by a cross-sectoral action. An inter-ministerial arrangement is in place for the project, which serves as a cooperation framework between the ministries in charge of land, water, energy, and trade. Integrated land use planning is a key response in addressing food security. The role of trade is fundamental, as one of the biggest challenges for communities is how to access markets.

The second level of platforms considered under the project is the enterprise platform, also in view of improving access of communities to markets. These two platforms are essential to ensure that all actors are

involved, know each other, and are informed.

Pierre Omer Ouedraogo, Program Officer of SPONG in Burkina Faso, highlighted the role of national platforms for improving policies, actions and advocacy at ground level, as well as influencing decisions at international level. The SPONG offers a platform for its 165 members to share knowledge and promote coherent and concrete actions on the ground. It also supports creating coalitions for negotiations with the government and technical/financing partners. Created in 1974, the SPONG has become a credible stakeholder for development in Burkina Faso and plays an important role to support CSOs taking part in international advocacies.



Salome Begeladze, Programme Officer, IUCN Global Forest and Climate Change Programme, highlighted the successful regional and global coalitions and multi-stakeholder dialogue processes, such as Bonn Challenge and 20x20 Initiative in Latin America and the Caribbean. These global platforms endorsed “declarations” for change, bridging political and technical stakeholders, which added transparency and promoted information sharing. She also added that certain platforms were instrumental to promote innovations.

Sara Scherr, Founder and Chair of Eco Agriculture Partners, summarized the session and highlighted the experience of her organization in promoting multi-stakeholder platforms. These platforms promote landscapes approach to deliver SDGs with locally-tailored strategies. She introduced the “1,000 Landscapes for 1 Billion People” initiative as a radical collaboration among different organizations to champion, support and fund these landscapes multi-stakeholder platforms.

Highlight 3: Business perspective

Matt Reddy, GEF, introduced the session’s speakers and highlighted the session focus which is on transformational change from business perspective.

Bernard Giraud, CEO, Livelihood Fund, talked about how private-sector experiences changed due to the change in customer profiles. He introduced the collaboration initiatives among public sector, private sectors, NGOs, World Bank, and other financial organizations. He posed questions to the audience on how we make transformational change happen, and how we make a coalition for the public and private sector.

Dilip Kulkarni, President, Agri-food, Jain Irrigation, addressed how business plays a role in introducing transformation. He highlighted that about 70%-80% of water in India is used in agriculture, while there are several issues in the process of irrigation. In India, there has been a big difference in the availability of water in different states. Excessive use of water causes its scarcity which often leads to drought. In the State of Punjab and Haryana, over irrigation caused salinity of land, which reduced the fertility of the soil.

This action resulted in the criminal waste of land. He also spoke about solutions to the problems.

Varun Vats, Global Needs for Partnership, Syngenta and WEF lead on Climate-Smart, said that business is changing due to the change in customers. At the same time, business plays an important role in creating jobs and opportunities. He explained the importance of the true value of food, referring to land and land products that are not reflected in the cost. The consumption, production and distribution of foods can be improved by knowing the true value of food. Mr. Vats added that conservation of agricultural practices reduced loss of biodiversity, soil erosion and assisted in water conservation and land conservation.

Madjiguene Seck, Communications Officer, World Bank Group External and Corporate Relations, presented the case of Arabic Gum Value Chain restoration in Mauritania. The World Bank saw an opportunity in the socio-economic potential of the gum and to transform the value chain. Globally, exports have tripled in the last 25 years with Sudan, Chad and Nigeria being the top three. The Sahel and West Africa Program (SAWAP) in support of the Great Green Wall restore degraded landscapes, promote integrated landscape management and address socio-economic vulnerability. The program ensures that the poorest rural communities benefit the most from the reviving of the sector in 39 communities strategically located in on the frontline of the Sahara. Ms. Seck concluded by saying that the World Bank hopes to replicate these efforts as Gum Arabic has the potential to generate foreign exchange, promote sustainable agriculture and forestry, ensure food security and combat desertification and climate change.