



GEF CSO Network

Statement on Agenda 5 : [Progress Report on the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund](#)

38th LDCF/SCCF Council, June 2025

The GEF CSO Network welcomes the GEF's Progress Report on the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) and the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), as it underscores the critical role these financing mechanisms play in delivering adaptation benefits to the most climate-vulnerable nations, including the most marginalized groups in developing countries.

These funds have catalyzed investments in community-based adaptation, rural livelihood diversification, and resilient infrastructure, reaffirming their value proposition. Yet, the voluntary nature of LDCF/SCCF replenishment continues to hinder predictable, adequate, and sustainable financing, affecting both efficiency and transparency in program delivery. As global geopolitical shifts and tightening donor budgets become more prominent, the urgency to institutionalize robust funding mechanisms has never been greater.

While we welcome the Report's affirmation of LDCF/SCCF relevance, we note with concern that current replenishment modalities remain ad hoc. Without binding commitments, predictable resource flows are jeopardized. We call on the LDCF/SCCF Council to develop and adopt replenishment modalities that guarantee adequate and sustainable financing, which will foster justice and center local communities.

Given the importance of a community based approach for adaptation to climate change, we urge the LDCF and SCCF to institutionalize a 20 percent minimum direct funding allocation within the portfolio for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Women, Youth, Indigenous Peoples, and Local Communities (IPLCs). Pilot grants and ad hoc allocations have proven insufficient for systemic change; as the GEF CEO has acknowledged, direct access and empowerment of local actors must be elevated from pilot status to core funding principles. A binding commitment to channel at least 20 percent of LDCF/SCCF resources to these groups would ensure that those closest to climate impacts can design, implement, and benefit from adaptation initiatives.

Transparency and participatory budgeting are non-negotiable if we are to build trust and inclusion. The Report highlights the lack of clear budgeting pathways for LDCF/SCCF allocations, which risks perpetuating inefficiencies and inequities. We call for fully open, inclusive budgeting processes, where communities and CSOs can trace every dollar from pledge to project, influence priorities, and hold decision makers accountable. It is not enough to include communities in the titles of the projects -- it is crucial to fully incorporate local leaders throughout the process. This echoes the GEF CEO's own calls for "open, inclusive governance" and lessons learned from past projects where opaque funding led to exclusion.

Education-related co-benefits must be elevated as a central pillar of LDCF/SCCF programming. While adaptation investments often prioritize infrastructure and resilience building, community-driven education on climate and nature remains underfunded. We recommend dedicated funding windows for climate-smart education initiatives, particularly those led by youth, women, and IPLCs, to build local capacity, raise awareness, and foster long-term resilience.

Climate justice demands intersectional solutions. To overcome fragmentation, we call for thematic funding windows that explicitly target projects addressing overlapping forms of marginalization, including gender, age, and race. The GEF's own evaluations have shown that intersectional projects generate deeper, more lasting impact; embedding this approach within LDCF/SCCF will multiply benefits across sectors, and it is a key priority for the CSO Network

Redefining success requires us to look beyond hectares restored or dollars disbursed. The GEF must develop new indicators that capture justice, agency, and resilience. Let this Progress Report serve as a pathway to mainstream the role of local communities as active partners in implementation, not just beneficiaries. As civil society representatives and youth leaders, we stand ready to support this process. Only through genuine partnership with those closest to the ground, including communities most affected by the climate crisis, can the LDCF/SCCF achieve their full transformative potential.