

**Statement of Julia Carabias, Chair of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP)  
to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) at the GEF Council meeting, Washington DC,  
May 19, 2004**

1. Mr. Chairman, distinguished Council members, I want to thank the Council again for the opportunity to bring you up to date with what STAP has been doing since last Council meeting in November.
2. STAP III has been very busy. We are now well into our stride, and delivering the advice we promised in our work programme.
3. STAP has recently completed three pieces of advice which are presented to the Council as information documents: two on POPs, and another on low greenhouse gas-emitting technologies. I'll say more about these in a moment. Further details are available on STAP's website ([www.unep.org/stapgef](http://www.unep.org/stapgef)). And I also want to give you a foretaste of our advice on interlinkages, which I'll be presenting in detail at the next meeting in November.
4. STAP's first advice is on OP7 – the GEF Operational Programme designed to promote the development of low greenhouse gas-emitting technologies. OP7 projects have proved difficult to design and implement. STAP's analysis suggests there are two main problems. First, developing countries regard the technologies as too risky – both because of the technology, and because of the cost. And second, projects need to reconcile the global benefits of lower emissions, with sufficient local benefits, such as more reliable generation of electricity at affordable prices.
5. STAP's key message is that the GEF should not try to shoulder the burden of developing these technologies on its own. It should instead play more of a facilitating role, for example, by entering into more partnerships with the private sector. And more attention should be paid to developing supportive policy and regulatory frameworks which reduce the cost of energy services, rather than focussing on buying down the hardware cost of large, capital intensive projects.

6. STAP's second report is on non-combustion technologies for the destruction of POPs. As with OP7, STAP's recommendation is that the GEF alone cannot transform the market, by attempting to bring down the costs for new technologies. The GEF should support only commercially proven non-combustion technologies. And it should establish criteria against which to assess GEF support. These should include factors such as the risks, the country-drivenness of the project, sustainability, an enabling environment and the availability of partnerships.
7. Where these criteria are not met, the GEF should support packing and shipping the stockpiles to facilities that meet internationally-agreed standards for destruction. However, there is still a big problem with contaminated soils, which are by their nature, bulky. Here there is a catalytic, transforming role for the GEF to play in supporting research, pilot projects and demonstrations of bioremediation technologies.
8. The third report concerns a more technical question about monitoring for the presence of POPs, which occur in the environment at very low concentrations and are thus hard to measure. Even if it is a narrow question, it is still a very important one. The problem is that most traditional methods of analytical chemistry for measuring POPs are highly technical and expensive. They require sophisticated instruments, laboratories, and highly-trained personnel. This is a significant barrier to measuring the presence of POPs in the environment in developing countries.
9. STAP's advice is that to overcome this the GEF should support the use of biomarkers and bioindicators which involve measuring POPs in living organisms, such as mussels. These organisms have a tendency to accumulate POPs, which makes it easier to measure the concentrations. Bioindicators and biomarkers can provide quick, relatively inexpensive ways to detect the presence of POPs. The more high-tech methods of analysis should be used only when POPs have been detected.

10. These two POPs reports are very timely because the Stockholm Convention on POPs entered in force earlier this week on Monday, 17 May.
11. I commend these reports to you. We have been at pains to make our advice, at least the executive summary and preface, accessible for non-experts. You have them with your Council documents, and I hope you will set aside some time to read them.
12. I now want to turn to STAP's work on interlinkages, on which I'll be presenting a full report in November.
13. There is an emerging recognition of the importance of interlinkages between biodiversity, climate change, land degradation and freshwater and coastal systems. Biodiversity is affected by climate change both directly (for example, through changes in the length of the growing season) and indirectly (for example, changes in pest and disease outbreaks). Similarly climate change adversely affects land degradation, for example, by changing the availability of soil moisture. When biodiversity projects are being designed, they need to consider these effects, and thereby ensure their sustainability. Interlinkages are also important because projects in one focal area can have positive benefits on other focal areas or they can have negative effects. By taking the interlinkages into account from the outset, it should be possible to maximise the benefits on other focal areas, while minimising the negative ones.
14. The challenge is to understand how the interactions and feedbacks between the various human activities that affect the environment can be better managed to improve the prospects for sustainable development and human well-being. An additional challenge is to ensure that these interlinkages are properly reflected in the design of GEF projects, their implementation, and subsequent monitoring and evaluation.
15. The GEF in its focal areas, operational programmes and strategic priorities has recently moved towards recognising some interlinkages. For example, in land degradation, the multi-focal area operational programme (OP12), and Strategic Priority 2 of the biodiversity focal area (mainstreaming biodiversity into production landscapes). And many international waters

projects take an integrated approach to addressing interlinkages. Despite this, recent project documents do not reveal evidence of a systematic approach to incorporating these interlinkages explicitly in the design of projects.

16. We all understand the reasons why institutions – governments, as well as the GEF family – tend to adopt a sectoral approach to dealing with problems: it's simple, draws boundaries, provides a clear focus etc. But we also know that reality is much more complex than that.
17. STAP will be making a number of recommendations about how to deal with all this. And in particular we'll be recommending the use of a "design tool" which STAP has developed to ensure that interlinkages are addressed systematically.
18. Recently we discussed the preliminary conclusions at a high level meeting with Len Good, Klaus Töpfer, Ian Johnson, Alvaro Umaña, and the executive Secretaries of the principal environmental Conventions. And I'm pleased to say that there was a very positive and welcoming response from the GEF family – both for STAP's approach, and for the design tool. I want to thank them all for the important contributions they made. We are now producing a new draft to be circulated very shortly to the GEF Secretariat and to the Implementing Agencies. And I expect to present the final document at the next Council meeting. I would also like to recognise the contribution of Habiba Gitay, the Vice-Chair, to STAP's work on interlinkages.
19. Looking ahead to November, in addition to interlinkages, STAP will be presenting further advice, including on groundwater, where I'm grateful for the co-operation we received from UNESCO, and guidance on best practices in the restoration and rehabilitation of drylands, an environmental risk assessment of *Bt* maize in Kenya and advice on mainstreaming biodiversity in production landscapes.
20. I think that STAP is now delivering the advice which the GEF has asked for, and also what STAP thinks the GEF needs. But I want to emphasise the importance of feedback. We need to know from the GEF family whether our advice has been useful, and if it has been useful,

how it has been taken into account. I again want to thank Len Good and Dr. Topfer for the time they have given to STAP on numerous occasions: their guidance has been very stimulating. I am also grateful to Dr. Topfer and to Ahmed Djoghlaif for the very productive session they organised which helped to clarify the role of STAP, and its rules of procedure.

21. Finally, I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to the outgoing members of STAP: Dennis Anderson, who has served on STAP for the past 6 years; Xu Xiao-bai; Shinsuke Tanabe; Alexei Maximov; Leonard Nurse; and Saleem Huq. They have all made a significant contribution to STAP, and the GEF has benefited considerably from their advice.

22. Thank you. I would now be pleased to answer questions.