

Good Afternoon

1) Welcome back from lunch. This, by the way, is an Amazon Horned Frog, an Amphibian. It can grow up to the size of your lunch plate. They are found in fresh water marshes and pools throughout the Amazon Basin, from Colombia to Brazil. They are typical ambush predators and are aggressively territorial. Scientists are unsure what purpose their namesake horns serve, but it is likely they aid in camouflage, resembling leaf stems in the wild.

2. I would like to take a few moments to update the Council on our work programme activities and advisory products. I will also take a moment to present our comments on the GEF 2020 Strategy as well as provide an overview of our thoughts on how we view the role of science in the GEF going forward.

3. Let me start with an overview of STAP's work over the past 6 months, including highlights..

4. As part of the recent STAP Panel Meeting in Washington, DC last month, we organized a special technical session to address the important linkages between Sustainable Land Management and land degradation, biodiversity conservation, carbon storage and mitigation of climate change - and more widely, human livelihoods and well-being. We invited a number of outside experts, including the recent Tyler Environment Prize Winner, Diana Wall, of Colorado State University, to speak on soil biodiversity, as part of this event. (It was very well attended; held at IFPRI)

A key product from work in this arena is STAP's recent publication on "*Managing Soil Organic Carbon for Global Benefits*" (which you will find outside). It presents an overview of current technical and scientific knowledge of soil organic carbon. It highlights the importance of soil organic carbon management for an array of global benefits relevant to future GEF strategies – including land degradation, biodiversity, as well as climate mitigation and adaptation.

Some principles emerging from the composite work for the GEF:

- SOC is easier (and probably cheaper) to preserve than to restore.
- Typical outcomes of soil carbon management options can be “win-win-win”. That is, overall soil fertility can be enhanced, crop and pasture yields can be improved, and carbon storage with climate mitigation benefits can be achieved. (But, there are some systems that will not respond to soil amendments, so it is important to know where those are)
- SOC management requires an integrated, landscape scale approach, to have significant impact on fertility, productivity and/or carbon storage.
- At the same time – actions need to be tailored to local climate, soil and agricultural conditions, or they will not be successful.

We also held an Expert Workshop on Mainstreaming Biodiversity in South Africa– which included practices such as payments for ecosystem services and product certification that may of you are familiar

with. The purpose was to examine the evidence base over the past 10 years in how these approaches have delivered results, and how we can do better in the future.

It was a collaborative effort between STAP and the GEF Secretariat, with numerous senior representatives from countries such as South Africa, Seychelles, Botswana, Mexico - along with many institutions with significant expertise in this area (including our newly accredited implementing agencies WWF and CI, as well as WCS, IIED) and the private sector (e.g., CitiBank)

The workshop was held almost a decade after the first STAP workshop (also in Cape Town) on this subject which set down a marker for the principles and criteria for biodiversity mainstreaming - that have been used extensively since then in the GEF in over 300 projects. The GEF has clearly been a **leader** and **innovator** in this area.

But there is more to do – some key messages for future mainstreaming:.

a). **Enabling conditions** are essential for success, such as:

- Governance;
- Engagement with community/government/private sector partners;
- Strengthening of capacity amongst local partners
- Access to openly available- and usable- biophysical and socio-economic data at relevant scales

b) The role of National Government and local **champions** are crucial

c). Successful **mainstreaming takes time**. A typical 4-5 year project time frame is usually too short to demonstrate impact. We need to consider models which allow lower annual investments over longer time periods

d). Finally, we need to be much more thoughtful about **designing projects to measure success**. Paradoxically, despite a great deal of anecdotal indication of success we have little empirical data that mainstreaming initiatives deliver the Global Environment Benefits we seek. So, more data collection, monitoring, definition of success and metrics is important – this is a theme of mine, you'll notice!

6. Of course, STAP is busy with a great many other initiatives. Here's a list of the main ongoing activities and those that are upcoming . . .

- STAP conducted a systematic review of evidence for effects on human well-being arising from the establishment and maintenance of terrestrial Protected Areas (PAs) and provided recommendations for improving project study design and reporting. Again, data proving a positive impact of PAs on livelihoods are lacking. We need to design projects to better deliver data so we can evaluate effectiveness.

- Based on an assessment of the role of regional organizations in trans-boundary water management, STAP has prepared a draft report which suggests cooperating with some of the emerging regional structures which could benefit the GEF.
- STAP also organized a session on climate change adaptation and climate resilience during our recent STAP meeting to compare tools for characterizing vulnerability and analyzing adaptation options- and will hold future roundtable discussions with GEF partners to further advance this thinking. It is clear that there are a profusion of tools for characterizing vulnerability! We will hold future roundtable discussions with GEF partners to further advance this thinking.
- In partnership with the Secretariat of the CBD, STAP recently completed an analysis of marine spatial planning practice. Next, we intend to develop some capacity building resources, and summarize effective practices.
- STAP will be undertaking a technical review of mitigation options to address black carbon and other short-lived climate forcers, identifying relevant practices for mitigating these pollutants in GEF programs. We will build on the UNEP and World Bank work in this realm.
- We are thinking more about multi-focal opportunities and the role of research and science in the GEF, and will continue this discussion in a STAP retreat in Stockholm in January (Clearly we will remain indoors and working the whole time!)
- STAP has also been helping the GEF Sec shape the agenda for their upcoming meeting “Forum on Innovation Partnership: ICT Applications for Environmental Challenges” to be held in Dec. 18. I will co-chair that.
- Finally, under STAP’s Adaptation work programme, a partnership effort with UNEP/ PROVIA (Programme of Research on Climate Change Vulnerability, Impacts and Adaptation) is planned which will include the preparation of a technical report addressing issues related to indicators , frameworks for planning and mainstreaming of long-term adaptation.

7. STAP led two side events at UNCCD COP 11 organized jointly with the GEF on Carbon Sequestration and Sustainable Land Management, and on new tools to measure carbon and the GEF’s experience in applying the tools.

The STAP/GEF side event on CBD – SBSTTA 17 - provided an overview of the results of the mainstreaming biodiversity expert meeting, and future initiatives under the GEF 6 biodiversity strategy.

STAP Secretariat attended the first diplomatic conference of the Minimata Convention under observer status. The side event “Managing Mercury Pollution in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: bridging science and policy” was key for STAP to evaluate areas of mercury work it could embark on behalf of the GEF, whilst avoiding duplication of effort.

8. We will of course have an opportunity to address the GEF 2020 Strategy in detail under the next agenda item, however I would simply like to highlight three issues from STAP’s analysis here.

9. The GEF 2020 Strategy is a comprehensive analysis of current drivers of environmental change, essentially defining the “problem” space we face. We are very pleased with the emphasis on moving interventions “upstream” towards drivers, and endorse that approach. The environmental issues outlined are not what’s really new, but what is new is that we recognize that many conventional approaches to tackle these problems are becoming less and less effective. So we must tackle them in a more integrated way. STAP believes that this effort also provides an opportunity to define the “solution” space – and we should evaluate what GEF’s unique role in the solution space can be.

STAP has long advocated for the renewed emphasis on knowledge generation and leadership in the GEF, and STAP endorses the section “close the feedback loop” in the paper. We believe it is important to invest effort in empirically measuring what the U.S. National Academy of Sciences has called actual “outcomes” and “impacts” as well, and to develop metrics for these. Making progress on this will help with the dissemination of lessons and ensure future program decision making is based on evidence.

Finally, the analysis is heavily based on the “causal chain” analysis. From a communication perspective, the framework is useful and understandable. However, it is difficult to scale the framework down to the national level in a meaningful way.

But these comments are meant in no way to take away from the fact that STAP supports the strategy and welcomes it.

10. For a variety of reasons – including the development of the GEF-6 program, the 2020 Strategy and discussion around the signature programs – STAP believes that it is now opportune to reconsider the unique role of science in the GEF . . .

11. Why does Science matter? We want sound solutions that can be tested, evaluated, improved, and brought to scale. Science doesn’t end with the concept of the project- there are science issues all the way through implementation and evaluation. It involves basic science, engineering, economics, and behavioral and social science. Technologies or practices that may make sense theoretically, may not make sense in practice. Technologies that no one wants to implement, are not solutions. Feasibility – technical, social, and political - is important to understand.

What is science for the GEF? I would argue science is needed in both defining the problem space and developing the solution space. It is natural, economic and social science – they are inextricably linked.

How can GEF use science? In many ways – we need to learn by doing, iteratively. We need to develop the knowledge base from past GEF projects and evaluate lessons learned and best practices. And science can help design future projects to be more efficient and efficacious.

12. The table presented here is an attempt to show the way in which research could add value to the GEF. Of course, the 3 elements of the left column are inter-related and not mutually exclusive. First, generating knowledge and knowledge transfer is key. There are lessons we can learn from the 3600 projects already implemented for outcomes, lessons learned, best practices, and costs.

Better design and implementation of future projects are also desirable. We want to develop improved methodologies, tools, indicators and metrics. It can involve measuring relatively simple things like greenhouse gas emissions reductions, to evaluating success across multi-focal projects where the choice of actions might maximize some outcomes at the expense of others.

Removing barriers writ large can include filling knowledge gaps or addressing lack of capacity, lack of institutional support or incentives, etc. For example, STAP identified a gap in current thinking - that soils have potential for multiple benefits across focal areas. Similarly, ecosystem-based adaptation can create the opportunity to tackle several focal areas at the same time.

13. The GEF has the potential to play a role as an important knowledge management (KM) facilitator. However, KM is very much underdeveloped and not well-aligned with user needs. As many of you will recall a new KM Strategy was submitted to Council as an information paper last year, prepared by the GEF Secretariat through discussions and consultations with the GEF Evaluation Office, Agencies and STAP. An upgraded knowledge management system could function in a powerful catalytic role in significantly scaling up the impacts of GEF investments – and in addressing more complex, systemic challenges.

However, we believe that the GEF must clearly articulate what its knowledge role should be – for instance: establish active, solutions-oriented communities of practice. GEF-6 provides a pathway to pilot such networks through partnerships which could provide the means to both generate and disseminate lessons of high relevance to users

Another idea is that the GEF can be a leader in analyzing the “frontiers” of environmental change – which could perhaps result in a world-class knowledge product every four years, in advance of the planning cycle. So, these are some of STAP’s early ideas.

14. Finally, I want to touch on the roles and responsibilities of STAP. The GEF 2020 Strategy, and indeed the GEF 6 planning documents to date, are relatively silent about the role of STAP. We strongly believe that STAP is uniquely placed to facilitate many of the knowledge generation and science-related functions as proposed in my previous slides. STAP members are well linked in international scientific networks. STAP would welcome an opportunity to explore how the document could reflect the potential roles of STAP in a more prominent and detailed way.

What also was pointed out in the evaluation is that there have been significant increasing expectations and demands on STAP’s time. Perhaps foremost among these is the trade-off between STAP’s role in identifying strategic long term issues facing the global environment and its primary operational role through the screening of projects at entry for scientific and technical coherence. We hope to continue both roles, but given limited resources, short of cloning STAP, we will need to set priorities to produce maximum impacts!

15. Finally, I want to thank you for the discussion yesterday on improving the methodology of greenhouse gas emissions reduction calculations, and we are in agreement with the revised text and we will be ready with proposals by the next Council meeting.

Thank you! At the discretion of the Chair I would be happy to entertain any questions or comments . . .