

April 28, 2022

Open Letter to the GCF Board and Secretariat Regarding Observer Participation at B.32

Dear GCF Co-Chairs, Board Members, Alternate Board Members, Executive Director, and Secretariat,

As representatives of civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities around the world, we are deeply concerned about the implication in the recent “Notification of the Thirty-Second Meeting of the Board” that observers (other than the active observers) should not attend the upcoming GCF Board Meeting (B.32) in Antigua and Barbuda from 16-19 May, but instead should only follow remotely through the webcast. (The notice states, “For representatives of accredited observer organizations and accredited entities, it is advised that they follow the meeting remotely”.)

While we understand the concerns related to the ongoing global pandemic and the significant challenges it presents for safely holding in-person meetings, we find it unacceptable that the GCF has designed its first in-person meeting in two years to be held without the majority of observers who have consistently participated in and contributed to the GCF. Returning to in-person meetings under these circumstances substantially impedes the ability of observers to contribute to the GCF at this important moment, sets a terrible precedent for observer participation, and undermines the value of observers.

As you know, it is critical that those most likely to be impacted by GCF projects and policies are able to exercise their right to participation. It will be difficult for many observers to follow day-long meetings and interact meaningfully with Board members and the Secretariat if they are not in Antigua or in the same general time zone, which many are not. Further, the global observer network closely collaborates on GCF advocacy and on the interventions that the CSO active observers deliver, ensuring that interventions are representative of the broader network. This coordination will obviously be more challenging if observers who are often present at Board Meetings are not able to be. Additionally, GCF Board Meetings often facilitate closer discussions with Board members, advisors and GCF staff. Restricting participation precludes observers from the opportunity for such engagement, especially given that a new Board was constituted at the beginning of the year, and new Board members have not yet had a chance to engage with the GCF observer network. This approach further reinforces the view that observers are extraneous rather than an indispensable part of the GCF, including in its policy and operational development, elaborating its strategic direction, and implementing transformative projects.

Given the proximity of the Board Meeting and the potential need for visas and other requirements, it is essential that the GCF provide information about what provisions the GCF will make for observers to participate if they choose to.

Civil society, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities around the world are integral to the GCF's success and must be seen as partners, not as mere afterthoughts. Respecting our right to participate in the GCF Board Meetings is a core part of that partnership and should not be taken for granted or overlooked by the Secretariat or the Board. As global civil society has raised over and over again, meetings, like that of the GCF, must be inclusive. Like many of you, civil society representatives are also eager to be able to engage safely in-person again; however, engagement of observers must not be sacrificed in doing so.

Sincerely,

ACCESS

ActionAid USA

Asian Peoples Movement on Debt and Development (APMDD)

Asociación Ambiente y Sociedad

CARE

Caribbean Natural Resources Institute

Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)

Centre for 21st Century Issues

Centro para la Autonomía y Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas (CADPI)

Consejo Coordinador Nacional Indígena Salvadoreño (CCNIS)

Fundacion Plurales

Germanwatch

Global Forest Coalition

Green Leaf Advocacy and Empowerment Center

Greener Impact International

Heinrich Böll Stiftung Washington, DC

Indigenous Environmental Network

Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities (ICSC)

Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense (AIDA)

International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA)

Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN)

Organización de Mujeres Indígenas del Río Coco, Wangki Tangni

Peace Heritage Foundation

PINGO's Forum

Pivot Point

Social Inclusion of the Voiceless and Neglected (SIVON)

Tebtebba

Third World Network (TWN)

Transparency International Korea

We The People NGO

Women and Youths Environmental Safety and Empowerment Organisation

Women Environmental Programme Burkina

Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)