July 28, 2011

Mr. Cyril Rousseauand and Mr. Ahmed Moosa

Co-Chairs

Joint CTF and SCF Trust Fund Committee

Climate Investment Funds

Dear Mr. Rousseauand and Mr. Moosa,

We, the undersigned organizations, are aware that gender considerations have garnered increasing attention within the CIF governance bodies over the past year. We are pleased by this important progress and appreciate the significant efforts that have made these achievements possible.

While this is an important first step, we recognize that there is still much work to be done to ensure that the design and implementation of CIF projects draw on gender expertise and support greater gender equality and women’s empowerment.

To support these goals, we are writing now to formally request that a dedicated observer seat for a gender equality or women’s empowerment expert or organization be established within each of the CIF Trust Fund Committees and Subcommittees.

As you know, men and women experience social, economic, and environmental situations differently. Given their distinct gender-based roles, men and women’s vulnerability and coping strategies also differ due to different division of labor and use of natural resources, as well as different knowledge, skills and access to decision making. Women and girls face specific vulnerabilities relating to gender-based discrimination and inequality which often limit their income, social benefits, environmental resources, and access to information. These inequalities and limitations put them at a large disadvantage with respect to their ability to cope with and adapt to climate change.

Yet women must not be viewed as victims; they are strong agents of change with unique knowledge and skills that can contribute to climate change responses. Strong evidence has demonstrated that promoting gender equality and investing in resources to increase the opportunities for and participation of women and girls results in progress across all MDGs.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Given the scale of resources involved in the CIF, it is pivotal that its programs incorporate a gender perspective, in which the viewpoints of men and women are taken into account to ensure that the beneficial outcomes of CIF programs reach recipients more equally. Understanding and incorporating the perspectives of both men and women into project planning and implementation will not only help facilitate equitable opportunities and outcomes for all project recipients, but will also strengthen the effectiveness and sustainability of CIF programmes.

We know that steps are already being taken within the Trust Fund Committees and CIF Administrative Unit to raise the level of attention given to gender issues. Ensuring that women’s groups and gender equality organizations understand the process, however, requires direct access to the information and decision-making forum. Establishing a dedicated seat in each of the CIF governance bodies will not only strengthen the quality of CIF projects; it will also provide women’s groups and gender equality experts with critical information about the approach to climate change responses taking place within the CIF – which is a potential model for the future climate finance regime. Giving women’s groups the opportunity to engage in this process will contribute to the CIF’s objective of promoting learning and transformational change. This would also set an important precedent for the promotion of women’s rights and gender equality within climate change finance.

This is not a new request. We are aware that this idea was tabled in the CIF meetings in November 2010. In addition, we engaged strongly in the recent civil society consultation process. We had hoped that our voices had been heard and expected this issue to be raised in the Joint CTF and SCF Trust Fund Committee meeting in June. We were disappointed to see that our request was not reflected in either the overview of NGO Consultations submitted by the NGO Observers, or the Summary of the Co-Chairs of the Joint CTF and SCF Trust Fund Committee meeting.

We understand the concern that providing a dedicated seat for a gender equality expert or women’s organization could lead to requests by other groups requesting dedicated seats; the best way to address this challenge, however, is not necessarily to pass on the opportunity to establish a gender seat. It is well recognized that gender equality helps advance sustainable development and can promote more efficient and effective CIF programmes. Women, who constitute over half of the world’s population, deserve representation and a voice in the CIF regarding decisions and outcomes that affect their livelihoods.

In conclusion, we once again request that all funds under the CIF include a dedicated seat for an expert from a gender or women’s empowerment organization to participate as an active civil society observer in all CIF Trust Fund Committees and Sub-Committees. We thank you for your attention on this important issue and we look forward to working with you on this process.

Sincerely,

ActionAid, USA

Association Bao Taab Neere for Sustainable Development and Environmental Protection –

Burkina Faso

CARE Austria

Centro de Planificación y Estudios Sociales (CEPLAES) - Ecuador

Environmental and Human Systems Management

Gender and Development Action (GADA) - Nigeria

GROOTS International

Heinrich Boell Stiftung North America

Huairou Commission

International Alliance of Women

Irthlingz Arts-Based Environmental Education

MAUDESCO – Mauritius

Medical Mission Sisters

Population Action International

Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) – New Caledonia

Women’s Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)

Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture & NRM (WOCAN)

Worldview Impact Foundation

[List of Organizations - TBD]

CC: Patricia Bliss-Guest, Program Manager, CIF Administrative Unit

1. United Nations Development Programme (2010).*The Path to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: A Synthesis of Evidence from Around the World*. United Nations Development Programme. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)