

# The GEF NGO NETWORK e- NEWSLETTER



**"FROM THE GROUND UP"**

**An Electronic Newsletter for the GEF NGO Network**

**First Edition**

**July 2006**

## **Welcome!**

Welcome to the First Edition of our e-Newsletter! Our aim is to keep everyone abreast of the GEF NGO Network and its activities.

For this, our First Edition, we have taken the opportunity to inform you of the GEF NGO Network - our function, our responsibility, who we are, what we represent and where we are from. In this edition we have focused on one specific region - **Africa** - in honour of the Third GEF Assembly and the GEF NGO Network Forum being held in Cape Town, South Africa. The first time that this event has taken place in Africa and the first that the GEF NGO Network is holding a Forum. A first for all concerned!

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## [THE GEF NGO NETWORK](#)

The Global Environment Facility ([GEF](#)), established in 1991, helps developing countries fund projects and programs that protect the global environment. GEF is a major catalyst for improving the global environments. GEF's mandate is to make the connection between local and global environmental challenges and between national and international efforts to conserve biodiversity, reduce the risks of climate change, protect the ozone layer, clean up international waters, stop land degradation and eliminate persistent organic pollutants. The GEF is not just a funding mechanism; it is also a facility to leverage the international system to support the global environment.

The GEF is the largest funder of projects designed to protect the global environment. Since its inception in 1991 the GEF has committed more than \$7.5 billion US dollars in grants and leveraged \$16 billion US dollars in co-financing for 1,900 projects in 140 recipient countries. The GEF has also provided more than 6,000 small grants directly to community based organizations (CBOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). GEF projects are implemented through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Bank, regional development banks, and other specialized United Nations agencies.

The GEF Public Involvement Policy commits the GEF to ensure strong involvement of public and civil society groups, including NGOs, indigenous peoples, youth, women, and business in the GEF processes. Based on this policy, the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) Network of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established in May 1995, following the GEF Council's decision to establish a formal relationship between the civil society groups and the GEF Secretariat, Council, Assembly, and partner agencies. The GEF NGO Network was subsequently launched as a volunteer structure of GEF-accredited organizations whose work in environmental and sustainable development aligned with the GEF mandate.

The [GEF NGO Network](#) is a partnership between the Global Environment Facility ([GEF](#)) and more than 400 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) worldwide. Network members are [accredited](#) to the GEF and participate in the consultation process with the GEF's governing

body. The GEF NGO Network is organized into 17 regions with an NGO that serves as the [regional focal point](#) for each region and a central focal point which oversees the network.

As informed and effective advocates, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have had a role in shaping the GEF and its agenda from the very beginning. Today, participation by NGOs, both local and international, is crucial, not only at the project level but also in GEF policy dimensions. Village organizations and other community-based groups, academic institutions, and foundations are among the NGO partners integral to GEF's efforts.

NGOs play a variety of important roles both in the development and the execution of GEF projects, as well as in influencing GEF policies. At the project level, actions undertaken by NGOs have helped preserve biodiversity, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect international waters, and ultimately, achieve sustainable development. By partnering with a government agency or accessing directly to its funds, NGOs have made a significant contribution to the GEF portfolio of projects. At the policy level, NGOs contribute through a unique participatory mechanism, presenting case studies and influencing decisions at the Council meetings and through the GEF-NGO Consultations.

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## MEMBER PROFILES

### Africa

#### EASTERN AFRICA

**Countries that fall within the Eastern Africa region are as follows: Kenya, Uganda, Mauritius, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Madagascar, Burundi, Somalia, Djibouti, Eritrea, Comoros and Seychelles.**

#### **Mauritius Council for Development Environmental Studies and Conservation (MAUDESCO)**

Maudesco is a national environment and development NGO that was set up in 1985 to promote environmental protection, sustainable development, conservation, etc. Maudesco has a pyramidal set up. It has grass roots membership as well as regional and national membership. Membership to Maudesco is open to grass roots groups, women, students, teachers, youths and regional village council and municipal councillors. Maudesco currently has a membership of over 200 members representing the various stakeholders mentioned.

Maudesco promotes its objectives through talks, seminars, workshops, publications, research, lobbying, etc. Maudesco is the Mauritian chapter of the Friends of the Earth International, the Society for International Development, the regional coordinator of: Southern African Regional

Climate Action Network (SARCAN), GEF NGO Network RFP, and East Africa Region and Earth Charter Initiative.

Maudesco believes no amount of international meetings, conferences will solve in a sustainable manner the problem of environment/ poverty, etc unless the various stakeholders/ populations are sensitized about the issues, the implications and the individual responsibilities of each of us. There is no substitute for this. Hence Maudesco has as a priority activity awareness raising, capacity building to the various stakeholders.

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## WESTERN AFRICA

Countries that fall within the Western Africa region are as follows: **Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Senegal, The Gambia, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Togo, Guinea, Cape Verde, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Gabon and Democratic Republic of Congo.**

## [Enda Tiers Monde - Programme Energie](#)

Enda Tiers Monde is an international non-profit organization founded in 1972. Enda is based in Dakar and is comprised of autonomous organizations working in various countries in the Global South. The association is active in various domains linked to the environment and development. Enda seeks to improve the tools of knowledge for local development by identifying and enforcing common initiatives that help development at the grassroots level.

ENDA's worldwide representation includes:

- twenty-four teams at the Dakar headquarters each working on development and environment themes;
- twenty-one poles in Southern countries: fourteen in Africa, five in South America, two

in Asia;

- a European delegation; Japanese representation to follow soon.

Enda collaborates with grassroots groups in search of alternative development models on the basis of the experience, expectations and objectives of marginalised peoples. This mutual commitment translates as:

- development of replicable models of progress, uniting action, research, training and communication;
- involving intellectuals and professionals in defining and implementing development models for the majority and the least privileged;
- fighting poverty: this is the primary principle behind Enda activities;
- involvement in international debates to render third world positions visible and influential.

In general, Enda works to enhance the visibility and value, in practice as well as theory, of the knowledge and tools that exist in local development efforts. This consists of identifying and supporting community development initiatives - especially in terms of local organizations.

Enda is an organisation in constant evolution. This is reflected in the integration of new priorities and in regular organizational restructuring, such as a diversification of teams and entities, for example. As a result there is a constant dynamism between the different areas and levels of ENDA's activity. Transparency and co-ordination between the various teams and entities, both internally and externally, is a priority for the organization's operation so that all efforts reach as many as possible.

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## **SOUTHERN AFRICA**

**Countries that fall within the Southern Africa region are as follows: South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Angola, Namibia, Malawi and Swaziland.**

### **ZERO Regional Environment Organization (ZERO)**

ZERO Regional Environment Organization (ZERO) is a premier research, planning and implementation agency operating in the Southern African region since 1987, whose core operating values are to be efficient, effective and ethical in its research and development work. ZERO believes in and works for a global paradigm shift, changing minds and promoting prosperity for all. Its mission is to work with rural and urban communities and other partners to foster balanced, healthy growth and self-reliance within a rapidly changing world. ZERO's dynamic vision and mission statement are reflective of a local agency, functioning globally.

As a development oriented organization, ZERO functions as a catalyst, facilitator and coordinator in stimulating, evaluating and supporting a range of projects positively affecting the environment, balanced development and growth and quality of life projects. ZERO's main focus is on the needs and aspirations of rural women, men and youth. It employs fifteen core staff members, contract researchers and consultants, and has an annual budget of USD 500 to 1 million with satellite offices in Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Although ZERO's origin was in the Southern Africa region, it operates with continental and global vision and perspectives. ZERO works with United States and Western European governments and United Nations agencies, and partners with a wide range of international organizations having harmonious and complimentary objectives.

ZERO has also been working towards the development of other renewable energy sources, appropriate technology and stimulating wealth generation models in rural areas. In addition to that, ZERO has been working towards improving energy efficiency in small-scale rural industries that use wood fuel as part of its natural resource management strategies. SADC cross border trade development and support projects fit well into ZERO's regional role as a trade and employment catalyst and facilitator. Agricultural and climate change research projects as well as programmes addressing gender and HIV and AIDS issues have also been ZERO's areas of focus.

Besides the above, ZERO also organizes and holds national and regional development seminars and workshops, undertakes research and publishes research reports. With the United Nations, IUCN World Conservation Union and other international agencies and public institutions as partners, ZERO works on the implementation of sustainable development initiatives. ZERO is the lead agency in Zimbabwe for the implementation of the United

Nations sponsored Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and functions as the Regional Secretariat for the Community Organizations Regional Network (CORN), a SADC country member network.

ZERO knows well what types of development projects work and what do not work in Southern Africa. We know, for example, that for sustained development activities, the time frame of donor support and assistance must be set for a minimum of three years, with a maximum of five years. We know who in rural areas and local governments should be consulted about projects, how to elicit the best advice, when to listen and when to talk. We know how to overcome obstacles, and when, occasionally, to admit things are not going as planned. We know our values come from being efficient, effective and ethical.

ZERO is very well positioned to function regionally due to its role as Secretariat to the Community Organizations Regional Network (CORN). CORN has a well-established international network made up of Community Based Organizations (CBO) throughout the Southern African countries. The membership is reflective of communities involved in a wide spectrum of activities, including agriculture, trade, small business development and the issues surrounding HIV/AIDS. Through CORN, ZERO is constantly in touch with the operating environments in Mozambique, Angola, South Africa, Zambia, Botswana, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

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## **NORTHERN AFRICA**

**Countries that fall within the Northern Africa region are as follows : Algeria,**

## Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, Sudan, Libya and Mauritania.

### Association Recherche Climat Environnement (ARCE)

Detail of this organisation will be available in our next edition.

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## CASE STUDY

### GM Cotton Set to Invade West Africa

***This is an excerpt from a briefing on the results of research undertaken by GRAIN in collaboration with several national and regional partners in Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal.***

The study begins with an assessment of the principal claims made by the promoters of Bt cotton : that Bt cotton will 1) reduce the use of insecticides; 2) increase yields; and 3) increase incomes for farmers. The second part of the study examines four of the consequences of Bt cotton : 1) the criminalisation of traditional farming practices; 2) genetic contamination; 3) the development of pest resistance to Bt cotton; and 4) the effects on Bt cotton quality. The study does not deal directly with the biosafety issues relating to Bt cotton (environmental and health impacts) because these issues go beyond the scope of this study. We hope that others will take up these important questions.

Monsanto, an American pesticide corporation, is now promoting a genetically modified (GM) cotton variety called "Bt cotton" which it claims will reduce pesticide use, increase yields and increase income. The letters "Bt" stand for *Bacillus thuringiensis*, a toxin-producing bacterium found naturally in soils that farmers use to control insect pests, particularly caterpillars. Scientists have isolated certain genes responsible for the production of these toxins, most commonly the CryIAc or Cry2Ab toxins, and have then used genetic engineering techniques to insert them into cotton. The resulting cotton plants produce the Bt toxins and susceptible pests die when they eat them.

#### **CAN Bt COTTON OFFER ADVANTAGES FOR WEST AFRICAN FARMERS?**

The promoters of Bt cotton maintain that it provides farmers with three principal advantages. Each of these is discussed below.

##### **a) Will Bt Cotton Reduce the use of Insecticides?**

Bt cotton does not eliminate the use of pesticides and there is little evidence for significant reductions in overall pesticide use. The Bt toxins expressed by Bt cotton only target lepidopteran pests (caterpillars) and some lepidopteran pests are more susceptible than others. Bt cotton has been shown to be effective against the tobacco budworm and the pink bollworm but less effective in controlling cotton bollworms, an important cotton pest in West Africa. This is why farmers continue to use pesticides against bollworms and continue to experience damage from these pests. There are many important cotton insect pest for which Bt cotton offers no control, such as aphids and jassids. The secondary pests can result in significant crop damage on Bt crops, which helps to explain why insecticide use remains high in Bt cotton fields.

In West Africa, cotton farmers have to manage a diversity of pests and many of the more important pests would either not be controlled or be only partially controlled by Bt cotton. Bt cotton is toxic to a few important cotton pests but, growing Bt cotton does not automatically translate into a reduction in pesticide use and damage from pests. The vast majority of West African farmers spray their cotton fields with broad-spectrum pesticides according to a calendar method, which begins with 2 treatments of an organophosphate pesticide followed by 3 or 4 treatments of a mixture of organophosphates and pyrethroids. These pesticides are used to control all cotton pests not simply those targeted by Bt cotton. Simply cutting back on pesticide use will mean greater problems with pests not controlled by Bt cotton, as cotton farmers in the US have experienced. In order to reduce pesticide use with Bt cotton, farmers must adopt more complicated and targeted pesticide practices.

#### b) Will Bt Cotton Increase Yields?

Bt cotton is genetically modified to produce a toxin that kills certain insects, not to increase yields. Claims made about Bt cotton's ability to increase yield relate to its capacity to reduce damage caused by insects. So where farmers are already successful in keeping damage from pests at low levels, there is little potential for Bt cotton to increase yields. This is the case in most of West Africa, as current pest management practices are able to effectively control pests.

*For the complete document visit [www.grain.org](http://www.grain.org) and comments/observations can be addressed to [jeanne@grain.org](mailto:jeanne@grain.org).*

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# ANNOUNCEMENTS - UPCOMING EVENTS

## The GEF NGO Network NGO Forum

### "Turning Policy into Reality: From the Ground Up"

**28 August 2006 - Cape Town International Convention Centre, Cape Town, South Africa**

The Third Assembly of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), hosted by the Republic of South Africa, will be held in Cape Town during August 29 to 30, 2006.

Organised by the GEF NGO Network, under the umbrella of the Third GEF Assembly, the NGO Forum brings NGOs, Indigenous Peoples Groups and rural and urban grassroots communities to participate and contribute their knowledge and expertise to discussion on the global environment, sustainable livelihoods, and poverty eradication. The forum will bring to the attention of governments and regional organizations the capacity and contributions of these groups in addressing global environmental challenges and will provide recommendations as to how best to incorporate their perspectives into policies and strategies that make a difference at the local level.

### UNIQUE FORUM BENEFITS

- **Exciting programme** – Exposure to current information, case studies and well articulated dialogue.
- **International** – An opportunity to meet with a mammoth gathering of diverse sectors; Indigenous Peoples, NGOs, civil society, private sector, Environment and Development Experts, Government representatives and high level representatives from the GEF 176 member countries.
- **Networking** – Stakeholders from private sector, government (local, state and federal), international civil society, NGOs, Indigenous Peoples Groups, rural and urban communities and academia. Organised Site visits to on-the-ground activities financed by the GEF and its partners in South Africa.
- **Stimulating** – An interactive forum based environment. Case studies from all over the globe illustrating environmental interventions.
- **Great Location** – Hosted by the Republic of South Africa in Cape Town better known as the “Mother City” and the home to Table Mountain. Cape Town is a city rich in cultural diversity with numerous attractions. A land filled with some of the world’s finest vineyards and wineries. From the landmark beaches of Clifton and Camps Bay to the vibrant Waterfront and Cape Town city centre- time spent in Cape Town will not be forgotten.

### PREVIEW OF PROGRAMME

The morning session will tackle the Climate Change and Adaptation Challenge and Energy the Central Pivot. The afternoon session will look at Environmental and Economic Inequities and the Role of NGOs in Environment and Development. Diverse questions will be answered and the outcome of the proceedings of this forum will be shared with the GEF Assembly.

For more information on the GEF Assembly and specifically the NGO Forum see official website [www.theGEF.org/Assembly](http://www.theGEF.org/Assembly) or contact the Interim Central Focal Point of the GEF NGO Network at [info@zeroregional.com](mailto:info@zeroregional.com) or [dorothy@zeroregional.com](mailto:dorothy@zeroregional.com). **REGISTER YOUR INTEREST NOW!!!!!!**

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## **THIRD GEF ASSEMBLY 2006**

**August 29 to September 3 2006 - Cape Town International Convention Centre, Cape Town, South Africa**

The Third Assembly of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), hosted by the Republic of South Africa, will be held in Cape Town during August 29 to September 3 2006.

The Assembly, held once every three to four years, is a strategic opportunity for GEF Stakeholders to meet, take stock, and collectively strengthen strategies and actions for protecting the global environment and achieving sustainable development.

Sharing knowledge, fostering improved policies, and strengthening partnerships are overarching objectives of the Assembly. As a preeminent forum of environment and development experts, the Assembly will attract high-level representatives from the GEF's 176 member countries, as well as environmentalists, leading development practitioners, and participants from the private sector and civil society.

The location and timing of the Assembly are opportune. There is growing awareness that a special effort is needed for achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Africa, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. We are honoured that the Republic of South Africa has graciously agreed to host the Assembly, making this the first Assembly to be held on the continent.

A series of events - symposia and technical sessions on topics and themes of contemporary significance, high-level plenary sessions, panels and roundtables, thematic exhibitions and displays, poster sessions, and site visits to top-performing environmental projects in the Cape Town region - will comprise the highlights of the Assembly.

The associated meetings will begin on August 28 and the site visits will take place on August 31 and September 1, 2006.

For further information, contact the GEF Secretariat at [www.theGEF.org/Assembly](http://www.theGEF.org/Assembly).

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## **FORUM FOR SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT:**

### **Sustainable Land Management, Combating Environmental Degradation and Reviving Ecosystem Productivity**

**August 28 2006 - 0930 to 1830 - Arabella Sheraton Hotel, Cape Town, South Africa**

As part of the UN International Year for Deserts and Desertification (UN-IYDD), the GEF is organizing a forum to highlight its achievements in the area of sustainable land management. The forum, ***Sustainable Land Management: Combating Environmental Degradation and Reviving Ecosystem Productivity***, will address progress by the GEF, its partners, and member countries in dealing with land degradation and charting future directions.

The forum, which will feature presentations from eminent personalities and leaders, will review progress towards sustainable land management in drylands, humid and sub-humid zones, and transboundary water systems; focus on the role of science and community knowledge and action in the process of knowledge management for sustainable land management; address the role of partnerships, institutional development, resources mobilization, and investments in land management; and promote the role of sustainable land management in enhancing the natural resource base and combating rural poverty.

The event will take place at the Arabella Sheraton Hotel, next to the Cape Town International Convention Centre, and will be open to all participants of the Assembly.

Further information is available on the Assembly website - [www.theGEF.org/Assembly](http://www.theGEF.org/Assembly).

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## **CONTACT THE GEF NGO NETWORK e-Newsletter**

We value your comments, suggestions and contributions. You can communicate with us at either: [dorothy@zeroregional.com](mailto:dorothy@zeroregional.com) or [info@zeroregional.com](mailto:info@zeroregional.com).

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