

CSO UPDATE: GCF BOARD MEETING 25

10 MARCH 2020 | GENEVA, SWITZERLAND



Amid the travel restrictions, and mandatory health precautions in light of the Coronavirus (Covid-19), the Green Climate Fund is pushing through with its 25th Board Meeting. Originally set to happen at the GCF Headquarters in Songdo, South Korea, B25 is taking place in Geneva, Switzerland and will run from 10-12 March 2020. A significantly reduced number of people – from Board members, Secretariat and observer organizations – is participating in the said meeting.

Day 1 started with the usual introductions, with the new co-chairs Nauman Bhatti from Pakistan and Sue Szabo from Canada welcoming the new members of the Board. Our new Active Observers were also introduced, and they are Erika Lennon from the developed country CSOs and Eileen Cunningham from the developing country CSOs.

The co-chairs also presented information about precautionary measures for **Covid-19** throughout the duration of the meeting and protocols should a person attending B25 gets infected. They confirmed that the GCF will not be holding its usual reception dinners with the BMs and observer organizations this time as a precautionary measure.

On this topic, the BM from France expressed his disappointment about how the co-chairs handled the extraordinary circumstance of the Covid-19 outbreak. According to him, they failed to consider the fact that cases will increase in other parts of the world, as what has happened in Europe in a span of a week. He added that many international meetings have already been cancelled, with some holding virtual meetings, so he asked why the GCF did not take the same direction.

At some point during the board discussions, Ambassador Valentin Zellweger, the permanent representative of Switzerland to the United Nations, came in to the Board Room and called out the Board for not complying with the protocols, including the practice of social distancing that is strictly implemented in Geneva. Participants of the meeting must maintain at least >2-meter space from each other, and should not be in close contact for more than 15 minutes.



He reminded the Board also of other precautionary measures like frequent hand washing and skipping the usual greeting of shaking hands and hugging. Because of this, the Board went into an executive session to sort out the carefully spaced seating arrangement inside the Board given that the room is relatively small for the number of people inside.

As with previous practice of the Board, Day 1 was spent with hearing the reports and the Board taking note of them. The **Report on the Activities of the Secretariat** presented 4 documents (i.e. Report on the Activities, Status of Accreditation Master Agreements and Funded Activity Agreements, Report on the

Execution of the 2019 Administrative Budget of the GCF, Development of Sector Guidance and Consultation Process). There were a number of BMs concerned with the GCF Staffing Status as it has been noted in the report the need to increase the number of staff in the Secretariat. BM from Switzerland reminded the Secretariat to consider gender balance, not only in numbers but also in ranking, while BM from Egypt raised the need to factor in cultural diversity among the Secretariat personnel and suggested to hire people from Arab countries.

Other BMs went into the finer details like BM from Sweden who raised the question about the Board's response to the development of the Fund's portfolio management framework. BM from Germany noted that while there is an effort by the GCF to increase the number of DAEs, the low value of funding received is something that the Board should address soon. She also added that while the Replenishment Process done in 2019 was successful, the Secretariat must still do further outreach to augment the current amount of contributions. BM from Spain highlighted the importance of tapping the Private Sector, while BM from Ecuador raised the need to conduct REDD+ Results Based Payments Assessment before the mechanism is further implemented. BM from Norway noted the challenges around how the Board operate (i.e. circulation of Board documents 21 days prior a Board Meeting) and urged them to advance progress on this.

Our CSO Intervention focused on the development of Sector Guidance, where we expressed our disappointment for the lack of transparency and CSO participation in the development of the guidance notes. The intervention delivered by Eileen Cunningham, the CSO Active Observer from the South, was echoed BM from Germany and recognized the need to enhance stakeholder engagement in the process.

The **Reports of the independent units** – IEU, IIU and IRM were also presented. Some BMs expressed concerns on the increased cases reported by the IIU including staff misconduct, and furthered that measures to deal with them should be prioritized. BM from Egypt raised comments on the IEU report particularly on how the Board can respond to the evaluation and recommendations, as well as on the need to harmonize the division of labor between the IEU and the Secretariat.

As for the **Report on the Activities of the Co-Chairs**, BM from France expressed his dismay on how the co-chairs' actions have not been aligned with what was in the GCF Rules of Procedure. In the report, he referred to the activity that said the co-chairs gave clearance to documents that will be deliberated for this meeting. According to para 18 of the RoP, this should not be the case, and that the only document that they should give clearance to is the Board Meeting Provisional Agenda, which should also be shared to the BMs 21 days before B25. For this Board Meeting, many of the documents were circulated in less than 21 days.

Other items that the Board covered were the **Updated Workplan of the Board** and the **Co-chairs' Proposal on the Review of Committees, Panels and Groups**. Both documents had minimal comments from the Board.

The entire afternoon of Day 1 was spent in an Executive Session, which is exclusive to Board Members only.

The 25th Board Meeting is available via webcast here:

<https://www.greenclimate.fund/boardroom/meeting/b25#videos>