



GEF/C.70/Inf.17  
November 20, 2025

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70<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting  
December 15-19, 2025  
Virtual Meeting

## **UPDATE ON THE ORGANIZATION OF THE EIGHTH GEF ASSEMBLY**

## INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this note is to provide Council with updated information regarding the organization of the Eighth GEF Assembly.
2. During its 69<sup>th</sup> session, the Council approved the Republic of Uzbekistan's offer to host the Eighth GEF Assembly and associated meetings from May 30 to June 6, 2026. This paper updates the Council on progress since the 69<sup>th</sup> GEF Council Meeting in June 2025. Annex I contains the Host Country Agreement, signed by the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the GEF Secretariat on November 17, 2025, on the margins of UNFCCC COP30 in Belém, Brazil.

## LOCATION AND TIMING OF THE ASSEMBLY

3. The First GEF Assembly was hosted by India in March 1998; the Second by China, in October 2002; the Third by South Africa, in August 2006; the Fourth by Uruguay, in May 2010; the Fifth by Mexico in 2014; the Sixth in Viet Nam in 2018, and the Seventh by Canada in 2023<sup>1</sup>.
4. The *Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured GEF* states that “the Assembly shall meet once every three years”. Nonetheless, for previous Assemblies, the Council agreed that the Assembly should be linked with the completion of the Replenishment negotiations of the GEF Trust Fund. This has resulted in the Assembly being convened at four-year intervals.
5. Negotiations on the Ninth Replenishment for the GEF Trust fund are to be completed during the Spring of 2026. Therefore, the Eighth GEF Assembly will be convened on June 4 and 5, 2026 following the 71<sup>st</sup> GEF Council Meeting.
6. During the 69<sup>th</sup> GEF Council Meeting, the Council accepted the offer of the Republic of Uzbekistan to host the Eighth GEF Assembly. The Republic of Uzbekistan has proposed to hold the Assembly in Samarkand, at the Silk Road Congress Center.
7. Following the Council's acceptance, the GEF Secretariat initiated discussions with Uzbekistan to draft a Host Country Agreement setting out the arrangements between the host country and the Secretariat, including each party's responsibilities. The Host Country Agreement has been finalized, signed, and is attached for information.
8. A GEF delegation visited Uzbekistan from 10-13 November 2025 to conduct a scouting mission as part of Assembly preparatory organization process. The team reviewed the main venue the Silk Road Samarkand Congress Center, assessed its halls and meeting rooms, technical systems and logistical suitability. The delegation also evaluated hotel capacity, transport arrangements and technical readiness, including internet reliability, AV systems and hybrid-

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<sup>1</sup> This interval resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic

participation capabilities. High-level meetings were held with key government ministries and authorities to discuss security, visa facilitation, customs clearance and other Host Country activities. Overall, the visit received strong national commitment and progress towards the Assembly preparation.

9. The easily accessible location of the Assembly in Samarkand, Uzbekistan will facilitate strong participation by the GEF Participant countries, its Agencies and its broader partnership stakeholders.

10. As customary, interpretation services for the Council and Assembly Plenary meetings, as well as for the Civil Society Organization (CSO) Forum will be made available in English, French and Spanish.

### **ORGANIZATION OF THE ASSEMBLY**

11. It is proposed that the Assembly be organized consistent with previous Assemblies. Key elements would include convening at the ministerial level, holding high-level roundtables, and concluding with endorsement of an Assembly Statement reflecting views expressed by delegations in their statements and during the roundtables.

12. In parallel with plenary sessions, there will be exhibits, side events, GEF project site visits, and learning stations. A CSO Forum will be held following the 71<sup>st</sup> Council Meeting and prior to the Assembly.

13. As in previous GEF Assemblies, a dedicated team has been put together to undertake the GEF responsibilities and provide overall coordination, including liaising with the government contacts.

### **ATTENDANCE**

14. All GEF 186 Member countries will be invited to send a Representative and one Alternate to the Assembly. Delegations may include Advisors.

15. The GEF will finance the travel and subsistence costs of two representatives from each recipient country and three representatives from LDCs and SIDs.

### **ASSEMBLY OBJECTIVES**

16. The Primary Purpose of the Assembly as defined in the Instrument is to:

- a) Review the general policies of the Facility
- b) Review and evaluate the operation of the Facility on the basis of reports submitted by the Council

- c) Keep under review the membership of the Facility, and
- d) Consider, for approval by consensus, amendments to the present Instrument on the basis of recommendations by the Council.

17. In addition to its formal mandate above, the Assembly provides a unique opportunity to promote:

- a) High-level dialogue on the major global environmental challenges facing the planet
- b) Increased awareness and understanding of key global environmental challenges and the need for concerted activities in order to address the major drivers of environmental degradation, and
- c) Sharing of experiences of the GEF and its Agencies at the operational level in undertaking measures to protect and manage the global environment.

18. The draft agenda and proposed activities will be detailed in communications sent out to Governments together with the official invitation.

#### **Proposed Schedule of Activities**

19. At its 69<sup>th</sup> session, the Council agreed that the 71<sup>st</sup> Council Meeting would be held back-to-back with the Eighth GEF Assembly in a hybrid format, and is scheduled for May 31 to June 3, 2026.

20. As is customary for Council meetings, it will be preceded by Constituency Meetings for GEF recipient countries. In parallel with the Council Meeting, the GEF will host learning stations to help Political and Operational Focal Points navigate into GEF-9, engage in dynamic exchanges, and provide timely answers.

21. A CSO Forum will take place in the afternoon of June 3.

22. The Eighth GEF Assembly will convene on June 4 and 5, 2026, and will include side events, round tables and a high-level plenary session. Exhibits from the GEF partnership will be on display throughout the different days. The program will conclude with site visits, offering delegates a choice between GEF project visits or cultural excursions.

	Saturday May 30	Sunday May 31	Monday June 1	Tuesday June 2	Wednesday June 3	Thursday June 4	Friday June 5	Saturday June 6						
8:00		Registration	Registration	Registration	Registration	Registration	Registration							
8:30		Council meeting	Council meeting	Learning stations OFP/PFP	Council meeting	Learning stations OFP/PFP	Assembly	Side events						
9:00									7 Round tables (continued)	Side events				
9:30											Assembly	Side events		
10:00													Assembly	Side events
10:30														
11:00														
11:30	Registration													
12:00		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	HoD Lunch (co-hosted UZ/GEF)	Lunch	Field visit						
12:30														
13:00														
13:30														
14:00					CSO Forum									
14:30	Constituency meetings (PFP and OFP of recipient countries)	Council meeting	Learning stations OFP/PFP	Council meeting		Learning stations OFP/PFP	Council meeting		Learning stations OFP/PFP					
15:00														
15:30														
16:00														
16:30														
17:00														
17:30														
18:00														
18:30														
19:30					Cultural night/reception by UZ Gov		GEF reception							
20:30														

## DOCUMENTATION FOR THE ASSEMBLY

23. Documentation for the Assembly is to be disseminated at least six weeks before the start of the meeting (April 23, 2026).

## BUDGET FOR THE ASSEMBLY

24. Costs for preparing and organizing the Assembly will be incurred in FY26. Resources approved by the Council for the financing of the Assembly will be kept in a separate account, and any resources remaining after the Assembly will be returned to the GEF Trust Fund.

25. At its 69<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Council approved US \$ 1.7 million for planning the Assembly.

**ANNEX I. HOST COUNTRY AGREEMENT SIGNED WITH GOVERNMENT OF UZBEKISTAN**



MINISTRY OF ECOLOGY,  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
AND CLIMATE CHANGE OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN



global  
environment  
facility  
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

**AGREEMENT**

**BETWEEN**

**THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN**

**AND**

**THE SECRETARIAT OF THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY  
REGARDING**

**THE EIGHTH MEETING OF THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT  
FACILITY ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATED MEETINGS**

## **Preamble**

The Government (“Government”) of the Republic of Uzbekistan (“Uzbekistan”), represented by the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change, and the Secretariat of the Global Environment Facility (the “GEF”), (hereinafter jointly referred to as the “Parties”, and, individually, as a “Party),

**CONSIDERING** that following the notification sent by the Ministry of Ecology, Environmental Protection and Climate Change on January 23, 2025, the Council expressed its sincere appreciation and accepted the generous offer of the Government to host the Eighth Assembly in Uzbekistan and

**RECOGNIZING** the need to start the preparation of the Eighth Assembly and to agree on the basic roles and responsibilities of each Party in such preparation,

**HAVE** reached the following understanding:

## **Article 1 Definitions**

In this Agreement (the “Agreement”), unless the context otherwise requires, the capitalized terms are defined as:

a) “ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT” means the Articles of Agreement of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, as amended through June 27, 2012;

b) “EIGHTH ASSEMBLY” means the eighth Assembly of the GEF, established in accordance with paragraphs 11, 13 and 14 of the Instrument;

c) “ASSOCIATED MEETINGS” means the Council meeting and civil society organizations consultations, meetings of Council constituencies and other meetings, workshops and exhibits related to the Eighth Assembly;

d) “CONVENTION” means the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations, adopted by the General Assembly on November 21, 1947, and acceded to by Uzbekistan on February 18, 1997;

e) “COUNCIL” means the Council of the GEF, established in accordance with paragraphs 11 and 15 to 20 of the Instrument;

f) “GEF TRUST FUND” means the trust fund established in accordance with paragraph 8 of the Instrument;

g) “INSTRUMENT” means the Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility, as amended, accepted by representatives of the States participating in the GEF at their meeting in Geneva,

Switzerland, from March 14 to 16, 1994, and subsequently adopted by the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme, as Implementing Agencies of the GEF;

h) "ORGANIZATION" means the Secretariat; and

i) "SECRETARIAT" means the Secretariat of the GEF, established in accordance with paragraphs 11 and 21 of the Instrument.

In this Agreement (unless a contrary indication appears), a reference to "Eighth Assembly participants" and/or to "all persons performing functions in connection with the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings" includes all representatives, alternates, advisors, observers, panelists and workshop participants, and media representatives, accredited by the Secretariat on behalf of the Assembly to attend or observe the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings.

## **Article 2**

### **Cooperative principle**

Activities under this Agreement shall be undertaken taking into account the laws and regulations of Uzbekistan, as well as the international conventions of which Uzbekistan is a member, without prejudice to the privileges and immunities provided under this Agreement and other legal instruments.

## **Article 3**

### **Date and Place of the Sixth Assembly and Associated Meetings**

The Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings will be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, from May 31 to June 6, 2026.

## **Article 4**

### **Privileges and immunities**

The Articles of Agreement and the Convention, *mutatis mutandis*, will be applicable to the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings. The representatives of the Parties and the members and alternates of the Council, as well as representatives of observers and experts invited to participate in the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings in the territory of Uzbekistan, during the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings, and the project visits, will enjoy the privileges and immunities provided under Article V of the Convention.

The Government shall take appropriate measures to ensure that representatives of the Parties and the members and alternates of the Council, as well as representatives of observers and experts invited to participate in the Eighth

Assembly and Associated Meetings, shall be granted the following privileges and immunities on the territory of Uzbekistan during the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings, and the project visits and during their journeys to and from the location where the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings are being held, in accordance with Uzbekistan's and international laws and regulations:

- a) Inviolability of body and accommodation, immunity from arrest, detention and seizure of personal baggage;
- b) Immunity from legal process in civil, administrative and criminal matters, for acts performed in the exercise of their functions;
- c) Inviolability for all official papers and documents, letters, telegrams, telephones;
- d) The same facilities with regards to foreign exchange as are granted to diplomatic agents.

#### **Article 5 Visa Arrangements**

The Government will facilitate visa arrangements in accordance with the applicable national legislation for persons invited to attend the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings, who are in possession of a valid passport or other valid travel document that meets the requirements of the domestic law in force in Uzbekistan, with respect to entry into Uzbekistan. It is the responsibility of each traveler to obtain a valid travel document in the participant's country of origin. The Government will communicate to the Secretariat the visa entry requirements – including, and if necessary, any visa on arrival processes at Islam Karimov Tashkent International Airport and Samarkand International Airport, both holding international airport status - six (6) months prior to the start of the Eighth Assembly.

#### **Article 6 Communications**

The Organization will enjoy, in their communications and the transfer of documents in connection with the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings, treatment not less favorable than that accorded by the Government to any diplomatic mission.

**Article 7**  
**Government's responsibilities for**  
**the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings**

Unless otherwise agreed in writing among the Parties, the Government will provide the services and facilities, for the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings, and cover their costs as set forth below:

**1. Facilities**

a) The Government will provide conference facilities that are both environmentally sustainable and adequate to host the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings, as well as all related arrangements which shall prioritize highly environmentally sustainable alternatives.

b) The conference facilities hosting the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings (excluding the sites for the project visits) will be available for use on the dates established for the meetings and set up such conference facilities as required and will also provide sufficient exhibition space.

c) The conference facilities will be ready to receive set-up arrangements for the beginning of the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings and be available for setup 3 days prior to the start of the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings.

**2. Security and Safety**

The Government will take all reasonable measures that are necessary to safeguard the participants' security, and the safety of their and the Organization's property, within the premises of the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings.

**3. Information and Communication Technology, Audio Visual Services and Equipment; Equipment for Registration**

The Government will provide Audio-Visual and Information Technology systems, internet/Wi-Fi services and equipment (including microphones, interpretation equipment, viewing screens, projectors, LCD display projectors/panels, web streaming, video and audio recording), as well as equipment pertaining to registration and badging (including digital cameras and printers).

**4. Logo**

The Government will provide a logo registered with the relevant trademark authorities.

**5. Local Transportation**

The Government will ensure that appropriate transportation is available to the participants during the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings time-period to and from the approved airports, approved hotels and the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings conference facilities. Additionally, the Government will provide transportation to and from official social events with experienced drivers and assisting personnel.

## **6. Airport Arrangements**

The Government will provide airport assistance at Islam Karimov Tashkent International Airport and Samarkand International Airport for the full duration of the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings. A welcome desk will be set up and staffed at the airports to assist Council members and alternates and all those who will participate in, observe, or perform functions in connection with, the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings.

## **7. Personnel**

The Government will provide local personnel required for servicing the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings (registration clerks, messengers, secretaries, conference clerks, travel assistants, technicians for operating and maintaining equipment, and any other essential service personnel).

## **8. Furniture, Equipment and Supplies**

a) The Government will provide furniture as required for the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings, the installation of offices, registration, and other areas; racks for documents distribution, among others.

b) The Government will provide signage, including exterior and interior directional and door signs for the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings.

c) The Government will set up communication facilities and provide office supplies and equipment, including computers, printers, internet and Wi-Fi connections, telephones, and photocopiers.

## **9. Project Visits**

The Government will make local arrangements for visits to GEF financed project sites.

## **10. Emergency and Medical Services**

The Government will provide medical personnel, equipment, and dedicated space adequate for first aid in emergencies, within the conference area. For serious emergencies, the Government will provide and ensure immediate transportation and admission to a hospital. The Government will, however, not be responsible for the cost of any medical treatment.

## **11. Protocol**

The Government will make arrangements and provide staff to deal with protocol arrangements for VIP participants to the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings.

## **12. Events**

The Government will organize a cultural night and other events that it wishes to host.

## **13. Catering**

Coffee breaks and lunch throughout the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings.

**Article 8**  
**Secretariat's roles and responsibilities for**  
**the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings**

Unless otherwise agreed in writing among the Parties, the Secretariat will be responsible for arranging the following, which will be financed from the GEF Trust Fund:

1. Travel, subsistence allowances and related expenses for the Organizations' officers and employees, and persons specifically recruited or invited by the Secretariat to attend, observe or participate in the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings, and for whom the Secretariat has agreed to cover the related costs;
2. Selection, recruitment and payment of travel and related expenses to and from Samarkand, Uzbekistan, per diem allowances and salaries of all the technical staff, including translators and interpreters;
3. Side events and exhibitions arranged by and at the invitation of the Secretariat, as well as a welcome or closing event for the Eighth Assembly and a cocktail reception for Council members and alternates, excluding side events organized by third party organizations who will cover the related costs;
4. Actual charges for mail, Internet connection and Wi-Fi access, long distance calls and other carrier traffic initiated by the Secretariat;
5. All transportation expenses for Secretariat-initiated shipments from Washington, D.C. (United States of America) to the conference facilities and back;
6. Reporting and communication for the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings and other events organized by the Secretariat;
7. Website for the Eighth Assembly that will be active eight months prior to the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings. The Website in coordination with the government, and the Parties in line with the GEF's Policy on Communication and Visibility will include, at minimum, logistics information, including travel, visa and approved hotel arrangements, agendas for the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings, registration for the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings and project visits.

**Article 9**  
**Means and Channels of Communications**

This Agreement will be carried out, and all action deemed necessary in connection therewith will be taken by the Parties, through their respective designees.

Communications among the Parties on matters related to the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings and to this Agreement will be in writing and will be transmitted by email. Official channels of communication will be as follows

**For the Government of Uzbekistan:**

Javokhir Abdukhalikov  
Deputy Head of International  
Cooperation and Rankings  
Department  
Ministry of Ecology, Environmental  
Protection and Climate Change  
7A, Bunyodkor Avenue, Tashkent,  
100043  
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**For the Secretariat:**

Noemi Hernandez Rodriguez Borjas  
Secretary to the Council  
Global Environment Facility  
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United States of America  
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**Article 10  
Amendments**

The Parties will cooperate to ensure that notice of any changes proposed to this Agreement will be given as early as practicable and guaranteeing that the best efforts will be made to facilitate the smooth functioning and preparation of such changes in a collaborative spirit.

This Agreement may be amended or revised in writing by an exchange of letters among the Parties.

**Article 11  
Settlement of Disputes**

Should any dispute arise among the Parties to this Agreement regarding its interpretation and/or implementation, the Parties will settle such disputes by means of direct consultations conducted in a spirit of trust and friendly cooperation among them.

**Article 12  
Entry into Force**

This Agreement will enter into force on the date of signature thereof by Parties.

**Article 13  
Duration**

This Agreement will remain in force throughout the duration of the Eighth Assembly and Associated Meetings, as well as the project visits, and for such period thereafter as is necessary for all matters relating to any of its provisions to be settled.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF** the undersigned, being duly authorized thereto, have signed this Agreement, in two copies, in the English and Uzbek languages. In case of discrepancies the English version shall prevail.

**FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN**

**FOR THE SECRETARIAT  
OF THE GLOBAL  
ENVIRONMENT FACILITY**



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**Aziz Abdukhakimov**  
Minister of Ecology, Environmental  
Protection and Climate Change

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**Carlos Manuel Rodriguez**  
CEO and Chairperson

## **ANNEX II. PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

1. Opening Ceremony
  - (a) Welcoming Address by the Host Government
  - (b) Welcoming Address by the CEO/ Chairman of the Facility
2. Election of Chair
3. Election of Vice-Chairs
4. Adoption of the Agenda
5. Report on the GEF Trust Fund by the Trustee
6. Report on the Ninth Replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund
7. Amendment of the Instrument
8. Statement by the GEF IEO
9. Statements by the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP)
10. Statement by a Representative of Civil Society Organizations
11. Statements by the Heads of the GEF Agencies
12. Statements by the Representatives of the Conventions
13. Statements by the Heads of Delegations
14. High Level Roundtables with Participation by Ministers and other Heads of Delegation
15. High-Level Plenary Session
16. Report on Membership
17. Report on Credentials and Participation
18. Summary of High-level Roundtable Discussions
19. Presentation of Chair's Summary
20. Closing of the Assembly