

**38th LDCF/SCCF Council**

**June 4, 2025**

**Washington, DC**

**Opening of the Meeting**

**Introductory Remarks by**

**Carlos Manuel Rodríguez**

**GEF CEO and Chairperson**

**As Delivered**

It is a real honor to be here with all of you today.

I want to begin by thanking each of you for your continued commitment to the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund.

We are entering the final stretch of the GEF-8 period – which is a moment not just to reflect on what we have been doing with these two funds, but also on how we deliver.

To understand how we deliver better, in terms of purpose, urgency, and solidarity.

And for the LDCF and SCCF, that means showing what inclusive, effective, country-led adaptation and resilience building can look like.

I know I don't need to remind any of you that we are gathered at a time when climate impacts are escalating.

One year ago, when I addressed this meeting, 2023 had been named the warmest year on record.

Today, that record has already been broken, with 2024 exceeding the pre-industrial average by 1.46 degrees.

As we've heard from STAP today, and in many recent reports, the science is clear. But it doesn't take a scientist to understand the threats we are witnessing.

We need to take real action at the scale that is needed to support the efforts of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States. These countries continue to deal with the droughts, floods, fires, and storms that are growing in intensity.

No country is immune, but the risks are deepest where the capacities are most strained and people, economies, and ecosystems are most vulnerable – and these are the in Least

Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, without any doubt.

Yet it is exactly these countries, where the challenges are greatest, that are showing us the way forward.

From the Sahel to the South Pacific, frontline communities are building resilience with nature-positive, inclusive solutions – solutions that the LDCF and SCCF are proud to support.

Today, four projects in five LDCs that focus on innovation, whole-of-society, socio-economic stability and job creation are being presented to you in the LDCF work program.

These LDCF projects show that GEF funding is not only catalytic, it is distinctive and strategic.

We have sharpened the strategic direction of both funds under GEF-8, listening closely to you – our Council members – and the countries we serve.

Locally led action is at the core of our shared vision.

We are scaling up finance for food, water, nature, urban systems, and coastal ecosystems. We are linking adaptation to energy access, gender equity, public health, and early warning systems. And we are integrating and innovating across sectors, aligned with the Global Goal on Adaptation.

So far in GEF-8, more than \$618 million in LDCF/SCCF resources has been programmed – building the resilience of almost 21 million people.

Our operational reforms are accelerating the path from approval to implementation.

You will also have an opportunity today to discuss how the active LDCF/SCCF portfolio is performing when we present the Annual Monitoring Review.

But while we are making progress, we are very far from where we need to be.

The most recent UNEP Adaptation Gap Report estimates that developing countries will need as much as \$359 billion annually for adaptation in the years to 2030. Current funding flows fall well short of that. This gap is not just a financial one – it is a justice gap, a resilience gap, and a risk we cannot afford to leave unaddressed.

That is why we must:

- Deliver tangible, timely results on the ground;
- Secure increased and predictable financing from our donor partners;
- Forge deeper partnerships across sectors and stakeholders;
- And ensure the leadership of vulnerable countries guides our every move.

Today's work program is modest – but it marks the beginning of our final push in GEF-8.

Every project we approve, every dollar we mobilize, must help ensure that no Least Developing Country or Small Island Developing State is left behind.

As we move towards the final year of GEF-8, I also want to remind colleagues that we still have some way to go to meet even the modest financial scenarios agreed for the LDCF and SCCF for the GEF-8 period. We also have a number of projects that are waiting to be supported.

The dynamic and forthright discussions we held in Paris two weeks ago have laid the foundations for a bold, inclusive strategy in GEF-9.

Our colleagues will share a short update on the key takeaways from the Paris meeting, and the way forward, today is this Council meeting.

Our vision is clear: the LDCF and SCCF must remain vital vehicles for scaling adaptation and fulfilling the global goal under Article 7 of the Paris Agreement. The New Collective Quantified Goal commits us to tripling climate finance outflows by 2030. The funds we steward here today are essential to realizing that commitment.

Colleagues – this work is not charity. It is a shared responsibility, and a shared opportunity. The LDCF and SCCF are proven, trusted, and ready. What they need now is sustained, ambitious support.

Today, I invite you to join us in ensuring that we continue to deliver that support on a timely basis, and with maximum effect, as we look towards the conclusion of GEF-8.

Thank you for your commitment, your guidance and your partnership. While the scale of the climate crisis demands action beyond the capacity of any one fund, with your support to the LDCF and SCCF, the GEF is proving that the transformational adaptation can be achieved in an urgent manner.

Now, it is my pleasure to hand over to our esteemed Chair of the LDC Group, Mr. Evans Njewa, who is Chief Environment Officer at the Environmental Affairs Department of Malawi, as well as the GEF Alternate Council Member for the Southern African constituency.

Thank you so much for joining us Evans. The floor is yours.

Thank you.