

Global Concessional Financing Facility Steering Committee Meeting

October 29, 2024, by Video Conference

Key Decision

- *Noting the importance of taking stock of progress towards the GCFF's objectives and of lessons learned as well as future direction of the GCFF, the Steering Committee invited the Coordination Unit to prepare draft terms of reference for an independent evaluation of the GCFF in accordance with paragraph 39 of the GCFF Operations Manual. The Steering Committee further requested the Coordination Unit to discuss the draft terms of reference for feedback in the TAG along with the proposed timeline, before submission to the Steering Committee for review in the first meeting of the new year.*

Summary of Meeting

1. Introductory Remarks

The co-chairs of the meeting, Mr. **Warner ten Kate**, Head of Migration and Displacement Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Representative of the Netherlands, and Mr. **Ion GUMENE**, Secretary of State, Ministry of Finance, Representative of Moldova, welcomed all participants to the GCFF Steering Committee (SC) meeting. Mr. **ten Kate** turned to Ms. **Nabila Assaf**, Manager of the Fragility, Conflict and Violence Group, World Bank for the roll call and introductory remarks.

Ms. **Assaf** welcomed participants to the SC meeting and acknowledged new colleagues to the Committee, notably Mr. **Jacob Faber**, representing Denmark, Ms. **Svea Burmester** representing Germany, Mr. **Stein Erik Horjen** representing Norway, and Mr. **Robin Dowse-Willoughby** representing the United Kingdom. New members including Ms. **Elizabeth Flinter**, Deputy Head Migration Department, FCDO were provided with an opportunity to introduce themselves and say a few words on the GCFF. Ms. **Assaf** also welcomed the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as the sixth MDB to join the GCFF.

Ms. **Assaf** noted, that based on a series of discussions led by the Co-Chairs, new pledges for the LAC, MENA and ECA regions have been announced by Canada, Denmark, Germany, Japan, The Netherlands, Sweden, and United States. The generosity of Supporting Countries is essential for the GCFF to remain responsive and continue support to existing and future Benefiting Countries (BC). Ms. **Assaf** informed there have been discussions with the Spanish Development Agency (AECID) to potentially become a Supporting Country. Further developments will be reported to the SC.

Ms. **Assaf** provided an overview of the agenda and concluded by thanking members for participating and looked forward to a productive meeting.

Item for Presentation/Discussion

Update of GCFF Funding Plan 2024-25.

Introduction of the agenda item: Mr. **ten Kate** introduced the agenda item. Mr. **ten Kate** noted this Funding Plan has been developed in accordance with the new process approved by the GCFF SC in June 2024 requiring preparation of prioritised project pipelines and consultations with country-level GCFF stakeholders. Mr. **ten Kate** informed that while several BCs completed the process, it is expected that the remaining BCs will organise country level discussions soon. The ongoing situation in Lebanon will likely preclude a meeting of GCFF stakeholders in the near future, but the Coordination Unit (CU) has received a validated pipeline from the Government. In addition to the CU providing an overview of the Funding Plan Mr. **ten Kate** added that two projects from the Armenia and Ecuador pipelines would be spotlighted to give members a better understanding of the priorities included in the pipeline.

Presentation. Mr. **ten Kate** first turned to Mr. **Spyridon Demetriou**, Program Manager GCFF, for a brief presentation. *(Please find copy of presentation in attachment).*

Mr. **ten Kate** then turned to Ms. **Carolyn Geginat** Country Manager World Bank Armenia for a brief presentation on the joint ADB-IBRD Housing and Economic Integration Project *(Please find copy of presentation in attachment)*. This was followed by Mr. **Don Lambert**, Country Director ADB who provided an overview of project, the collaboration between the ADB/IBRD and importance of the project for Armenia.

Mr. **ten Kate** then introduced Ambassador **Christian Espinosa** and Mr. **Andreas Castor**, representatives of Government of Ecuador, for a brief presentation on the IBRD supported Social Safety Net Project.

Discussion. Following the presentations Mr. **ten Kate** opened the floor for comments and questions.

Canada inquired about the funding gap and overall targets as in illustrated in the Funding Plan.

Ms. Ana Aguilera, World Bank noted that the updated pipelines for Colombia, Costa Rica and Ecuador be included in the pipelines as the priorities have evolved.

The Netherlands requested Supporting Countries to convert earlier pledges/commitments to transfers and announced €10 million for Moldova. The Netherlands congratulated Moldova on receiving the Nansen Award for the country's support to Ukrainian refugees.

Denmark asked about the allocations and receipts figures provided in the Funding Plan for 2023.

The United States announced a contribution of \$10 million to be transferred to the LAC window in support of the Ecuador Social Safety Net Project. The United States appreciated the collaborative approach in developing the Armenia Housing Project and welcomed country level consultations in BCs. The United States further requested if it was possible to get a sense of the participants and nature of meetings organised so far in BCs.

Ms. **Assaf** noted that the Funding Plan reflects a transformative shift in laying the foundation for predictable financing for BCs through highly prioritised pipelines identified by a consultative process. Ms. Assaf acknowledged the efforts made by BCs in formulating the pipelines and hoped this new process and selected priorities would lead to more stable and sustained support from the Supporting Countries.

Jordan informed that its pipeline has been shared with the CU for the consideration of the SC.

Japan announced a contribution of \$10 million for the joint ADB/IBRD Housing Project in Armenia and encouraged other Supporting Countries to consider funding this important project.

Ms. Paula Rossiasco, World Bank explained that the Ecuador Social Safety Net Project builds on the Government's policies aimed at integration and regularisation of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers and the project will benefit host communities and refugees. Ms. Rossiasco added that the LAC pipelines include important Technical Assistance proposals that the SC is requested to consider.

Ambassador Espinosa, Government of Ecuador thanked the United States for the generous contribution and looked forward to support from other Supporting Countries in aid of Colombian and Venezuelan refugees.

The Coordination Unit thanked members for comments and will update the Funding Plan to include latest pipelines before circulating the final version to the SC. Regarding finances, it was clarified that receipts amounted to \$17 million and allocations \$59 million in CY 2024. Further historical contributions have been sufficient to meet the needs of BCs, however the current flow of contributions is not commensurate to the increasing demand from existing and potential BCs as indicated in the Funding Plan 2024-25 funding gap. The CU will request BCs for minutes/participant lists of country level meetings and if provided will transmit the same to the SC.

Conclusion. Mr. **ten Kate** thanked SC members for the productive discussion, generosity and recognised the efforts of BCs in developing the respective pipelines. He concluded with the hope of supporting the needs of BCs as highlighted in the Funding Plan.

Item for Presentation:

Overview of Refugee Trends, Challenges, Opportunities, and Priorities by UNHCR.

Introduction of the agenda item. Mr. **Gumene** introduced the presentation item. Mr. **Gumene** acknowledged the important advisory role of UNHCR in the GCFF and informing the SC on current and potential refugee crises around the world. Mr. **Gumene** informed that the presentation will provide a broad overview of the global refugee situation and will also update on the situation in Sudan and Lebanon. Mr. **Gumene** added that the UNHCR presentations are important to take into consideration in identifying potential scope for GCFF engagement and support.

Presentation: Mr. **Gumene** introduced Mr. **Hervé de Villeroché** Special Advisor on Development UNHCR. *(Please find copy of presentation in attachment)*

Discussion. Following the presentation, Mr. **Gumene** opened the floor for comments and questions. With no comments, Mr. **Gumene** thanked Mr. **de Villeroché** and closed the agenda item.

Item for Decision:

Second Independent Evaluation of the GCFF

Introduction of the agenda item. Mr. **ten Kate** introduced the agenda item. Mr. **ten Kate** noted that the GCFF Operations Manual establishes that the SC is expected to commission an independent evaluation of the Facility approximately every three years. The last evaluation was launched in early 2020 and completed in April 2021. Building on the last independent evaluation Mr. **ten Kate** added that the CU proposes initiating the process for the next evaluation to commence in late 2024/early 2025 and be concluded by December 31, 2025. The findings from the evaluation are expected to inform discussions around the future of the Facility and its extension in advance of the current end approval date of June 30, 2026 and closing date of January 31, 2026.

Presentation. Mr. **ten Kate** turned to Mr. **Spyridon Demetriou**, Program Manager GCFF, for a brief intervention followed by a presentation by Ms. **Sarah Craig**. *(Please find copy of presentation in attachment).*

Discussion. Following the presentation Mr. **ten Kate** thanked the presenters and opened the floor for comments and questions. With no comments/questions Mr. **ten Kate** proceeded to the decision.

Mr. **ten Kate** read the text of the decision.

Decision

Noting the importance of taking stock of progress towards the GCFF's objectives and of lessons learned as well as future direction of the GCFF, the Steering Committee invited the Coordination Unit to prepare draft terms of reference for an independent evaluation of the GCFF in accordance with paragraph 39 of the GCFF Operations Manual. The Steering Committee further requested the Coordination Unit to discuss the draft terms of reference for feedback in the TAG along with the proposed timeline, before submission to the Steering Committee for review in the first meeting of the new year.

Any other Business/ Closing Remarks by Co-Chairs

Mr. **ten Kate** informed that the agenda item for discussing the GCFF Value Proposition Note will be further discussed in the TAG following which it will be presented to the SC early in the new year.

Mr. **ten Kate** updated the SC on the second meeting of the TAG and acknowledged the quality of discussions and looked forward to input on GCFF business from the TAG.

Mr. **ten Kate** recapped previous discussions on consideration of including Egypt as an eligible BC. Although there has been a general interest on Egypt, the financial resources to match that interest have yet to be identified. Mr. **ten Kate** updated that there is a renewed interest among some members of the GCFF in Egypt, however two issues remain; the amount of funding that can be mustered to make engagement meaningful and the need to reassess the willingness of the Government of Egypt in potentially seeking GCFF membership. Mr. **ten Kate** noted that the World Bank country office has been the primary interlocuter in informal discussions with the Government in this regard.

The United Kingdom expressed interest in supporting Egypt and highlighted two issues that need further discussion, (i) interest and absorptive capacity of Government of Egypt and (ii) critical mass of GCFF donor support to make the undertaking substantive. The United Kingdom also requested the views of the UNHCR on the matter.

The Coordination Unit informed that the World Bank Country Office is in contact with the Government of Egypt to obtain confirmation of their interest in the GCFF and identify potential lending operations that could serve as vehicles to support to Sudanese refugees are also being identified. The Coordination Unit will update the SC on any future developments.

Denmark confirmed exploring possible support to Egypt in 2025 in the event the Government was interested in the GCFF.

Norway echoed the views of Denmark.

Mr. **ten Kate** thanked members for a productive discussion and concluded the session by noting that the SC will revisit the subject as and when the CU learns of progress from the World Bank country office.

Mr. **ten Kate** and Mr. **Gumene** thanked the SC membership for a productive meeting and the continued support of the Supporting Countries.

Ms. **Assaf** thanked the SC for their support, the Coordination unit for organising the meeting and the BCs for their efforts in developing the pipelines.