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Adaptation Fund Board  
Forty-fourth meeting  
Bonn, Germany

## Report on the Activities of the Secretariat

### Strategic Issues

- a) The Report on the Activities of the Secretariat is sequenced to follow a short presentation on key decisions of the CMP and CMA affecting the Adaptation Fund Board and a Report on the Activities of the Chair to support the overall framing of the Agenda of the board meeting.
- b) Accordingly, the Report of the Secretariat provides a retrospective view of the Secretariat's key activities since the last meeting of the Adaptation Fund Board. This report is intended to inform the report of the Adaptation Fund Board to the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP), as well as inform the Secretariat's Annual Performance Report for each fiscal year to the Board later in the year.
- c) As well, the Report also provides a forward-looking view on issues and challenges facing the Secretariat to support the Board's mandate and deliberations at its 44<sup>th</sup> meeting. In particular, this report draws the Board's attention to the decision at CMA 6 on the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) made at CMA 6 to triple the outflow of the Adaptation Fund from 2022 levels by 2030.

### Purpose

1. This board paper presents to the Board a report on the activities of the Secretariat from October 2024 to March 2025. This paper also presents to the Board for its approval a request to prepare an assessment on the implications of the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on the operations of the Adaptation Fund.

### Recommended Decision

2. The Adaptation Fund Board, having considered document AFB/B.44/4/Rev.1, takes note of the Report of the Secretariat for the period of October 2024 to April 2025, and requests the Secretariat to prepare an assessment on the implications on the New Collective Quantified Goal on the operations of the Adaptation Fund, taking into account guidance provided by the Board at its 44<sup>th</sup> meeting, and present it for consideration by the Board at its 45<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### Background

3. This report lists the key activities of the Secretariat during the five-month period since the Board's 43<sup>rd</sup> meeting in October 2024. This report organizes key activities according to the Secretariat's teams in accord with its structure. Lastly, this report provides a forward-looking view on the issues and challenges facing the Secretariat in the next fiscal year.

## **Front Office (including Communications)**

4. The Front Office directly supports the Manager of the Secretariat, who provides overall strategic direction and policy leadership for the Secretariat, strengthens the Secretariat's management culture, and positions the Fund in external engagements.

### *Key Activities of the Manager*

- Led the Fund delegation to COP29 in November 2024, speaking on numerous panels and events, plus engaging with a range of Fund partners and stakeholders in bilateral meetings. The Manager also supported the Board Chair's engagement at COP on behalf the Fund.
- Led a management team retreat in early December to strengthen the Secretariat's management team and lead forward looking strategic thinking on the Secretariat and Fund.
- Also led a Secretariat wide retreat in mid-December to cohere the Secretariat as a whole given the arrival of new staff and extended-term consultants, as well as lead discussions focused on the Secretariat's internal culture, business operations, and work to support the Board.
- Mission to Brasilia, Brazil in February 2025 to engage with a range of stakeholders, including the COP30 Presidency in preparation of the Fund's participation in COP30, potential collaboration with the incoming Presidency, and to advocate for the Adaptation Fund among representatives of contributor and recipient governments.
- Signed a Letter of Intent with the Head of the Secretariat for the Fund Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD), outlining ways to collaborate in areas of mutual interest to support the respective mandates of the Fund and FRLD.
- Mission to several European contributor countries at the end of March 2025, beginning of April to advocate for a well resourced Fund and increase the visibility of the Fund among its stakeholders.

### *Key Activities of the Communications Function*

- Undertook a phased project to modernize the Fund website and make it more engaging and user-friendly, finishing phase 1 in early November ahead of COP29 to beautify and enhance the visual look and feel of the website to put it on a par with other modern websites of similar size organizations. Also undertook work toward a phase 2 reorganization and simplification of the site, with early organizational improvements.
- New website content continuously created, including videos and photos that showcase the Fund's work, resulting in 296,881 views, a 34% increase in webpage views compared to the same period last year, and 75,205 active users of the website, a 53% increase over the same prior period.
- Continued to be very active on social media, posting regularly about the Fund's tangible projects and programmes, innovative thought leadership, and the importance of adaptation finance. This resulted in the Fund reaching 25,000 followers on "X" this period, an increase of 1,200 since March 2024. The Fund also saw an increase of 5,391 followers on LinkedIn to 13,000 in the same period.
- Put out two new photo albums on Flickr, while continuing to grow its Facebook, Instagram and YouTube channels, and innovated by creating two new AF accounts on emerging and growing

social media platforms BlueSky and Threads to safeguard/enhance the reach of AF's story and messages.

- Supported the Fund's activities at COP 29 by developing, designing and organizing a highly visible joint pavilion and outreach campaigns with the other multilateral climate, a significant design improvement over past pavilions that was very well-received. The pavilion served as a venue to enhance partnerships and host several Fund and joint events on key topics that received overflow attendance and additional online viewership. Also produced a COP29 website on the Fund's activities plus several key handouts summarizing its work – including postcards, brochures, flyers, bags and pens. Lastly, produced timely news releases on the progress of the Fund's resource mobilization efforts and coordinated several media interviews with influential global and national climate news media.
- Produced and disseminated engaging content on the Fund's work, including seven videos during the reporting period showing tangible impacts through its projects and programs; four project stories; six news releases, multiple e-newsletters, brochures, social media flyers and photo albums, as well as a timely thought leadership blog on adaptation finance. Current work includes developing additional project videos, written stories, podcasts, and diverse short videos, and updated strategy.
- Enhanced media outreach, coordinating and developing talking points for several interviews during the reporting period, including with Climate Home News, Thomson Reuters Foundation, Devex, national/regional outlets, African Arguments, Resilience Constellation and others. Media mentions during the period reached 1,071 (an increase of 340 over the same reporting period the previous year). Further, the Fund continued to grow its sponsored media partnership with Climate Home News, highlighting its projects and programs, as well as sharing and republishing content with implementing partners to multiply its audience reach. Media and social monitoring tools were further expanded by leveraging new platforms such as Cision and others.

### **Programming and Innovation Team**

5. The Programming and Innovation Team coordinates and undertakes technical reviews of proposals, supports the development of policies and processes for the pre-approval stage of projects, and ensures the efficiency of the proposal submission process. It also leads the implementation of the innovation pillar of the Fund's Medium-term Strategy and provides direct support to Implementing Entities (IEs) in the preparation of grant proposals. The team also provides support to collaborative partnerships.

#### *Key Activities of the Programming and Innovation Team*

- Processed over US \$500 million in proposals received during the reporting period; proposals included single-country, regional, locally-led adaptation (LLA) single-country, LLA global aggregator, Adaptation Fund Climate Innovation Accelerator (AFCIA) global programme, large innovation projects, and small innovation grants.
- Developed an additional funding modality jointly with RBM/KM team (bundling of innovation and learning grants.)
- Supported the finalization of the sponsorship agreement with University of Canterbury for Adaptation Futures 2025 and kicked off planning of Innovation Days.

- Supported the finalization of the cooperation agreement with Wageningen University on a research project on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and adaptation.
- Engaged in dialogue with various Implementing Entities on the Adaptation Fund's processes for accessing funding, including presentations to internal teams at the World Bank.
- Actively supported design, organization and representation at various events, including the Fund's readiness events, including the following:
  - Organized and participated in various events at COP29 in Baku such as Locally-led Adaptation (LLA), Adaptation Fund Climate Innovation Accelerator (AFCIA), nature-based solutions, urban resilience, climate information and multi-hazard early warning systems, innovative adaptation financing etc.
  - Supported the Readiness Team in co-hosting an IE webinar with the European Space Agency to explore how Earth Observation tools can enhance climate adaptation efforts on 9 December 2024.
  - Participated in the Community Resilience Partnership Program (CRPP) 'Locally Led Adaptation: How can national and multilateral systems strengthen local voices and scale up actions?' in Bangkok on 25 February 2025.
  - Represented the Fund at the Needs Based Finance (NBF) workshop focusing on countries affected by conflict and severe humanitarian needs in Abu Dhabi 26-27 February 2025.
  - Participated at the World Adaptation Science Programme (WASP) Annual meeting and scoping meeting in Brussels on 4-6 March 2025.
  - Supported the Results Based Management (RBM) team in a portfolio monitoring mission to Malaysia Nature-based Climate Adaptation Programme for the Urban Areas of Penang Island 17-21 March 2025.
  - Represented the Fund at event 'Mainstreaming human mobility and human security in Caribbean climate and disaster risk reduction policies: progress and ways forward' in Saint Kitts and Nevis 25-26 March 2025. Supported virtually a Climate Finance Academy Session for the Youth Climate Movement (YOUNGO) on 2 October 2024.
  - Represented the Fund at Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Climate Project Pre-investment Workshop in Grenada on 16-18 October 2024.
  - Represented the Fund (virtually) at meeting on accessing climate finance for health in the Southeast Asia Region Dilli, Timor Leste 25-28 February 2025.

### **Country Partnerships Team – Resource Mobilization, Accreditation, and Readiness**

6. The Country and Partnerships Team is comprised of resource mobilization and strategic partnerships, accreditation, and readiness. The resource mobilization function seeks to mobilize resources from various sources, including public government contributions, private sector donations and alternative sources. The accreditation and readiness functions support IEs and DAs to better engage with Fund policies, access and grant processes. As well, the Team seeks to enhance complementarity, coherence and synergies with other climate finance providers and initiatives.

### *Key Activities in Support of Resource Mobilization*

- In the reporting period, the Team continued activities related to the implementation of the Resource Mobilization Strategy for the Fund for the period 2022 to 2025, which included proposing annual resource mobilization targets. The Country Partnerships Team has undertaken active outreach and communication to existing and potential new contributor governments on the 2024 resource mobilization target of USD 300 million from a higher number of contributors than the previous year, as set by the Board at its 42<sup>nd</sup> meeting, Activities included:
- Engagement with UNFCCC Executive Secretary and Azerbaijan’s COP29 Presidency for their support in advocating for the AF’s resource mobilization to reach the Board’s target
- Bilateral meetings with existing and potential contributor governments before and during COP29
- Organization of the Fund’s annual high-level Contributor Dialogue during COP29 on November 14, 2024, co-hosted by the Government of Azerbaijan’s COP29 Presidency: the Contributor Dialogue was moderated by the Fund Board Chair with high-level speakers from the UNFCCC secretariat, COP30 Presidency, contributor and recipient governments, as well as civil society.
- Since COP29, the Team regularly updated contributor governments on the results and impacts of their contributions, including response to information requests and inputs to reporting documents
- Made further updates and enhancement of the dedicated resource mobilization webpage on the Fund website, including the “donate button”
- In partnership with the United Nations Foundation (UNF), enhanced the Fund donation page and finalized updated legal agreements between the Fund and UNF for the transfer of donations received through the donation page
- Participated in meetings related to international carbon markets fora to present on the Fund’s ability and experience with channeling resources from international carbon markets to adaptation projects

### *Key Activities in Support of Accreditation*

- Developed two documents, in consultation with the Accreditation Panel, to streamline the Accreditation Panel’s assessment report on (re-)accreditation applications. The following two documents were endorsed by the Panel at its 44<sup>th</sup> meeting: a) A guidance document for the preparation of the Accreditation Panel’s report on accreditation and reaccreditation applications and associated note to the board, and b) An approach paper on the roles and responsibilities of the panel experts with respect to quality assurance.
- Supported the 44<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Accreditation Panel organized in Washington, DC from February 3-4, 2025.
- Ongoing coordination with the Green Climate Fund (GCF) accreditation team regarding upcoming amendments to their accreditation process, including participating in the 41<sup>st</sup> meeting of the GCF Board to follow up on these changes.
- Ongoing improvement of the Fund’s accreditation workflow through constant feedback from Implementing Entities (IEs) and the Accreditation Panel.

- Ongoing implementation of the transition of the Designated Authority to an entity through official communication and follow-up webinars to inform the Designated Authority and UNFCCC Focal points about the upcoming changes and relevant timelines.

#### *Key Activities in Support of Readiness*

- The secretariat completed the review process for readiness grants for the intersessional period between the forty-third and forty-fourth meetings of the Board.
- The secretariat hosted a webinar to share key updates from the decisions of the Forty-third meeting of the Adaptation Fund Board and its implications to the implementing entities on 29 October 2024.
- The secretariat co-organized a workshop for Africa’s NIEs jointly with Global Center for Adaptation and Green Climate Fund in Nairobi, in December 2024.
- The secretariat hosted a webinar on Using Earth Observation (EO) tools for climate adaptation, in collaboration with the European Space Agency (ESA), on 9 December 2024. The session showcased ESA’s cutting-edge EO applications, emphasizing their ability to help address challenges in key adaptation sectors such as agriculture, water management, disaster risk reduction, and urban resilience, and their available support for the Fund’s implementing entities. The webinar provided practical insights and empowered IEs to integrate EO into their adaptation projects.
- The secretariat also hosted a webinar on key updates to its Strategic Results Framework (SRF) and discuss their implications for the Fund’s implementing entities (IEs), on 11 February 2025. The webinar discussed updates to incorporate feedback previously received from the entities and reflect changes the Fund has undergone since the Framework was last finalized.
- The secretariat hosted a webinar on the Proposed Amendments to the Provisions of the OPGs Related to the Designated Authorities (DA) of the Fund, on 5 March 2025. The webinar provided further insight and clarification into the DA transition period and enable countries to nominate entities as their Designated Authorities. This engagement was crucial in ensuring the expansion of AF support to enhance the institutional capacity of DAs.
- The secretariat plans to host the following events between April and June 2025:
  - Webinar to share key updates from decisions from AFB44
  - Readiness write-shop in Recife, Brazil on the four funding windows of the AF from 6-9 May 2025
  - Caribbean Regional Workshop in May 2025

#### **Results Based Management and Knowledge Management Team**

7. The Results Based Management and Knowledge Management Team is responsible for managing project performance during implementation and sharing knowledge to maximize learning and impact.

#### *Key Activities in Support of Results Based Management*

##### Portfolio Management Functions

- Clearance of Project Performance Reports (PPRs): In the reporting period, the Team completed the review and clearance of 26 PPRs, which are publicly available on the Fund’s website.

- Processing of documents related to project revisions: The Team received 6 requests for project changes including requests for no-cost extension of programme completion date, change in project outputs, material change, revision of disbursement schedule, and extension of project completion date, under the regular process. These were approved by the Board and a corresponding decision was transmitted to the IE. The intersessional board decisions are publicly available on the Fund’s website.
- Planning and Conducting Portfolio Monitoring Missions (PMMs): During reporting period, two PMMs were planned, with one already undertaken. These missions focus on UN-Habitat-implemented projects related to nature-based solutions, ecosystem protection, and human settlements in Laos PDR and Malaysia. The missions are scheduled for March 17–21 in Malaysia and March 24–28 in Laos PDR.

The PMM aims to evaluate the progress, challenges, and overall effectiveness of Adaptation Fund projects in these regions. It will involve key stakeholders, including government representatives, project executing entities, and community beneficiaries, to gather insights, best practices, and lessons learned from project implementation.

#### External collaboration on results-based management related matters

- Members of the Team participated in the Multilateral Climate Funds’ (MCF) collaboration platform on metrics and participated in the meeting on the Global Observatory for Early Warning Systems Investments led by WMO and UNDRR.
- The Team contributed to a paper on Transformational Change (TC) in consultation with the Global Environmental Fund (GEF) and the GCF. This takes an exploratory approach and does not bind the Fund to develop a framework on TC but instead highlights features of the Funds’ operations that all already aligned with dimensions and principles of TC.

#### Representation in conferences and workshops

- Team members represented the Fund in the following conferences/workshops: (i) Asia Need-Based Finance Investment Forum (28-29 November 2024; Seoul, South Korea; in-person); (ii) Eastern Caribbean regional climate finance training for OECS countries: “Designing bankable project proposals to scale up access to climate finance” giving a presentation on enabling access to AF funding - organized by GIZ and Euroclima (3 March 2025; virtual);

#### Implementation of Board decisions

- The Team developed proposed revisions to the Policy for Project Implementation, as set out in annex 7 to the Operational Policies and Guidelines and the Policy for Project/Programme Delays per the Board’s decision B.43/28, which will be considered for Board approval at its 44th meeting. In addition, the Team developed proposed revisions to the Fund’s Strategic Results Framework (SRF), following consultations with the Fund’s IEs, key informant interviews with some agencies and MCFs and internal consultations within the Secretariat. This paper will be presented for Board approval at its 44th meeting.

#### *Key Activities in Support of Knowledge Management*

##### Development of knowledge management products

- Updated a study on lessons learned from adaptation interventions in LDCs. This study offers an overview of adaptation interventions in LDCs focusing on lessons learned from the Fund’s portfolio. An executive summary of the study will be made available in French and Spanish.

- Updated a study on lessons learned from adaptation interventions to strengthening urban resilience. The study will offer an overview of the Fund’s experience and lessons learned on urban adaptation interventions in strengthening long-term resilience to climate change, including case studies drawn from the Fund’s portfolio of projects and programs.
- Completion of a study focusing on lessons learned from mainstreaming gender in the agriculture and food security sector with examples from the Fund’s portfolio. The study will highlight the importance of gender-responsive approaches and provides recommendations for effective implementation.
- A study on alignment of the Fund’s portfolio with NDCs and NAPs with case studies drawing from the Fund’s portfolio in progress.
- Preparation of concept note for the official AF side event at Adaptation Futures to take place in Christchurch, NZ on lessons learned from adaptation interventions in SIDS countries with participation of AF accredited NIEs and RIEs implementing projects in SIDS
- The secretariat organized two side events at COP29 in Baku, as follows:
  - Advancing climate resilient development in Latin America and the Caribbean: lessons learned from the Adaptation Fund portfolio and new financing windows
  - Climate finance for adaptation in fragile and conflict-ridden settings: lessons learned from the Adaptation Fund and the Global Environment Facility
- The Team initiated the work on an e-course focusing on the LLA funding window aimed at increasing understanding of requirements, capacity to access and utilize small LLA grants by IEs. Once complete, the course will be made available in Spanish and French.

### **Governance and Operations Team**

8. The Governance and Operations Team was a newly formed team as of 2024, bringing together the governance, policy, and internal operations functions of the Secretariat, such as supporting the Fund’s governance (both Board/ Committee meetings and reporting to the CMA and CMP), development of Fund policies, and internal operations (such as work plan and budget preparation and standard operating procedures for administrative processes).

#### *Key Activities of the Governance and Operations Team*

##### Governance

- Organized the 44<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board and 35<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ethics and Finance Committee.
- Supported the Chair in finalizing the report of the 43<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Board.
- Supported the Chair in finalizing the Addendum to the Report of the Fund to the CMP and CMA.

##### Policy

- Implemented the Board’s decisions requesting the Secretariat to (i) support the Board’s decision to continue considering the matter of the transition the Fund to exclusively serve the Paris Agreement (Decision B.43/32), (ii) update the standard project legal agreement (Decision B.43/8), (iii) update the Environmental and Social Policy (Decision B.42/56), and (iv) update the draft Adaptation Fund Vision and Guidelines on Enhanced Civil Society Engagement and the draft Guidelines for Participation of Active Civil Society Observers.

- The Team also began work to develop a draft of a policy for the protection against sexual abuse, exploitation, and harassment (SEAH).

#### Gender

- The Team has continued to implement the Fund’s Gender Policy and Action Plan 2021-2023 per the Board’s Decision B.35-36/25, strengthening IE’s capacity to integrate a gender responsive approach and monitoring and reporting on gender progress in projects and programmes.
- The Team is also finalizing a gender knowledge study titled “Lessons Learned from Mainstreaming Gender in the Agriculture and Food Security Sector with Examples from the Adaptation Fund Portfolio.”
- The Fund’s Gender Scorecard (GSC) was piloted, originally developed with the aim of improving data collection and analysis to track the performance of projects at entry and during implementation and to enable the secretariat to track and report the progress of the implementation of the Fund’s gender policy at the Fund’s portfolio level on an annual basis.
- Collaboration on gender mainstreaming with other climate funds and partner organizations expanded during the reporting period, with the Team co-organizing gender events and participating in several meetings and workshops. This included: “Empowering the Most Vulnerable to Adapt and Build Resilience to Climate Change through Concrete Actions, Innovations and Learning and Sharing” co-organized by the four climate funds at COP29 (November 2024); “Financing Women and the Future Generation as Catalysts for Climate Action: Addressing Climate Impacts and Fostering Climate Justice” organized by UNIDO; “Bridging the GAP from Access to Action- National Gender and Climate Change Focal Points Training on Climate Finance and Gender” organized by the UNFCCC Secretariat; the Gender Collective Gathering Meetings organized by the UNFCCC Secretariat (November 2024 and March 2025); “Advancing Beijing: Opportunities and Priorities for Accelerating Women’s Empowerment with Climate and Environment Finance” co-organized by the Adaptation Fund, Green Climate Fund and UNDP as a side event at the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

#### Operations - Finance

- Monitored the Secretariat’s implementation of the FY25 administrative budget, supporting Team Lead’s in the delivery of their teams’ work plans.
- Prepared the Secretariat’s work plan and administrative budget proposal for the Ethics and Finance Committee’s consideration.
- Provided analysis of the Fund’s financial efficiency and status of submission of required reports for small grants.
- Continued to ongoing work to maintain and further enhance the Financial Intermediary Fund (FIF) platform, including building an online project proposal submission system.
- Coordinated the signing of project legal agreements and the signing of cash transfers for projects and grants on behalf of the Board Chair and with the Trustee.

### **A Forward Look at Issues and Challenges Facing the Fund and Secretariat**

9. The work of the Secretariat to implement the Medium-Term Strategy 2023-2027 (MTS II) has grown in recent years in response to increased needs for adaptation finance expressed by countries and related to that, increased expectations on the Fund’s support, and as guided by the Board

through the MTS II Implementation Plan and annual work plans. The grant portfolio under management continues to grow as new projects and programmes are approved and as new grant types are developed, leading to additional work to update policies and increase monitoring support. As well, demand for accreditation review from new prospective national and regional implementing entities has increased, along with increased demand for capacity building through the Fund's readiness programme. The proposed FY26 work plan and administrative budget for the Board and Secretariat reflects these recent trends.

10. The Agenda of the 44<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board, responding to the Board's requests to the Secretariat through its decisions made at its 42<sup>nd</sup> and 43<sup>rd</sup> meetings, reflects these recent trends. The Board will see on the Agenda, per its requests to the Secretariat, proposals to amend the project legal agreement, updates to the Fund's Environmental Social Policy, an update on progress to develop a policy on protection against sexual abuse, exploitation, and harassment, a proposal on project and programme caps, and an update on the Strategic Results Framework to expand the Fund's ability to work effectively with its implementing entities and deliver financing for concrete adaptation projects by countries. As well, the update on the Resource Mobilization Strategy will be presented to the Board.
11. Also of note for the work of the Secretariat, at the recent meeting of CMA6 in Baku, Azerbaijan in November 2024, the CMA considered the new collective quantified goal on climate finance (NCQG) and decided "that a significant increase of public resources should be provided through the operating entities of the Financial Mechanism, the Adaptation Fund, the Least Developed Countries Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund and also decides to pursue efforts to at least triple annual outflows from those Funds from 2022 levels by 2030 at the latest ..." (Decision -/CMA.6, paragraph 16). The Secretariat is at the disposal of the Board as it considers the implications of this decision by CMA6, as implementation of the MTS II continues and early work on the next strategy approaches.