

How the Sixth Edition of the Global Environment Outlook can Help Achieve Transformational Change

During the annual Committee of Permanent Representatives subcommittee meeting, the Science Division hosted a side event aimed at communicating the [messages and findings of the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook report](#). The side event titled 'How the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) 6 can achieve transformational change' was held on 8 October 2019 at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) complex in Nairobi. The panel of the event was made up of UNEP staff members including Director; Jian Liu; Maarten Kappelle; Hartwig Kremer; Eddah Kaguthi and Jillian Campbell with active participation of the following Member States; Australia, Belgium, China, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Montenegro, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

UNEP Science Division Director Jian Liu, welcomed Delegates and introduced the side event, stating that the side event is being organized to discuss the [GEO-6 key messages'](#) uptake pathways to enable the UNEP Science Division to engage with policymakers for policy actions. He said the Science Division and GEO team work with other global assessment processes through the Global Assessment Dialogue, such as IPCC, IPBES, IRP and GSDR. One common message in these landmark assessments is the need for transformational change. Jian Liu mentioned that we will not meet the targets of the [Paris Agreement](#), the [SDGs](#) and the [2030 Agenda](#) without transformational changes.

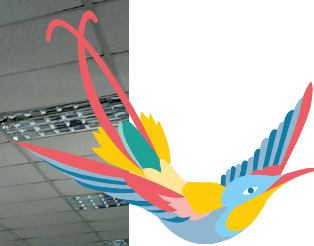


Eddah Kaguthi presented key takeaways with a focus on the policy response options available to achieve transformational change. Policy innovation, integration and coherence with emphasis on policies that focus on large systems can help society achieve transformational pathways. She said, considering the massive scale of the challenge, there is a dire need to reach a near-zero-waste society by 2050 to ensure good human health and a healthy planet. The circular economy, including reduce, re-use and recycle approaches can generate significant social and economic benefits and lead society toward near-zero-waste. Eddah highlighted that analysis in [GEO-6](#) reveals that linear 'take-make-waste' models for society are obsolete and must be phased-out to ensure a healthy planet for healthy people.



Some of the key suggestions made by Member States when considering the use of GEO-6 key findings for transformative change are highlighted below:

- **Transformative shifts, as opposed to incremental changes, in systems of energy, food and waste** with examples including alternative, low-impact meat products (as opposed to dietary changes) and infrastructure change, including cycling lanes, to support transitioning away from single car transport (as opposed to battery replacements for internal combustion engines). The UNEP Science Division should continue to **work with the private sector to develop more innovative, transformative shifts**. – Belgium
- **Transformative change requires strong underlying science provided by the GEO** which can be achieved through attracting many scientists including those at the top of their field. Generating demand from top scientists requires establishing an elite reputation similar to the IPCC. – Switzerland
- For implementation, **the science must be relevant at the regional and national levels**. Breaking down science requires investing in financial and human capital resources to make the science digestible for the policy agenda at regional, national and local levels. The *World Environment Situation Room (WESR)* is an example of creating a bridge toward policy. – Switzerland
- **The value of GEO is the UNEP Science Division support for Member States provided by identifying the sound science alongside innovative solutions**. The GEO derivative products help groups identify customized solutions which are essential for graduating from science to solutions. – China
- The data provided to the business community in addition to Member States is essential for **developing innovative solutions from the GEO together with the private sector**. – Australia
- **Leverage the private sector's power and influence to generate political will** for incorporating the global commons including true costs into economic structures. This can be achieved through the *Science-Policy-Business Forum (SPB)*. – Belgium
- **Engage the private sector by creating a dialogue with targeted sectors**, such as law, legislation, human rights, among others, to share knowledge for finding a model to reduce environmental impact. – Denmark
- **European Green Deal includes priorities identified by the President-Elect in zero pollution, circular economy, biodiversity, supply chain, farm to fork**. The Green Deal is anticipated over the next few weeks in November. – Spain



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