

**Environment Assembly 2017 Preparatory Retreat
Windsor Golf Hotel & Country Club in Nairobi
27 – 28 October 2016**

Briefing Update on Global Environment Outlook-6

The Global Environment Outlook (GEO) is UN Environment's flagship integrated environmental assessment. It reports every 4-5 years on the state of the global environment, the extent and effectiveness of the existing policy responses in addressing major environmental challenges and the prospects or outlook for the environment over the foreseeable future. In 2014, the independent evaluation of GEO-5 called for wider developing country participation, broader stakeholder engagement, greater use of grey literature and indigenous and local knowledge, multi-lingual access to information, improved funding and implementation of results based management. The scope and objectives of GEO-6 were shaped accordingly at the GEO-6 intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder meeting, held in Berlin in 2014. From this, six GEO-6 Regional Assessments were presented at UNEA-2, providing building blocks for the global assessment.

At UNEA-2, Member States agreed that GEO-6 "should be delivered no later than 2018"¹. However, with the change in the UNEA cycle, an amendment at UNEA-3 to the UNEA1/4 Resolution is needed. The UNEA President has written to the Head of UN Environment to prepare the relevant document.

In relation to the change in the UNEA cycle, the High Level Intergovernmental and Stakeholder Advisory Group have proposed that in order to maintain the quality of the report, the final GEO-6 should be presented at UNEA-4 in 2019. A revised production schedule has been prepared, in which the global analysis of the state and trends in the environment, policy effectiveness and responses will be ready for UNEA-3. An updated outlooks section and the final GEO-6 will be ready for UNEA-4 in 2019.

Dr. Paul Ekins, Professor of Energy and Environment Policy at University College, London and Dr. Joyeeta Gupta, Professor of Environment and Development at the University of Amsterdam, have accepted to co-chair the GEO-6 process to its conclusion in 2019. The participation of these eminent scientists as the GEO-6 co-chairs adds an important element of excellent leadership and prestige for the whole GEO process. The list of 60 authors, recommended by the Scientific Advisory Panel, has been validated with author teams from recent and on-going environmental assessments to ensure coherence across the different assessments. Twice monthly working sessions with authors have been scheduled to produce a zero order draft for the first authors' meeting with the High Level Group and Scientific Advisory Panel in 2017. In parallel the Assessment Methods and Data Working Group is finalizing the UN Environment's international assessment guidelines.

Based on the revised production schedule, including a separate meeting for negotiation of the Summary for Policy Makers by Member States, the funding forecast for 2016-2019 shows a shortfall of 2.9mUSD.

GEO-6 comes at a time of significant international engagement on the environment, with the agreement on Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals as well as important multi-lateral environmental agreements. The High Level Intergovernmental and Stakeholder Advisory Group have thus discussed the form of the GEO-6 report for UNEA-3, whether and how it should include references to the Sustainable Development Goals, other internationally agreed environmental goals and links to the themes of the High-Level Political Forum in 2018. There will be a final discussion on this matter in a teleconference of the High Level Group on 25th October.

¹ UNEA1/4 Paragraph 8 "Requests the Executive Director, within the programme of work and budget, to undertake the preparation of the sixth Global Environment Outlook (GEO-6), supported by UNEP Live, with the scope, objectives and procedures of GEO-6 to be defined by a transparent global intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder consultation informed by document UNEP/EA.1/INF/14, resulting in a scientifically credible, peer-reviewed GEO-6 and its accompanying summary for policymakers, to be endorsed by the United Nations Environment Assembly no later than 2018".

The UNEA Bureau members who are also members of the High Level Group may wish to report on the outcome.

The UNEA Bureau is asked to discuss the contribution of the GEO-6 findings to UNEA-3 in 2017, aspects of funding, the preparation of the Summary for Policy Makers and the final delivery of GEO-6 in 2019.

GEO-6 Production Schedule

