

Our Ref: UNEA/GEOSC/pb/2

Oct. 2, 2019

**‘Future of GEO’ Steering Committee Meeting Summary,  
Sept. 12, 2019**

**Important Note:** In order to make future calls more efficient and effective, Steering Committee members are encouraged to keep their verbal interventions to a maximum of 3 minutes each and members are encouraged to mute their telephone lines when they are not speaking, in order to minimize background noise.

The Steering Committee on the future of GEO met for their second call to mainly discuss administrative matters related to the operation of the Steering Committee. Agenda items included:

- Consideration of nominees for the position of co-chairs and vice-chairs of the committee
- Discussion of agenda for the Prague meeting
- Discussion of logistics and preparations for the Prague meeting
- Any other business (Organization of meetings and calls of the Steering Committee)

**On these agenda items the Steering Committee decided:**

- The Steering Committee supported the proposal of the Secretariat for the co-chairs, vice-chairs and a rapporteur for the Committee. The final approved list of co-chairs, vice-chairs and rapporteur are therefore:

First name	Last name	Affiliation	Nominated by	UN Region	Gender
<b>Co-chairs</b>					
Ivar Andreas	Baste	Norwegian Environment Agency	Norway	Western Europe and Others Group	Male
Suzan	Alajjawi	Supreme Council for Environment, Bahrain	Bahrain	Asia-Pacific Group	Female
<b>Vice-chairs</b>					
Jerome	Sebadduka Lugumira	National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)	Uganda	Africa Group	Male
Toral	Patel-Weynand	US Forest Service	USA	Western Europe and Others Group	Female
<b>Rapporteur</b>					
Rafael	Monge Vargas	Ministry of Environment and Energy	Costa Rica	Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC)	Male

- The Secretariat will proceed with orientation sessions for the co-chairs and vice-chairs as well as the rapporteur to ensure they are prepared for chairing future calls and meetings.
- The agenda and meeting objectives of the Prague meeting should be updated to include a longer discussion on lessons learned from GEO-5 and GEO-6, as well as moving the issues discussion up in the agenda to ensure that all members have input into the content of the options document.
- A group photo will be added to the agenda for the Prague meeting.
- The Czech Ministry of the Environment is recommending that **participants to the Prague meeting should book their hotels as soon as possible.**, since the hotels for those dates are booking quickly.

- The Secretariat would like to be **informed by self-funded participants if and when they are attending the Prague meeting**. This will help with the preparation of the participants list and also the list for clearing any security measures that might be required at the Czech Ministry of the Environment.

<b><u>Rapporteur</u></b>	<b><u>Signature</u></b>
Mr. Rafael Monge Vargas	

### ***Summary of the meeting***

The Secretariat chaired the meeting to ensure that the discussion on election of co-chairs, vice-chairs and rapporteurs was possible. Moving forward, the elected co-chairs and/or vice-chairs will chair future face-to-face meetings and calls.

### **Consideration of nominees for co-chairs, vice-chairs and rapporteur**

- The Secretariat reviewed the note prepared on the nomination process and the proposal for the choice of co-chairs, vice-chairs and rapporteur and explained the criteria used for developing the proposal. The criteria included a review of CVs to ensure that the nominees had experience co-chairing intergovernmental bodies and followed this with balancing geographic and gender representation, while ensuring there is a developed and developing country co-chair and a developed and developing country vice-chair.
- Following a question, the Secretariat clarified that the co-chairs and vice-chairs would be asked to reach out to their constituencies to ensure that a broad selection of views was obtained on the various issues being considered by the Steering Committee, but the Secretariat would also provide regular briefings to Member States and the Committee of Permanent Representatives as well as the chairs of the regional groupings in Nairobi to ensure that their feedback was being considered.
- Following another question, the Secretariat clarified that if a co-chair or vice-chair cannot continue in their role, there would likely be a discussion with the Secretariat and the individual would likely decide to resign. This would be followed by another request for nominations followed by an election by the Steering Committee.
- The Secretariat also clarified that there were now 37 members / countries represented in the Steering Committee with very good geographic and gender balance.
- Following a final review of the proposed co-chairs and vice-chairs, the Steering Committee approved the Secretariat's proposal.

### **Discussion of the agenda for the Prague meeting**

- The Secretariat reviewed the draft agenda for the Prague meeting in order to receive comments from the Steering Committee members.
- Firstly, the meeting objectives were discussed. These included:
  - Approve the draft work plan for developing the options document and conducting the broad consultations;
  - Approve the terms of reference for developing the options document, which could be used for hiring a consultant or staffing a position within the Secretariat;

- Approve the issues that should be considered in the options paper, so that the Steering Committee ensures that all relevant issues are considered by the firm or individuals developing the options paper.
- The Secretariat clarified that the options document will likely take several months to produce, but that the issues document would be produced for the Steering Committee's review at the next call.
- Steering Committee members requested to add an objective to the agenda to understand the intricacies of Resolution 23, as well as the lessons learned through GEO-6. A 2-hour slot could be allowed for this discussion.
- Also, Steering Committee members requested that there be a review of the GEO-5 lessons learned prior to the discussion of issues to be considered in the options paper.
- The group requested documents on the medium-term evaluation of the GEO-6 process and the lessons learned document from the GEO-5 process.
- The Secretariat clarified that the options paper work would likely also have to review the assessment landscape and learning from other assessment processes when providing the options for the Future of GEO.
- Although, Steering Committee members hoped that there would be less of an audit approach to the lessons learned and more of a free-flowing discussion. Also, there should be some discussion of the assessment landscape at the Prague meeting to better define the Terms of Reference and the options paper process.
- A good understanding of the purpose of GEO and its niche within the overall assessment landscape will be important for the group to discuss the issues to be included in the options paper.

### **Discussion of logistics and preparations for the Prague meeting**

- The Secretariat has worked to book the travel of about 25 members of the Steering Committee for the Prague meeting.
- The Secretariat would like to be informed of the participants to the meeting who will be self-funded.
- The Secretariat will be sending the travel itineraries for the UNEP-funded participants as soon as possible, so that they can use these for the application for the travel visa.

### **Any other business**

- Co-chairs, vice-chairs and rapporteurs should have a role in approving documentation before it is sent to the group, so there should be a minimum amount of time for document turnaround and sending to the participants.
- For longer documents (e.g. drafts of the options paper) the Secretariat should be preparing them and sending out of the documents for review by the co-chairs, vice-chairs and rapporteurs about 2 weeks in advance, and then these would be shared with the group.
- For smaller documents (e.g. meeting summaries, discussion documents, etc.), these should be prepared for review by the co-chairs, vice-chairs and rapporteurs about a week in advance, and then these would be shared with the broader group.
- A group photo should be added to the agenda for the Prague meeting.

### **Action items**

- The Secretariat will prepare a written summary of the meeting and also share the link to the recording of the call.
- The Secretariat will organize short orientation sessions for the co-chairs, vice-chairs and rapporteur in order to prepare them for chairing and tracking future calls and face to face meetings.
- The Secretariat will revise the meeting agenda according to the discussion during the call and also prepare the drafts of the supporting documents for the Prague meeting, so that these can be reviewed and discussed on the next call of the Steering Committee.
- The Secretariat will find the reference documents (e.g. medium-term review of GEO-6, lessons learned from GEO-5, etc.) that the Steering Committee has requested and circulate these for their consultation.
- The Secretariat will work to issue the travel itineraries as quickly as possible, so that these can be used for the visa application process in some countries.
- The Secretariat will work to have all meeting documents reviewed by the co-chairs and vice-chairs before they are sent to the broader group, and will also work to have shorter documents prepared 1 week in advance of a call or meeting and two weeks in advance for longer documents (e.g. different drafts of the options document).

## List of Participants

First name	Last name	Affiliation	Nominated by
Charles	Lange	National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)	Kenya
Jerome	Sebadduka Lugumira	National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)	Uganda
Ambinintsoa Lucie	Noasilalaonomenjanahary	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	Madagascar
Anna	Mampye	Ministry of Environment	South Africa
Apsara	Mendis	Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment	Sri Lanka
Kazuhiko	Takeuchi	Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)	Japan
Keisuke (alternate)	Takahashi	Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)	Japan
Najib	Saab	Arab Forum for Environment & Development (AFED)	Lebanon
Suzan	Alajjawi	Supreme Council for Environment, Bahrain	Bahrain
Narges	Saffar	International Affairs & Conventions Center, Department of Environment	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Marek	Haliniak	Ministry of the Environment, Poland	Poland
Nino	Gokhelashvili	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia	Georgia
Lukas	Pokonry	Ministry of Environment	Czech Republic
Teshia	Jn Baptiste	Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development	Saint Lucia
Marcos	Serrano	Ministry of Environment Chile	Chile
Rafael	Monge Vargas	Ministry of Environment and Energy	Costa Rica
Ryan	Assiu	Environmental Management Authority	Trinidad and Tobago
Celso	Moretti	Agricultural Research Corporation	Brazil
Toral	Patel-Weynand	US Forest Service	USA
Andrew	Stott	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs-UK	United Kingdom and Northern Ireland
Ivar Andreas	Baste	Norwegian Environment Agency	Norway
Sebastian	Jan Konig	Swiss Federal Office for the Environment,	Switzerland
Claudia	Kabel	German Environment Agency	Germany
Jock	Martin	European Environment Agency (EEA)	European Union
Salla	Rantala	Finnish Environment Institute	Finland
Marcel	Kok	Environment Assessment Agency (PBL)	Netherlands
Mona	Westergaard	Ministry of Environment and Food	Denmark

Apologies

First name	Last name	Affiliation	Nominated by
Ouedraogo	Desire	Ministry of Environment, green economy and climate change	Burkina Faso
Isaac	Dladla	Eswatini Environment Authority	Swaziland
Chenouf	Nadia	Ministry of the Environment and Renewable Energy	Algeria
Christine Okae	Asare	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Ghana
James	Mathew	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change, Government of India	India
Chatchai	Intatha	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand	Thailand
Aliya	Shalabekova	Ministry of Energy	Kazakhstan
Huang	YI	School of Environmental Sciences and Engineering, Peking University	China
Mery	Harutyunyan	Ministry of Environment	Armenia
Mira	Zovko	Ministry of Environment and Energy	Croatia
Ivana	Stojanovic	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism	Montenegro
Shanna (alternate)	Emmanuel	Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development	Saint Lucia
Keri (alternate)	Holland	US Department of State	USA
Cathy (alternate)	Maguire	European Environment Agency (EEA)	European Union