

Our Ref: UNEA/GEOSC/pb/3

Oct. 29, 2019

**‘Future of GEO’ Steering Committee Meeting Summary,
October 10, 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 third call to discuss the draft documents provided by the secretariat for in-depth discussions in Prague. Agenda items included:

- Review of the Issues document on the Future of the Global Environment Outlook
- Review of the Terms of Reference for the options paper development work
- Review of the work plan for the Future of the Global Environment Outlook
- Any other business (Need for second face to face meeting at the end of the Steering Committee work and Rapporteur’s approval of all minutes following steering committee meetings)

On these agenda items the Steering Committee decided:

- The Steering Committee members will provide written comments (in track changes) to the Secretariat on the three documents discussed during the meeting.
- The Secretariat will revise and re-circulate the drafts before the Prague meeting where further discussions will be conducted.
- The written comments should be sent to the secretariat by 20th October for revision and circulation in good time for the Steering Committee meeting in Prague.

Rapporteur	Signature
Mr. Rafael Monge Vargas	

Summary of the meeting

The meeting was chaired by the new co-chairs of the Steering Committee.

Discussion on the Review of the Issues document on the Future of Global Environment Outlook

- The Secretariat presented the document prepared on the issues to be analysed for the Future of Global Environment Outlook and explained the importance of the options to consider the situation analysis, function and purpose of a GEO to fulfil the member states request. The presentation highlighted the dynamics of producing a GEO, e.g. lack of stable financing, staffing etc. while also focusing on the scope of GEO and its intended content. The need to ensure that GEO key findings are adequately communicated was raised by members of the Steering Committee together with a caution to not only just consider the

Secretariat's self-evaluation as an important input and not a definitive direction. There was a caution from the Steering Committee to avoid discussing staffing issues at this stage of discussions on the future of GEO in order to allow for a better discussion on the best options first. SC members were asked to consider UNEP's mandate in their discussions for the options as this will be an important guide for development of the options. The options document should produce a light mapping of different assessments within and outside UNEP and what their mandates are to help inform the discussion around what GEO's niche is. The linking of GEO to MEAs and lessons on the impact of GEOs was also brought up by the Steering Committee. There was also a call from the Steering Committee members to ensure that the consultant is clearly directed on these issues to avoid wasting time.

Following these questions the Secretariat clarified that:

- This document is not already looking into the options but raising the issues for consultant and the Steering Committee to consider and discuss further.
- The work plan has already identified how GEO links with the MEAs and the Steering Committee members were directed to read the three guidance documents together.
- The Steering Committee should not consider the options at this early stage and concentrate on ensuring that all issues are raised to allow the analysis to come up with the best options, which may also include doing away with the GEO.
- Steering Committee members were invited to provide written comments on the issues by 20th October where the secretariat will revise the draft and provide revised documents for the Prague discussions.

Discussion on the Review of the Terms of Reference for option paper development work

- The Secretariat reviewed the Terms of Reference for the option paper development work in order to receive comments from the Steering Committee members.
 - The main focus of the presentation was on the skills needed and the expected output of a consultant or a group of consultants that would do the work.
- SC members felt that experience in similar assignments would help get the right candidate for this work together with experience in consulting in about two or more of the regions needed for the consultations. Some Steering Committee members also felt that the Terms of Reference had a strong focus on natural sciences but there was need for social sciences too since multi-disciplinary skills would be beneficial for the consultation. Environmental policy was also suggested as a key skill since GEO was focusing on this aspect and hopes to bridge the science-policy interface. A point on whether an individual versus a group of consultants would be best was also raised but agreed that this will be discussed in detail in the face to face meeting. Steering Committee members were also concerned if they were going to suggest names or

companies for the consultancy and whether a one-month recruitment period in December would be enough to have the consultant in place.

On these issues the secretariat responded:

- There is need to develop a list of standards and other assessment processes to be consulted.
- The Secretariat emphasized the need for the procurement process to be transparent and as open as possible.
- It highlighted that the procurement process is complicated and will take at least two months to have the consultancy in place, so the Prague meeting will be essential to establish the ToR for the Secretariat to start the recruitment process.
- The options document will likely be a single document provided to UNEA with annexes supporting the analysis and conclusions of the main report.

Discussion on the Review of the work plan for the Future of the Global Environment Outlook

- The Secretariat reviewed the work plan for the Future of the Global Environment Outlook in order to receive comments from the Steering Committee members. A focus on the three outputs requested by members states in the resolution was highlighted with emphasis that the consultation with stakeholders and member states is as important as the final document that will be presented at UNEA-5. The role of the Steering Committee in the consultations was also presented with Pros and cons stated for each approach. The timeline and the budget were then presented with an approach of three regional consultations costed out (since UNEP has regional offices in those regions). Steering Committee members raised a point that if there are more back and forth on the options is it possible then to have governments review and input into the document directly. The role of the Secretariat to submit the document to UNEA-5 was also brought up. A point was then raised on leaving the regional workshops option open for the Steering Committee to discuss on the best way to involve the stakeholders.

On these issues the secretariat responded:

- That the preference for the three consultations is based on experience in the GEO processes that a face to face meeting raises the profile of the whole endeavor and the consultations will benefit developing countries most.
- The secretariat also clarified that at the UNEA members states will be invited to agree on which option will be best for the future of GEO. The document will be provided six weeks prior to UNEA-5. The work plan is therefore open and written comments will be welcomed for the development of a new draft to be further discussed in Prague.

Any other business

- The Secretariat assured all Steering Committee members that the logistics for the Prague meeting are proceeding well and that any last minute difficulties should be discussed with the Secretariat and Lucas as soon as possible
- The Secretariat suggested a discussion point for the Steering Committee's consideration at the Prague meeting. Should a second face to face meeting, where members will discuss the options and the outcome of the consultation process, be organized at the end of the process, just prior to UNEA-5
- The final other business was a request from the Secretariat for the Steering Committee to decide on how formal the approval of the meeting summaries should be. Should the rapporteur sign off the meeting summaries for each 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 revise all the three documents discussed in this meeting and share with the Steering Committee members on 21st October
- The Steering Committee will send their respective written comments to the secretariat by 20th October for redrafting of the three documents
- The Secretariat will continue to work on logistics of the Prague meeting on a one on one basis.

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	Gokhelaashvili	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
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
Jock	Martin	European Environment Agency (EEA)	European Union
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