

Our Ref: UNEA/GEOSC/pb/1

July 29, 2019

**‘Future of GEO’ Steering Committee Meeting Summary,
July 24, 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 first call to mainly discuss administrative matters related to the operation of the Steering Committee. Agenda items included:

- Introductions of Steering Committee members
- Election of officers (co-chairs and vice-chairs)
- Approval of procedures for holding virtual calls (e.g. muting, interventions, approval of agenda, etc.)
- Consideration of late nominations to help achieve geographic and gender balance
- Consideration of whether alternates will be allowed for Steering Committee members
- Any other business

On these agenda items the Steering Committee decided:

- The election of officers will follow the usual UN Environment Assembly practice, since the Steering Committee is a subsidiary body of UNEA. A request will be sent by the Secretariat to the chairs of the 5 regional groupings to nominate possible co-chairs and vice-chairs for the Steering Committee. Following this nomination process the Steering Committee will be requested to elect the co-chairs and vice-chairs from the list of nominees.
- The Secretariat will prepare a set of draft procedures for holding virtual calls of the Steering Committee. These procedures will cover practical issues such as muting lines while someone else is speaking, as well as procedural issues such as the preparation and approval of the summaries of these meetings. The Steering Committee will be requested to approve these procedures.
- The Steering Committee uses its discretion to allow the Secretariat to propose a list of late nominations of additional Steering Committee members in order to achieve better geographic and gender balance within the Committee.
- The list of additional Steering Committee members proposed by the Secretariat is approved by the Steering Committee with the addition of two additional nominees from the Africa Group, to be selected by the Secretariat using the criteria set out in UNEA.4/RES.23.
- Alternates will be allowed by Steering Committee members to support continuity and decision-making within the Committee. Countries must submit to the Secretariat an official nomination letter and CV of any proposed alternate member of the Steering Committee.
- The Secretariat will send out a Doodle Poll to choose the dates of the two-day face-to-face inception meeting of the Steering Committee. The Poll will suggest dates from the last two weeks of October, 2019.
- Members of the Steering Committee are requested to inquire with their governments to see if a country is able to host the Committee for its face-to-face inception meeting.

Summary of the meeting

The Secretariat noted that co-chairs and vice-chairs of the Steering Committee had not yet been elected and requested if Steering Committee members objected to the Secretariat acting as chair of this first virtual call. Committee members approved the Secretariat as chair of the virtual call.

Introduction of Steering Committee members

- Steering Committee members briefly introduced themselves and provided background on their work with environmental assessments and international consultations processes.
- These brief biographies are provided in the participants list at the end of this meeting summary.

Election of co-chairs and vice-chairs

- Normal UNEA procedures for election of co-chairs and vice-chairs require nominations from the regional groupings.
- Since the Secretariat has not yet requested these nominations and we have agenda item 4 where new members of the Steering Committee might be added, the Secretariat proposes that the election of officers be left until the next virtual call.
- There were no objections to delaying the election of officers until the next call.

Approval of procedures for holding virtual calls of the Steering Committee

- Throughout the GEO-6 process there have been many virtual calls for the authors and the advisory bodies.
- Through these calls we've learned that it is important, for the smooth operation of these calls that:
 - Participants mute their computers or telephone lines until they wish to speak. This will keep the background noise to a minimum;
 - It is important to try to limit the verbal interventions from participants to between 2-3 minutes to allow as many participants to speak as possible.
 - Members who would like to speak can simply speak up and request the floor or use the chat window to request the floor.
 - Approval of agenda is always the first item on any call.
 - Written summaries of the calls will be produced, so that there is a clear record of the main decisions at each call. This is to ensure proper record keeping of decisions by the Committee.
 - It is important for participants to correctly identify themselves in the GoTo meeting software and those who are on the phone should also verbally identify themselves.
 - Usually a Doodle Poll is used to identify the best time and date for each call. Normally the calls happen in mid to late afternoon Nairobi time.
- Procedures for face-to-face meetings will also be developed as we approach the inception meeting.

Consideration of late nominations for the Steering Committee

- List of nominations was presented to the Committee of Permanent Representatives at their June 20th meeting (146th meeting of the CPR) as per the requirements of UNEA.4/RES.23.
- The list of the first 25 members of the Steering Committee was approved.
- RES.23 allows the consideration of late nominations at the discretion of the Steering Committee. The CPR strongly suggested that the Steering Committee consider late nominations to better balance gender and geography in the Committee.
- For geographic balance the main things that need to be corrected is that the Eastern European and Latin America Group only had two nominees. Also the gender balance was not quite good enough.
- The proposed additions of Members from the late nominations helps correct the Eastern European (now 6 members) and Latin America Groups (now 5 members). In addition, this proposal also allows for 16 of the 35 members to be female (19 male).
- The Steering Committee notes that the Africa Group (6) has fewer members than the Asia-Pacific Group and the Western European and Other Groups (WEOG) (9 each). It would be good to try to create better geographic balance by perhaps increasing the Africa Group members.
- The Committee member CVs are slightly heavy on environmental assessment expertise, but there is complementary expertise in international processes.
- The Africa Group nominees also include a few female nominees so adding these in would also allow for better gender balance.
- The Steering Committee supports the addition of 2 female nominees from the Africa Group. The Secretariat will make these adjustments in the membership of the Committee.

Consideration of whether alternates will be allowed for Steering Committee members

- During the nomination process some countries and the EU nominated alternate members to help with continuity and the participation level in the Committee.
- Alternates were possible in the previous GEO-6 High-level Group and this seemed to work well. However, it was important that the alternate member be copied on all emails from the Secretariat and that they stayed informed on the documentation and the discussions.
- The Steering Committee members have no objections to requesting that countries nominate an alternate if they wish to do so.

Any other business

- The Committee discussed the location and data of the face-to-face inception meeting.
- **Funding of Committee Members to attend meetings:** UNEA rules allow for the supporting of participants from developing countries to come to face-to-face meetings. Budget is available to ensure the participants from developing countries can attend the upcoming inception meeting. Developed country participants are expected to fund themselves to attend the inception 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 add the additional twelve members to the Steering Committee for the next call by confirming that their late nomination has been accepted.

- The Secretariat will prepare a summary document for the procedures for holding virtual calls for comment and approval by the Steering Committee.
- The Secretariat will send out the Terms of Reference for alternate members to the nominating governments, allowing these countries to nominate an alternate if they wish to do so. The timeline for nominations would be 30 days.
- The Secretariat will request nominations from the regional groupings for co-chairs and vice-chairs of the Steering Committee.
- The Secretariat will send out a Doodle Poll for the dates of the 2-day inception meeting. The Doodle Poll would cover the last two-weeks of October. In addition, in the message that goes out with the Doodle Poll, the Secretariat will also request that one of the countries offer to host the Steering Committee at their location.

List of Participants

Name	Country	Brief background
Nino Gokhelasvili	Georgia	From Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (created last year), working since 2001. Involved in international processes such as conventions, policy directions. Joined the GEO process in preparation of Summary for Policymakers in GEO-5. Georgia is using GEO for policy briefs and international discussions.
Ivar Andreas Baste	Norway	Senior advisory to Norwegian Environment Authority. 30 years of working on international environmental issues, including 10 years within UNEP. Currently a bureau member of IPBES and Director of Environmental Management Group within UNEP. Coordinating Lead Author and Lead Author for GEO-4 and GEO-5. Worked on several projects for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Environment Ministry including as Deputy Permanent Representative for Norway in Nairobi.
James Mathew	India	From the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change. Working on environmental aspects and SDGs, including GEO-6 and environmental reports. Prior with Ministry of Statistics on implementation of environmental statistics and SDGs. Attended the January negotiation of the GEO-6 Summary for Policymakers.
Jerome Sebadduka Lugumira	Uganda	With the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), Soil scientist by training, land ecology and biochemistry are main areas and currently Natural Resources Manager. Participate in landscape assessments and continue to teach at university on land and soil management.
Marcel Kok	The Netherlands	Working with Dutch Environmental Assessment Agency PBL, Involved as Coordinating Lead Author for GEO-4 and then as consultant in the scoping phase of GEO-5. Contributing as Lead Author to IPBES Global Biodiversity Assessment. PBL has extensive experience in scenarios work in IPCC, Millenium Ecosystem Assessment, IPBES, etc.
Marcos Serrano	Chile	Working with Ministry of Environment Chile for 23 years. Responsibility of environmental information department, produces the State of the Environment report for Chile, using the GEO methodology. Acted as reviewer for GEO-6, also contributed to environmental indicators work within UNEP and the Pollutant Release and Transfer Register work of the OECD. Background is mainly in climate change and pollutant release in air, water and soils.
Narges Saffar	Iran	Working in International Affairs & Conventions Center, Department of Environment. Worked on GEO-5 and GEO-6 indirectly. Background is in marine ecology and also acting as focal point for UNEP and GEF in Iran.
Salla Rantala	Finland	Working with the Finnish Environment Institute. Senior researcher in governance of natural resources and the environment. First participated in the GEO during the negotiation of the Summary for Policymakers in Nairobi. Also involved in the Global Sustainable Development Report to be launched in September at the UN General Assembly.

Teshia Jn Baptiste	Saint Lucia	Working with the Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender relations and Sustainable Development. Four years working on implementation of international agreements to advance sustainable development in Saint Lucia as part of GEF-funded project. Worked on climate change with other Caribbean countries. Worked as a peer reviewer on the GEO-6 for Latin America and the Caribbean.
Kazuhiko Takeuchi	Japan	President of Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES). Project Professor, Institute for Future Initiatives (IFI), The University of Tokyo, studying landscape ecology and sustainable science. IGES contributed extensively to GEO-6 so happy to contribute to this new effort.
Andrew Stott	United Kingdom	Working with Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs-UK
Claudia Kabel	Germany	Working with the German Environment Agency. Biologist by training and working on international sustainability strategies, in particular Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. Supporting author team of Global Sustainable Development Report, supporting colleagues in their research projects and providing SDG view. Coordinating the German intergovernmental review of the GEO-6.
Stefania Ministrini	European Environment Agency	Working in the International Cooperation programme. Here on behalf on Jock Martin. Jock Martin is head of Integrated Assessment for Sustainability, delivers the EU State of the Environment report. Developed reports on green and circular economy and supported the GEO-5 report and was on the High-level Group of GEO-6.
Ms. Noasilalaonomenjahary Ambinintsoa Lucie	Madagascar	

Apologies

Charles Lange	Kenya
Ouedraogo Desire	Burkina Faso
Anna Mpye	South Africa
Isaac Dladla	Eswatini
Aspara Mendis	Sri Lanka
Najib Saab	Lebanon
Suzan Alajjawi	Bahrain
Chatchai Intatha	Thailand
Marek Haliniak	Poland
Toral Patel-Weynand	USA
Sebastian Jan Konig	Switzerland
Jock Martin	EEA