

GEO-6 for Youth

Covid-19 has put lives in danger all over the world and left many of us at home dealing with a different routine, which many are struggling to get used to. However, even though many of us are facing difficult situations, this can be an opportunity to start reflecting on our impact on the environment and find ways to reduce our footprint. It can be a moment to plan to make our daily routines more sustainable when things return to normal. As many studies show, this pandemic is also the result of climate change and the constant threat posed on wildlife and biodiversity as a whole. During these times, young people are at home, more connected across social media than ever. They are the ones that have the power to bring about transformative change for not only when they are able to leave their houses again but also now.



It is with this spirit, that we are working on the final details of the GEO-6 for Youth report. Specifically, we have been working on its youth friendly layout, animations and interactive features of the e-book. As this is UNEP's first ever paperless report, we are ensuring that it is engaging and appealing to our target young audience. At the same time, we are in close contact with our communication team to develop social media content, a video, as well as an interactive story which summarizes the report's key messages in an innovative manner.

At the beginning of May 2020, the GEO-6 for Youth will be out, paperless, interactive, impactful and ready to inspire the younger generation to take action!

UNEP's Global Assessments Synthesis Report Shifting to New Ways of Working

The first Authors' meeting for the Global Assessments Synthesis Report was successfully shifted to a series of virtual meetings, due to the global COVID-19 crisis. A series of teleconferences were hosted throughout the week of March 16th including a planning meeting amongst section leads, individual writing team meetings and a stock-taking meeting to digest the progress of the week between the section leads. By hosting a series of hour-long meetings, the authors were able to virtually connect and understand the layout, content and plan for their contributions. This conversations-built momentum and the authors have since capitalized on it by making strides in developing the report.



Photo: Febrian Zakaria on Unsplash

UNEP has convened an elite team of Authors led by Ivar Baste of the Norwegian Environment Agency and includes lead experts who were involved in major Global Environmental Assessments such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Intergovernmental Panel on Biological Diversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the Global Environmental Outlook (GEO), the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR), the International Resources Panel (IRP), the Global Chemicals Outlook (GCO), the Global Resources Outlook (GRO), the Global Biodiversity Outlook (GBO), the Global Land Outlook (GLO), the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), and the World Energy Outlook (WEO). The Scientific Advisory Group, led by Sir Robert Watson, includes experts from the European Environment Agency (EEA), University College London (UCL), the Netherland's Environment Agency (PBL), the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the International Energy Agency (IEA).

The objective of the report is to inform decision making at major global inter-governmental meetings in the coming year (e.g. the United Nations General Assembly (UN GA), the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) 15th Conference of the Parties (COP), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP 26, the fifth United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5)) and to underpin preparations for Stockholm+50 commemorations in 2022.

The main elements of the report are expected to cover the increasing human wealth, inequality and pressure on Earth's systems leading to the inability to meet recent international agreements, but also the actions required to change this course to instead achieve a sustainable future - however this is still work in progress.

GEO for Business Briefs

The newly launched Global Environment Outlook for Business briefs look at the GEO findings through a business lens. Written 'by business for business', the briefs bring the science of the GEO to the business community to support them in developing plans, business strategies, technology pathways, mechanisms and enablers towards building a green and circular economy. GEO for Business is led by a high-level Advisory Committee of major business and non-governmental organizations working on the environment. These short and stimulating products will be supporting UNEP's priority for the super year for Nature while providing 'how-to guides' for business on specific environmental issues. Six thematic briefs covering three systemic areas: food, waste and energy will be published throughout 2020. They are as follows:



1. Adapt to thrive and what transformational change means for business
2. Moving from linear to a circular economy and what this means for business
3. The changing role of business in transforming food systems
4. How business can manage the transition towards decarbonization and full electrification
5. Future-proofing infrastructure and infrastructure services for climate resilience
6. Changing finance, financing change

The Briefs are meant to be practical, solution oriented and are targeted at small to medium-sized enterprises that may be operating with the supply chains of large multinationals and are exposed to international trade or only supply domestic markets. The Briefs will be drafted by expert authors from the business community and published by UNEP and its partners. Throughout 2020, we expect to share practical information and knowledge, and we also hope to learn how this type of product can help stimulate transformational change at the scale and in the timeframes that are so clearly outlined in GEO-6.

The first Authors' meeting for the GEO for Business was scheduled for 6-9 April in Cambridge, UK but will now be shifted to a series of virtual meetings in the second week of May due to the global COVID-19 crisis. A series of teleconferences have so far been hosted throughout March and April to get the brief underway. These conversations will build momentum towards the virtual meeting in May as well as finalizing the briefs. Please see the [GEO for Business Brochure](#) for more information.

The First Workshop of the Steering Committee on the Future of GEO is held virtually



Photo by Allie Smith on Unsplash

The first workshop of the Steering Committee on the future of GEO was conducted on 26th and 27th March 2020. This Workshop was initially planned for Trinidad and Tobago but with the current global health pandemic (COVID-19) it was converted to a virtual workshop. Facilitated by the team of consultants working on the Options paper for the Future GEO, the workshop provided an opportunity for the Steering Committee to evaluate the progress of the consultants in this task while sharing their expertise on the Options of a Future GEO. The workshop was divided into three identical sessions each day to enable effective participation across the time zones. With the success of this workshop the committee contributed their experiences in the development of the options while the consultancy team now has clear guidelines to proceed in developing the options further in readiness for Member States, stakeholders and assessments experts consultations.

GEO for Cities Starts First Round Peer Review Process

The first order draft of GEO for Cities was delivered to the secretariat following the agreed timeline from the second Author's Meeting in Abu Dhabi (10-13 February 2020). Although some chapters were not as developed as other chapters due to the COVID-19 crisis, the agreement to start the review process as planned remained in place and explanations provided to reviewers. The Secretariat organized a webinar for all reviewers to help them understand how the review GEO process works. The official review period will last one month from 17 March to 17 April 2020.

The next steps for authors will be addressing all the comments after the review period. The COVID-19 crisis led to the cancellation of the planned third authors meeting that was supposed to happen in May 2020 in Mexico. The UNEP team is working to move things forward although the decision about either shifting the authors meeting to virtual or postponing it is under discussion and will be confirmed in due course.

