

## Briefing note on the implementation of UNEA resolution 5/3 Future of the Global Environment Outlook

CPR Subcommittee meeting 16 June 2022

### Background

The Global Environmental Outlook (GEO) is United Nations Environment Programme's flagship intergovernmental and expert-led environmental assessment. The GEO is a consultative and participatory process to prepare an independent assessment of the state of the environment, the effectiveness of the policy response to address these environmental challenges and the possible pathways to achieve various internationally agreed environmental goals. It also has a strong element of capacity building for global environmental assessments aimed at the interaction between science and policy decision-makers.

Taking in consideration the options presented by the Steering Committee on the Future of the Global Environment Outlook<sup>1,2,3</sup>, the resolution [EA.5/RES.3](#) was adopted in March 2022 by the UN Environment Assembly, reaffirming the objective of the Global Environment Outlook process: to keep the world environmental situation under review. The resolution also requested the Executive Director to undertake the preparation of the seventh edition of the Global Environment Outlook, to be submitted for endorsement by the Environment Assembly at a future session, no sooner than 2025. UNEP has already started the preparations for the next edition of GEO including a digitization process to assist in the implementation of streamlined and cost-effective governance and administration.

### GEO 7 could be solutions focused

The core message of GEO-6, released in 2019, was that transformative change could help us achieve the ambitious environmental goals that countries had set for themselves. Three main transformational pathways were highlighted in the Outlooks chapters, namely, phasing out 80% of the fossil fuels in the global energy mix by 2050, reducing the environmental impact of the global food system by about two thirds by 2050 and achieving a near-zero-waste economy by 2050.

The seventh edition of the GEO could be the most solutions-focused GEO ever, and rather than looking at the current difficult state of the environment (as previous GEOs have), it would be possible to look at practical steps and policies that countries could implement to truly transform the global energy system, the global food system, and the current linear economic model. GEO 7 could focus on how these pathways to an environmentally sustainable world could be achieved and what could be the social and economic implications.

The new resolution request as well the delivery of enabling support functions to countries and regions through capacity building, knowledge generation and support for policymaking, that will accentuate the GEO findings with relevant stakeholders and strengthen national and regional policy implementation.

### GEO 7 will be more digital

The development and implementation of a digital transformation strategy of GEO-7 and for future GEOs, will make its production more efficient allowing the participation of more stakeholders while reaching

---

<sup>1</sup> [Options for the future of the Global Environment Outlook](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Feasibility study on the financial, administrative, and collaborative consequences of the options for the future of the GEO](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Comprehensive consultations with Member States](#)

bigger audiences. This new approach for a digital GEO will focus on developing five (5) main new digital functionalities (tools) to support the production and outreach of GEO-7 and future GEOs. These functionalities include:

- a) Digital collaboration for Member States, stakeholders, and experts/authors.
- b) Enhanced online graphing and mapping capabilities that can draw from various online 'live' data sources, including the UNEP WESR.
- c) Enhanced online development of terms, definitions, and glossaries.
- d) Enhanced online management and automation of peer reviews.
- e) Online presentation of GEO in an interactive and user-friendly way, fully linked to the UNEP WESR.

The new digital GEO is a further step in strengthening the communication of science for policy, allowing decision-makers easier access to the data and analysis in the GEO in such a way that they can use it to support the development of new and more transformational environmental policies.

#### **What can we expect over the next three years?**

UNEP has already initiated the planning of the GEO 7 process which will include several preparatory elements, a production phase which includes several author writer's sprints and a final review and approval phase. The GEO-7 timeline is available [here](#).

Two main advisory bodies: the Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) and the Multidisciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group (MESAG) will support UNEP's Executive Director in ensuring the GEO findings are policy relevant and scientifically credible.

Responding to the specific requests from Member States in UNEA Resolution 5/3, two open-ended meetings will be organized in 2022:

- A virtual meeting from 19 to 22 September with the goal of approving the procedures document and the supporting functions for GEO-7
- An in-person/hybrid meeting in Nairobi from 17 to 20 October to define the scope and theme of GEO-7 and approve the draft annotated outline

The invitation letters for the participation on the two mentioned meetings and for the nominations for the IMAG should be sent during the first week of June.