

Committee of the Permanent Representatives  
Subcommittee meeting  
Nairobi, 21 September 2023  
10:00 – 13:00 and 15:00 – 18:00 (GMT+3)  
Hybrid meeting  
Conference Room 1 and Microsoft Teams

**Agenda item 6: Update on the Preparation of the seventh Global Environment Outlook.**

This background document has been developed by the Secretariat to inform the Committee of Permanent Representatives on overall progress made in the implementation of UNEA resolution 5/3: Future of the Global Environment Outlook. More specifically, it includes detailed information on the following aspects of the GEO-7 process:

- Update on the gap filling exercise for the author teams in GEO-7.
- Update on the virtual collaboration workshop held in June 2023.
- Update on the drafting process for the GEO-7 chapters and the successful second Solutions Pathways and Outlooks workshop in Shanghai, China.
- Key issues to be considered by the Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) and the Multidisciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group (MESAG)
- Outline of the next steps in the GEO process and update on the budget situation.

Following the presentation, Member States and Stakeholders are invited to engage in an exchange of views with the Secretariat.

## **Update on the gap filling exercise following the First Authors Meeting (Bangkok, Thailand, March 13-17 2023)**

Following a successful first authors meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, coordinating lead authors were requested to identify gaps in expertise in their author teams and they were asked to choose experts to fill these gaps from the database of official nominations. Virtual calls were held with all author teams to review the database and provide their preferred choices to the Secretariat. This was followed by a review of the full list of proposed experts by the co-chairs of the GEO-7 assessment. From this review a final list of proposed experts was compiled and invitations to these experts were sent out by the Secretariat. An eventual full cohort of authors was selected through this process and all author teams began having regular virtual calls to continue the drafting process of the chapters. The current regional and gender balance of the author teams is:

UN Regional Grouping	Number of authors	Percentage across all regions
WEOG	80	31%
EE	25	10%
LAC	44	17%
Africa	43	17%
AP	64	25%
Total	257	100%

Gender	Number of authors	Percentages
Males	129	50%
Females	128	50%
Total	257	100%

## **Update on the virtual collaboration workshop for authors (June 20-23 2023)**

To increase coherence across the chapters a virtual workshop was organized with all authors and the co-chairs of the GEO-7 process. The workshop was organized as 4 sessions of 3 hours each over the June 20-23 2023 period. Discussions were organized to allow for consideration of cross-chapter synergies for the four parts of GEO-7, namely (1) Introduction and Context, (2) State and Trends of the Environment, (3) Solutions Pathways and (4) Outlooks. Each of the groups of chapters provided updates to each other on their progress and the possible cross-chapter issues that they had observed. Discussion then focused on the best way to resolve any issues across chapters and how to increase synergies and coherence. A final virtual session was held to consider coherence issues across the main parts of the GEO. Coordinating lead authors considered these possible issues and discussed how best to manage them and increase synergies across the different parts of the report.

## **Update on the drafting process for the GEO-7 chapters and the successful second Solutions Pathways and Outlooks workshop in Shanghai, China.**

Over the May to September period authors have been working diligently to produce their draft chapters for the internal review period, planned for September 15 to October 15 2023. The internal review period is meant to allow authors from all chapters to review the content and approach for each chapter and provide detailed comments to the chapter authors that can be used to improve the drafts prior to the January 2024

meeting. In addition to the authors reviewing the chapters, the co-chairs of the assessment will also provide a detailed review. Different groups of experts on Indigenous and Local Knowledge (ILK), Behavioural, Social and Cultural issues and Climate Change Adaptation, will also provide detailed comments on potential gaps in the chapter narratives. These comments will be reviewed in a virtual workshop during the week of Oct. 16 2023. Authors will then be requested to address the comments and continue to improve their drafts leading up the January 2024 authors meeting.

To assist with this drafting process, Tonji University and the Yangtze River Delta Institute for Sustainable Development hosted the authors of the solutions pathways and outlooks chapters in Shanghai, China from Sept. 4 – 7 2023, to allow the authors to deepen their understanding of the solutions pathways approach and how it links to the quantitative modelling work in the Outlooks chapters. This meeting, which was just successfully completed, allowed authors to further explore the qualitative approach being developed for constructing solutions pathways and also to discuss how the regional outlooks chapters should proceed in their analysis of the possible future situation in each region if significant progress was made in solving the triple planetary crisis plus land degradation.

**Key issues to be considered by the Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) and the Multidisciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group (MESAG)**

At their virtual meeting in September 2023, the IMAG will seek to approve the regional and sub-regional country groupings proposed for use in GEO-7. They will also consider a proposal from the GEO-7 co-chairs to reorganize the chapters in the Solutions Pathways and Outlook parts of the GEO-7. These two discussions will help to strengthen the regional analysis in the GEO-7 and also create greater coherence in the analysis of the solutions pathways, quantitative modelling results and the scenarios narratives in the GEO-7.

At their virtual meeting in September 2023 the MESAG will consider new guidance developed by UNEP on the use of large language models and artificial intelligence in the preparation of GEO reports. This guidance, developed in collaboration with UNEP's office of the Chief Digital Officer, specifies what the appropriate uses are for artificial intelligence tools such as large language models in the preparation of GEO assessments. The MESAG will also consider the requirements that authors will be asked commit to when using these tools in their work on the GEO.

**Outline of the next steps in the GEO process and update on the budget situation.**

The key next step in the preparation of GEO-7 is the delivery of all of the chapters for the peer review of the First Order Draft (FOD). The FOD is expected to be delivered for peer review in early February 2024. Just prior to delivering these chapters, authors will be invited to a writer's sprint meeting from Jan. 15-19 2024 (location still to be determined). This 5-day sprint will allow the authors time to focus on polishing their chapters for the peer review process, which will last for 6 weeks. This will be the first time that an external audience of experts will be able to review the analysis in this innovative GEO-7.

In the run up to the January writer's sprint meeting, the GEO team is reviewing the budget situation for the coming year. The team has noticed a cash-flow issue that could affect the planning of the January meeting and internal discussions with UNEP's Executive Office are underway to resolve this cash flow issue, and ensure a successful delivery of the January meeting.

For more information on any of these points, please reach out to [pierre.boileau@un.org](mailto:pierre.boileau@un.org) .