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October 14, 2022

GEO-7 Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) Meeting Summary, October 7, 2022

Important Note: In order to make our calls more efficient and effective, members of the GEO-7 Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) are encouraged to keep their verbal interventions to a maximum of 3 minutes each. Members are encouraged to mute their telephone lines when they are not speaking, to minimize background noise.

The Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) met at its first virtual call to get to know each other and plan next steps in its work. Agenda items included:

1. Welcoming remarks from Secretariat
2. Roundtable introductions
3. Process for election of officials for the IMAG
4. Discussion of process and priorities of IMAG work plan for 2022/23
5. Overview of proposed approach for October scoping meeting and Advice on approach for the October scoping meeting
6. Overview of approach for nomination and selection of MESAG members and Advice on approach for nomination and selection of MESAG members
7. Any Other Business

On these agenda items the IMAG decided:

- Appreciated a very talented and diverse group of advisors on the IMAG. The Secretariat looks forward to IMAG's guidance on the GEO-7 process. The Secretariat will prepare a full list of IMAG membership with their affiliations and email addresses and share with the IMAG for further introduction and familiarization of IMAG members.
- The secretariat will send out an e-mail requesting expression of interest from the 25 Member States on the IMAG for Co-chairing, vice chairing and rapporteur role. Expressions from members of the group will be received up to Monday the 17th October 2022. That will allow the secretariat time to prepare a proposal for the election of officers at the October 21st meeting.
- The Secretariat will draft a first version of the multiyear workplan and provide it to the IMAG as a draft for the October 21st meeting discussions. The IMAG can then have preliminary discussion of the draft in that meeting and allow the finalization of the draft based on its advice.
- Scoping meeting for GEO-7 (Oct. 17-20) will not only involve reviewing and adopting text, but also will have 3 expert dialogues on energy, food, circularity and presentations on GEO's digital transformation.
- Launch of call for MESAG members will start soon. Would like to have the scientific advisory body in place for the selection of GEO-7 authors, as stated in the GEO procedures document. Letters of invitation to nominate will come from Executive Director and IMAG members are invited to share the request broadly through their networks.
- The Secretariat will consolidate lists of experts to be contacted with a request for MESAG nomination and IMAG members can also add to the list. Further, the Secretariat will have a proposed MESAG short list that can be discuss with the IMAG at a future call.

Rapporteur	Signature
Rafael Monge	

Summary of the meeting

The first call of the GEO-7 Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) took place online on 7 October 2022 at 16h00 – 17h30 (Nairobi time). The meeting was chaired by GEO Secretariat since this was the first meeting of the IMAG and its officers were yet to be elected.

Welcoming remarks from Secretariat

In its welcoming remarks, the Secretariat highlighted the fact that this was a busy period because of the upcoming GEO-7 scoping meeting preparations, however it was essential to have IMAG's input into the design of that meeting. Further, the Secretariat highlighted the need to allow IMAG members to know each other and elect its officers as well as discuss the development of its workplan for the next year. Finally, the secretariat highlighted the need to urgently launch the call for the members of the Multidisciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group (MESAG). The secretariat had shared with the IMAG some draft letters that the Executive director would sign to begin that call because of the need to set up MESAG quickly in order to have their input on the selection of authors.

On this issue, the Secretariat congratulated IMAG for its selection and thanked them for participating in this first call. It was noted that although the formation of the IMAG had taken a bit more time to make sure that this membership was solid and agreed to by all of the Member States, the resulting group is a very talented team and the secretariat is looking forward to its guidance on the GEO-7 process.

Roundtable introductions of IMAG members

A request for each IMAG member on the call to introduced themselves in detail highlighting their affiliation and nationality was made by the secretariat. All IMAG members on the call took the floor to introduce themselves and highlighted their background with respective affiliation.

On this issue, the IMAG appreciated a very talented and diverse group of advisors on the IMAG. The secretariat also reiterated its interest looking forward to IMAG contributions to the GEO-7 process. It was agreed that the secretariat would prepare a full list of IMAG membership with their affiliations and email addresses and share with the IMAG for further familiarization of IMAG members.

Discussion on the process for election of officials for the IMAG

The secretariat presented the modality used in election of officers in the past. In this modality the secretariat sends out a request for expressions of interest. Members who are interested in chairing, vice-chairing or acting as rapporteur for the group express their interest through email to secretariat. The secretariat then develops a bureau proposal based of expressions of interest for consideration and election by all members. In this regard, the secretariat proposed election of IMAG officials at the October 21st face to face meeting in Nairobi. This will allow for the elected officers to chair the meeting with support from the secretariat. Since UNEA rules and procedures are utilised in the conduct of business of the IMAG, members from UNEP's major groups and stakeholders are not allowed to hold a bureau role.

On this issue, it was agreed that the secretariat would send out an e-mail requesting expression of interest from the 25 Member States on this body for Co-chairing, vice chairing and rapporteur role. Expressions from members of the group can be received up to Monday the 17th October 2022. That will allow the secretariat time to prepare a proposal for the election of officers at the October 21st meeting.

Discussion of process and priorities of IMAG work plan for 2022/23

The secretariat presented this item using the Future of GEO resolution. In its presentation the secretariat highlighted that the IMAG has a lot to do in providing advice to the executive director managing the process of producing GEO. Item 10A in the resolution asks the IMAG to provide advice on convening an intergovernmental multistakeholder and expert meeting to establish a set of procedures that reflects the objectives and core function of the GEO. The secretariat noted that for purposes of time and efficiency, it has proceeded and held the procedures meeting because there are a number of COP meetings later in the year and it's essential to get these preparatory meetings out of the way. The secretariat thought that the IMAG would be in place to be able to seek its advice on this particular procedures meeting, but was not feasible although a number of IMAG members have already participated in that procedures meeting and provided their feedback through that process. This role can therefore be removed from IMAG's workplan.

The IMAG should also guide the conduct of nomination and selection process for external experts who will contribute to the GEO, including authors, fellows, peer reviewers, review editors, and ensuring geographic balance across all UN regions as well as disciplinary and gender balance. This is a top priority agenda for the October 21st meeting. On the selection of GEO experts the Secretariat reiterated the need for a transparent and rigorous nomination and selection process and the desire to attract social scientists, economists, transformation experts, futurists and related fields to the author teams to focus the GEO towards development and assessment of solutions pathways.

The other task for the IMAG is to advise the Executive director in ensuring that GEO draws from the evidence base of peer reviewed literature, national peer reviewed assessments in various languages and other international UN-led assessments, data and analysis and from information from credible sources. This may require development of some guidance for the authors on how to assess this evidence base and the secretariat along with the MESAG would produce that guidance with IMAG's advice to ensure that that evidence base is built from all these different sources of information.

A multidisciplinary expert scientific advisory group (MESAG) responsible for overseeing the scientific integrity of the GEO process also need to be established pursuant to the terms of reference at the end of the resolution. The secretariat expects to launch the call soon therefore again, IMAG's advice at the October 21st meeting will help guide that process. Then there is the necessity to have advice on the development of a flexible multiyear workplan and time bound budget setting out a programme of activities such as assessments and support services. At the moment only the GEO-7 assessment exists in the work plan. The secretariat further elaborated that a multiyear workplan and time bound budget is in the draft scoping document. The budget table has been removed, but the secretariat will add it in just before the scoping meeting because of the ongoing internal discussions within UNEP. This will be a clear element of advice not only during the scoping meeting but also following the scoping meeting.

The Secretariat then stated that two further elements needed advice from the IMAG: the upcoming scoping meeting as requested in the resolution "in order to strengthen the science policy interface for developing for each assessment a scoping document and a summary for policymakers prepared by experts." The Secretariat noted that the most important element at the moment was making sure that IMAG advises on the scoping meeting itself noting that the summary for policymakers meeting

is some years off, probably in January 2025. The secretariat therefore would be pleased to receive IMAG advice during this call on the agenda for the scoping meeting. And finally, the IMAG is to guide on the continuation of the Global Environment Outlook Fellows program for use to enhance the participation of younger generations.

In its summary presentation the Secretariat noted that this was a lot of work but most of it had been discussed and presented in the GEO procedures document. This document can therefore offer additional guidance that could be used to develop the draft multiyear workplan. The Secretariat further proposed that it could draft a first version of the multiyear workplan and provide it to the IMAG as a draft for the October 21st meeting discussions. The IMAG can then have preliminary discussion of the draft in that meeting and allow the finalization of the draft based on its advice.

On this issue the IMAG sort clarification on key areas in the procedures document where there are interconnections with its work, and sort clarity on the modalities for nominating experts for the GEO-7 process.

On its response the Secretariat highlighted that in producing the draft procedures document a number of the elements of the resolution where the IMAG is asked for advice were included in the procedures document. Therefore, the procedures document provides additional advice or additional clarity on IMAG's role that can be used as a resource document in developing the draft work plan. On experts' nomination modalities, the Secretariat highlighted that its proposal is that a call for experts from nominations from Member States, stakeholders and assessment expert groups be made to write certain portions of the document. However, an agreement on the scoping document is first needed to determine the areas of expertise needed to be added in the invitation letters. This will be discussed in detail during the October 21st meeting. Therefore, on this item, it was agreed that the Secretariat will draft a first version of the multiyear workplan and provide it to the IMAG as a draft for its October 21st meeting discussions.

Discussion on the overview of proposed approach for the October GEO-7 scoping meeting and IMAG advice on approach for the meeting

The secretariat presented this item using a draft agenda for the GEO-7 scoping meeting and the draft agenda for the first face to face meeting of the IMAG. The GEO-7 scoping meeting will be held from the 17th to the 20th of October in conference room one in the UN complex in Nairobi and online. The main meeting objectives are to review and adopt the GEO-7 scoping document and consider the draft annotated outline which is in the draft scoping document and review and approve the multiyear workplan and budget of GEO-7. The main meeting documents are the draft scoping document and the different presentations proposed by the secretariat for expert dialogues during the meeting.

The Secretariat then presented in detail the choreography and detail of each meeting day as drafted in the agenda. In its presentation, the Secretariat highlighted that because it is a four-day agenda to cover a 14-page document to approve, the Secretariat would like to invite some experts to contribute to discussions in the areas of energy systems, food systems and circular economy. Therefore, although there is a lot of time to discuss the wording of the scoping document and the key focus areas, 90-minute expert dialogues have been included in the agenda aiming to get some advice from some of the world's top experts on the transformation of energy systems, food systems and transformations towards circular economies.

On this issue, IMAG members thanked the Secretariat for a detailed presentation of the upcoming scoping meeting and preparation of the relevant documents. Further, the IMAG highlighted the need to have fresh and new experts in the expert dialogue in order to help frame discussions around the

three systems that can be implemented. Further the IMAG highlighted the need for the moderators of the three sessions to be precise in leading discussions towards identifying the real issues in the three systems and providing insights on how progress will be achieved. The IMAG also noted that being a packed agenda and with the Secretariat highlighting that parts of the program may need to be foregone in order to achieve the objectives of the meeting, the Secretariat should consider the main objectives envisaged for GEO-7. Further, the discussion about digital transformation of GEO should be kept on board as much as possible. Further, IMAG members enquired on the possibility for daily meeting summaries of the scoping meeting for those who will not be able to participate in person or online to follow the progress.

In its response the Secretariat thanked the IMAG for this advice, noting that it will be valuable to get contacts of key experts in the three systems to be invited to the dialogues. The Secretariat also noted that it had conducted a study through online questionnaires to identify key questions that would be appropriate for a solutions-oriented GEO. Further, the Secretariat promised daily outcome message to all scoping meeting participants and an agenda item to recap the main outcome of the scoping meeting in the first face to face IMAG meeting.

Discussion on the overview of approach for nomination and selection of MESAG members and IMAG advice on approach for that selection

The Secretariat was invited to make a presentation on the MESAG nominations. Using the draft MESAG nomination letter, the Secretariat presented that the multidisciplinary expert scientific advisory group has different functions, but basically provides advice on the scientific integrity of the full GEO process. The secretariat's goal is to start the nomination process by the October meeting with a one-month deadline. Such a possibility will allow the formation of the MESAG in good time to advise selection of authors. The MESAG will have 25 to 30 members that will be geographically, gender and disciplinary balanced. The Secretariat also noted that in previous GEOs, there were a lot of empirical scientists and natural scientists in the scientific advisory group. This time the aim is to have more social scientists, economists and more broad thinkers about these solutions focus in the MESAG. Those areas of expertise will be indicated in the nomination letter as well. Further, the Secretariat requested the IMAG to provide it with any networks that it should be in contact with to reach out for the MESAG nominations.

On this issue, the IMAG inquired on the status of the expert list that the Secretariat was planning to use to circulate the MESAG nomination request to the expert group. Further, the IMAG inquired on who would make the selection of the MESAG and if there was a possibility of the IMAG seeing the shortlist of the MESAG candidates to provide advice on their selection.

On these enquiries, the Secretariat highlighted that it has lists of authors and experts who have contributed to previous GEOs. The Secretariat is also hoping to use its connections with the Sustainable Development Solutions network which has a strong focus on trying to find solutions to the sustainable development issues that we face today. Further, the Secretariat is also hoping to use the networks of the assessment's Co-chairs and vice-chairs to distribute the nomination request more broadly. The secretariat stated that it was the role of the executive director to select the MESAG as per the resolution.

On this item, it was agreed that the Secretariat would consolidate lists of experts to be contacted with a request for MESAG nomination and IMAG members can also add to the list. Further, it was agreed that the Secretariat will have a proposed MESAG short list that can be discuss with the IMAG at a future call.

Any other business

- The secretariat enquired if every IMAG member that was planning to travel to Nairobi for the scoping meeting was preparing for that travel. The Secretariat is experiencing a delay in processing tickets for the scoping meeting and IMAG meeting because of a new travel agency. The secretariat team processing the travel is available to help with any difficulties and enquiries any time and IMAG members are encouraged to be in touch for swift preparation and facilitation of their meeting attendance. Further, guidance on meeting logistics and hotel reservations have been provided through an information note and can also be communicated and queried through the secretariat travel team. The secretariat is also able to provide invitation letters on request should they be needed for visa processing on a case-by-case modality.
- The IMAG enquire on a possibility of having a clear sense of when its future meetings will be and where and which ones will be hybrid or virtual. This will help IMAG members with effective planning and participation in future IMAG meetings. The secretariat highlighted that this can be discussed in the IMAG workplan discussions. Normally, the schedule is having such an advisory group have a 90-minute call once a month during the busy months making about 10 virtual calls in a year. This might be less next year because of a possibility of two in-person meetings of the IMAG. The IMAG requested the secretariat to consider other global meetings in selection of the dates for GEO meeting to ensure that overlaps are avoided.

Having no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 17h28 (EAT).

Action items

- The Secretariat will prepare a written summary of the meeting.
- Secretariat to share a list of IMAG membership with affiliations and email contacts
- The Secretariat to open an expression of interest where interested members of the IMAG can express their interest in election for the co-chairs, vice-chairs and rapporteur of the IMAG bureau. Interested members should express interest by responding to the Secretariat by close of business on Oct. 18, 2022
- Secretariat to prepare a proposal for election of the IMAG bureau to be considered in the first face-to face meeting of the IMAG on October 21 2022
- Secretariat to draft a first version of the multiyear workplan and provide it to the IMAG as a draft for the October 21st meeting discussions. First discussion on the work plan to happen on Oct. 21st
- The IMAG to identify and share with the GEO Secretariat any networks for the distribution of MESAG nomination letters; especially assessment experts.

List of Participants

Names	Affiliation	Nationality	Region(s) of Representation
Dr Jerome Lugumira Sebadduka	Natural Resources Management Specialist (Soils and Land Use), National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) Uganda	Uganda	African Group
Dr Leila BENDIFALLAH	Professor, M'hamed Bougara University, Algeria	Algeria	African Group
Ms. Anna Mampye	Director: State of Environment Information in the Branch, ministry of Forestry, Fisheries and Environment	South Africa	African Group
Ms Yi Huang	Professor, School of Environmental Sciences and Engineering, Peking University, China	China	Asia and the Pacific Group
Mr Takashi Otsuka	Director of Knowledge and Communications, Strategic Management Office, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Hayama, Japan	Japan	Asia and the Pacific Group
Ms Meri Harutyunyan	Chief specialist of Strategic Policy Department, Ministry of Environment, Armenia	Armenia	Eastern European Group
Mr TOGHRUL FEYZIYEV	Advisor, International cooperation division of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan	Azerbaijan	Eastern European Group
Dr Marek Haliniak	General Counsellor in the Ministry of Climate and Environment, Department of Strategy and Analysis, Poland	Poland	Eastern European Group
Ms Gillian Stanislaus	Environmental Programme Officer, Environmental Management Authority (EMA)	Trinidad & Tobago	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Mr Kenset Amaury Rosales Riveiro	Coordinator, Information Unit, Environment and Climate Change; Ministry of Environment and Resources Natural Resources (MARN)	Guatemala	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Mr Rafael Monge	Director - National Center of Environmental Information (CENIGA) Ministry of Environment and Energy; Costa Rica	Costa Rica	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Mr Arthur Eijs	Policy coordinator Natural Resource Management & Sustainable Land Use - Ministry of Infrastructure & water management, department of International Affairs	Netherlands	Western European Group
Dr Salla Rantala	Development Manager, Environmental Policy Centre, Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE)	Finland	Western European Group
Dr Lisa Eriksson	Policy evaluation and analysis; Sustainable Development Department; Swedish Environmental protection agency	Sweden	Western European Group
Ms Claudia Kabel	German Environment Agency (UBA), academic staff member, International Sustainability Strategies, Policy and Knowledge Transfer	Germany	Western European Group
Ms Christina Komorski	Director, Information & Indicators Division, Sustainability Directorate, Environment and Climate Change Canada	Canada	Western European Group
Dr Toral Patel-Weynand	Director of the Southern Research Station at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service	United States	Western European Group
Names	Gender	Nationality	Major Group
Dr. Mohamed Abdelraouf		Egypt	Science and Technology
Dr Fabian Wagner		Germany	Science and Technology
Ms. Ruth Viola Spencer		Antigua and Barbuda	Women
Ms. Zahra Abu Taha		Jordan	Children and youth

Mr Dominic Kailash Nath Waughray	Senior Advisor to the CEO World Business Council for Sustainable Development	India	Business and industry
Ms. Ingrid Coetzee	Director, Nature & Health; ICLEI Africa	South Africa	Local authorities

Apologies

Names	Affiliation	Nationality	Region(s) of Representation
Mr Thomas Chali	Senior Policy Advisor on Environmental Conservation and Natural Resources Management in Tanzania	Tanzania	African Group
Dr Modibo sacko	Vice President of the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CONACILSS), Mali	Mali	African Group
Dr Thuraya AL Sariri	Assistance Director General of Nature Conservation at MECA- Oman	Oman	Asia and the Pacific Group
Mrs Rolenas Baereleo	Principal Officer, Biodiversity and Conservation; Department of Environmental protection and Conservation (DEPC), Vanuatu	Vanuatu	Asia and the Pacific Group
Mrs maha maayta	Director of the Policy and International Cooperation, Ministry of Environment, The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan	Jordan	Asia and the Pacific Group
Mrs Dušica Pešević	Associate Professor, University of Banja Luka, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Eastern European Group
Mr. Miroslav Havránek	Director of the Czech Environmental Information Agency	Czechia	Eastern European Group
Mr Silvio Albuquerque e Silva	Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Brazil to UNEP; Embassy of Brazil in Kenya	Brazil	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Mrs Iveth Torres Bonilla	International Affairs Analyst; ministry of environment- Panama	Panama	Latin American and Caribbean Group
Dr Keri Holland	Senior Policy Advisor in the Office of Environmental Quality in the Bureau of Oceans, International and Scientific Affairs at the U.S. Department of State	United States	Western European Group
Names	Gender	Nationality	Major Group
Ms. Djatougbe Aziaka	President and founder of welfare Togo; co-facilitator of UNEP NGO major group	Togo	Non-governmental organization
Mr Jan-Gustav Strandenaes	Advisory board member of sustainability/environment governance project at the University of Stockholm	Norway	Non-governmental organization
Mr Prem Singh Tharu	Regional Programme Officer, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) under Environment Programme	Thailand	Indigenous peoples
Ms. Merylene Chitharai	Lan Manager at UKZN Howard College	South Africa	Faith-based groups