

Committee of the Permanent Representatives
Subcommittee meeting
Nairobi, 19 September 2024
13.00 – 16:00 (GMT+3)
Hybrid meeting
Conference Room 4 (in person)
and Microsoft Teams (online)

Agenda item 2: Secretariat briefing on the outcome from the third authors meeting for the seventh Global Environment Outlook and on the development of the GEO-7 Summary for Policy Makers.

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 outcomes of the 3rd GEO-7 authors meeting in Nairobi, 2-5 September 2024
- Efforts to encourage more intergovernmental and expert peer reviewers to review the Second Order Draft of the main report and the First Order Draft of the Summary for Policymakers
- Overview of the timeline and process for preparing the Summary for Policymakers and prepare for the SPM review and approval meeting in November 2025.

Member States are invited to provide guidance to the Secretariat on the further implementation of this resolution.

Update on the outcomes of the third GEO-7 authors meeting (Nairobi, Kenya Sept. 2-5 2024)

[Since the last briefing of CPR was in Nov. 2023, some additional details are provided in the briefing below. In addition, much of the summary below is an outcome of the decisions made in the [GEO-7 scoping document](#), which was reviewed and approved in Oct. 2022. For example, the inclusion of land degradation in the analysis of GEO-7 was decided at the Oct. 2022 scoping meeting]

Following a successful second authors meeting in January 2024 (Vienna, Austria Jan. 15-19 2024), the First Order Drafts of the chapters were prepared by the GEO-7 authors and an expert peer review was organized through the months of February to April 2024. Authors addressed all comments from the First Order Draft through the months of May – August 2024, producing their early Second Order Draft in preparation for the third GEO-7 authors meeting. In addition to preparing the Second Order Drafts of their chapters, authors also prepared the Executive Summaries of their chapters, delivering these to the GEO-7 co-chairs on July 31, 2024. The co-chairs then formed a core drafting team for preparing the GEO-7 Summary for Policymakers. Both drafting efforts were significantly advanced at the third GEO-7 authors meeting in Nairobi, from Sep 2-5 2024.

The main meeting, co-hosted by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, was designed to allow the authors to have many cross-chapter discussions, to move the current draft of the main report from a collection of 21 chapters to telling ‘one story’. The in-person meeting was greatly appreciated for this purpose, since coherence issues across the chapters could be quickly solved and any overlaps quickly identified. In particular, the chapters on outlooks and the systems transformation chapters were able to work to align their narratives. These chapters are the main innovation in GEO-7, working to not only explain the ‘what’ needs to happen to solve the triple planetary crisis but also explain ‘how’ these transformations could happen.

Efforts were made by the Drivers, Triple Planetary Crisis and State of the Environment Chapters to align their narratives, eliminating overlaps and creating greater coherence across their narratives. An innovative graphic was developed to illustrate the strength of the interactions across the triple planetary crisis issues, together with land degradation. The methodology for developing the graphic was also reviewed for scientific integrity by the Multi-disciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group (MESAG). The narrative is now expected to help policymakers understand why the triple planetary crisis, together with land degradation, needs to be addressed simultaneously. This narrative will also help explain GEO-7 proposed approach to focus on transforming the human systems (e.g. economies and finance, energy, food, materials/waste) that are the root cause of the environmental degradation, rather than trying to ‘clean up’ the environmental problem after it has occurred.

Strong efforts were also made to harmonize the regional narratives across the report, focusing on the environmental priorities in each region and identifying the social and economic impacts of the triple planetary crisis, together with land degradation, in each of the UN regions. Efforts were also made in the regional analysis to assess the impacts of the transformational changes required to solve the triple planetary crisis, together with land degradation, in the outlooks, to 2050, for each region. The analysis is expected to focus on the expected social and economic impacts in each UN region, presenting sub-regional detail where possible.

Additionally, chapter teams were able to meet with the groups working on cross cutting issues: the Indigenous Knowledge and Local Knowledge (IK & LK) Task Force, the Behavioural, Social and Cultural (BSC) Task Group, and the Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) Task Group. These meetings encouraged the addition of multiple perspectives to the chapters and ensured that cross-cutting themes were addressed consistently throughout the report.

The third authors meeting also allowed for side events to be organized, one on food systems transformation and a second one on the different supporting services that GEO is now providing in different countries. The food systems transformation side event brought together different experts on food systems to assess approaches to agricultural production that focus on soil health, efforts to reduce food loss and waste and finally efforts to change dietary choices towards plant-based proteins and novel foods such as cultured meat. The side event on supporting services highlighted the important work being done by the Malawi Environmental Protection Authority (MEPA), the GEO team and GRID Arendal to help Malawi produce an updated National State of the Environment and Outlook report, following the devastating effects of cyclone Freddie. The side event also highlighted the important work being done by UNEP and Peking University to develop a Masters-level course on communicating science to policymakers. Finally, the event highlighted the efforts to support Sichuan Province in China to develop its own State of the Environment and Outlook report.

Finally, the Lead Review Editors attended the meeting in person and met with many of the chapter teams. This enabled authors to ask any outstanding questions surrounding the peer review process to ensure that the Second Order Draft intergovernmental and expert peer review process is as smooth and effective as possible.

Although the third authors meeting was shortened, it turned out to be an excellent opportunity for authors from different chapters and parts of the report to collaborate and improve their narratives in preparation for the Second Order Draft intergovernmental and expert peer review of the main report, coming up from Nov. 1 2024 to Jan. 15 2025.

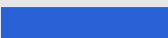

The meeting also allowed the GEO-7 co-chairs and the core drafting team of the Summary for Policymakers (SPM) to receive comments on their Zero Order Draft of the SPM and consider these in the preparation of the First Order Draft of the SPM, which will also be available for intergovernmental and expert peer review from Nov. 1 2024 to Jan. 15 2025. A call for nominations of government and technical experts to conduct a peer review of the Second Order Draft of the main report and the First Order Draft of the Summary for Policymakers was issued in Aug. 2024. We encourage all CPR members to contact us if they have received this call.

In parallel to the third authors meeting, the Intergovernmental and Multistakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) and the Multi-disciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group (MESAG) met separately in Nairobi from September 3-5, 2024. Both advisory groups had the opportunity to engage with the GEO-7 authors and provide advice on the policy relevance and the scientific integrity of the analysis in their chapters. Furthermore, they discussed and provided advice on relevant aspects of the GEO-7 process.

Update on efforts to encourage more intergovernmental and expert peer reviewers to contribute to the intergovernmental and expert peer review of the GEO-7 Second Order Draft of the main report and the First Order Draft of the Summary for Policymakers

Following the First Order Draft review of the GEO-7 chapters by technical experts, an assessment was conducted of the effectiveness of the peer review and whether changes were needed for the Second Order Draft peer review. The assessment revealed:

For the First Order Draft (FOD) peer review, 434 nominations were received. As required by UNEA Resolution 5/3, to achieve regional and gender balance only 244 out of the 434 experts were selected. In addition, MESAG (30) and UNEP (38) representatives were also included as reviewers of the FOD, which provided a total number of 312 reviewers, as showcased below:

Submitted Comments	Number of Reviewers	Percentage	
Yes	208	66.67 %	
No	104	33.33 %	
Total Reviewers:	312		

The FOD received 3,710 comments compared to 16,348 comments for the IPCC AR6 WGII FOD and 21,703 comments for the IPCC AR6 WGIII FOD which, however, had many more reviewers. Although several corrective actions were taken during the FOD review (e.g. extending the review period, webinars to encourage more reviews, circulating a questionnaire to reviewers, discussing the issue with MESAG), the number of comments received is considered low for a First Order Draft of a global environmental assessment, which is meant to be one of the key features of the process that helps ensure the report's scientific credibility. One reason for this is the low number of reviewers compared to the number of available nominations due to the need to achieve geographic and gender balance across the five UN regions.

Furthermore, the Review Editors, who have assessed the FOD peer review process, indicated the need to increase the number of reviewers for the Second Order Draft (SOD) to ensure a larger number of comments. The Review Editors also highlighted the need to prioritize the expertise and the number of reviewers versus geographic and gender balance.

Discussions of the MESAG and the IMAG at the third GEO-7 authors meeting evaluated options for correcting this issue in the Second Order Draft peer review process. After considering three options, both advisory bodies recommended that significant efforts be made to recruit more peer reviewers to the process and that a focus on the balance of expertise be the priority in selecting reviewers, while also striving to achieve gender and geographic balance. The advisory bodies felt that this approach would allow for more peer reviewers to be selected, combined with an effort to encourage more comments across the GEO-7 chapters. This could result in comparable levels of comments as for IPCC and IPBES. This should help ensure sufficient external review of the Second Order Draft of the main report and the First Order Draft of the Summary for Policymakers.

The Secretariat is also striving to conduct more extensive outreach activities to attract more peer reviewers for this second review. UNEP's Communication Division worked during the third authors meeting to develop a [web story](#) on the importance of the peer review, while the announcement of the peer review is being distributed through the MESAG and IMAG member networks. The nomination period is also being extended for an additional 2 weeks to ensure Member States can share their reviewers' nomination list with the GEO Secretariat, ensuring their participation in the GEO-7 review process.

Overview of the timeline and process for preparing the GEO-7 Summary for Policymakers, including the final review and approval meeting in Nov. 2025

At the same time as authors were meeting for the third time in Nairobi (Sept. 2-5 2024), a geographically and gender balanced core drafting team was working to produce the First Order Draft of the GEO-7 Summary for Policymakers (SPM). This First Order Draft of the SPM will undergo governmental and expert peer review from Nov. 1 2024 to Jan. 15 2025. The core drafting team worked through Friday and Saturday (Nov. 6, 7 2024) to expand the broad storyline of the SPM, based on the Executive Summaries of the GEO-7 chapters. Of course the storyline may change as the Second Order Drafts of the chapters are finalized and peer reviewed, but the First Order Draft of the SPM will provide a snapshot of what the analysis has shown so far.

During the week the GEO-7 co-chairs also presented the broad outline for preparing the Summary for Policymakers for review and approval to the Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) and the Multidisciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group (MESAG) for comments and advice. The timeline includes the intergovernmental review of the First Order Draft of the SPM mentioned above and a 2-month review of the Second Order Draft review prior to the Adhoc Open-ended Meeting (AHOM) for the review and approval of the GEO-7 Summary for Policymakers.

The timeline also includes extensive internal reviews by the authors and experts involved in the report. As agreed with both the IMAG and MESAG, full line of sight must be maintained between the findings of the main report and the SPM. This line of sight is ensured through rigorously drafted Executive Summaries in the main report and the use of those Executive Summaries for the drafting of the Summary for Policymakers. The full timeline is presented below.

SPM timeline – 10 September 2024 version

Date	Item
2024	
31 Jul	Executive summaries are completed
1-29 Aug	Drafting of the SPM initial Zero Order Draft (ZOD)
30 Aug	ZOD SPM shared with all authors
2-5 Sep (this week)	The core SPM drafting team starts revising the draft
6-7 Sept	1st in person meeting of the SPM core drafting team
8 – 26 Sept	Core group updated the SPM FOD with cross section review
20 Sept	SPM draft ready for cross-section review
27 Sept	Revised ES submitted by authors to core drafting team
27 Sept - 7 Oct	Core drafting team reconciles draft SPM FOD with ESs
7 – 15 Oct	CLAs and LAs review, prepare confidence statement and check line of sight of the FOD SPM
16 October	CLA and LAs comments and confidence statement and line of sight received on the revised SPM
16 – 23 Oct	FOD section completed and shared with the core team
25 Oct	Main report SOD is finalized
23 - 28 Oct	FOD is finalized
1 Nov – 15 Jan 2025	FOD SPM review by experts and governments
2025	
16 Jan – 28 Feb	CLAs revise chapter ESs, and the Core SPM team revises FOD SPM based on the review comments
28 Feb	Revised chapter ESs received – these ESs are near final
1 -31 March	Core SPM team further revise the FOD SPM based on revised (near-final) chapter ESs to produce SOD SPM (#1)
1-15 April	CLAs, LAs and secretariat review SOD SPM (#1) and submit comments
16 April – 15 May	Core SPM team revise SPM based on review comments
15 May	Final chapter Executive Summaries (ESs) received by the Secretariat after responding to RE comments
15 May – 1 July	Core SPM team with input from CLAs produce a near-final SOD SPM (#2), based on final chapter ESs – figures fully developed

1-15 July	Final review by CLAs, LAs and secretariat
15 July -14 August	SOD SPM finalized for OEWG review
15 Aug – 30 Oct	Second Order Draft Review of the SPM by Governments
1 October	Written review comments from governments
1 – 15 Oct	Co-chairs review written comments and develop a strategy to address them
1-2 Nov	Meet with OEWG co-chairs to discuss SPM and how to address government comments
3 – 7 Nov	Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) review and approval meeting of the SPM
10 – 30 Nov	SPM final edit and layout
10 Dec (TBD)	Launch at UNEA-7

For more information on any of these points, please reach out to pierre.boileau@un.org .