

Outcomes of the First Global Authors meeting of the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook

An exciting week of meetings to launch the drafting of the sixth Global Environment Outlook came to a close on 24 February 2017 in the beautiful town of Frascati, Italy, just outside of Rome. The meeting, graciously funded by the Italian government and hosted at the European Space Agency facilities, brought together several different groups of experts, including:

- Authors for the thematic and cross-cutting chapters of the assessment,
- The High-level Intergovernmental and Stakeholder Advisory Group,
- The Scientific Advisory Panel,
- The Global Environmental Outlook Fellows,
- The Assessment Methodologies, Data and Information Working Group, and
- The Innovative Outlooks Group.

These groups met to participate in:

- Basic orientation sessions,
- Briefing sessions on the roles of the advisory bodies,
- Planning sessions for key elements of the Global Environment Outlook process, such as the drafting of the Summary for Policy Makers,
- Interactive sessions among the various participants to ensure good collaboration and communication among the different groups.



European Space Agency (ESA) in Frascati, Italy

The [co-chairs](#) and [vice-chairs](#) of the sixth Global Environment Outlook, Professor Paul Ekins, Professor Joyeeta Gupta, Dr. Jane Bemigisha and Dr. Jiang Kejun, guided the groups masterfully through the week's agenda. This agenda included joint meetings of the advisory bodies with the authors, collaborative drafting sessions between thematic and cross-cutting authors, joint sessions of the advisory bodies as well as the closing plenary where the outcomes document and path forward were discussed. Important decisions were made to provide additional space in the document for explaining the linkages among the cross-cutting issues as well as ensuring the sixth Global Environment Outlook articulates environmental linkages to global policy, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals and the existing set of environmental agreements.



The Open Dialogue entitled "Environmental Security in a Changing world" in Frascati, Italy



Integrated Environmental Assessment Update

The update of the Integrated Environmental Assessment (IEA) guidelines now means that the practice of integrated environmental assessment (IEA) will evolve significantly from the last set of guidance which was developed by UN Environment in 2007. Among the objectives of the current draft of the guidelines is to evolve the traditional Demand-Pressure-State-Impact-Response (DPSIR) model for conducting Integrated Environmental Assessment (IEA) by a more holistic and fluid assessment approach which recognizes that clear separation between these concepts is no longer possible. This will present an approach to conducting assessments that is more inclusive regarding the depth of state of the environment analysis, the expansiveness of the policy response review and the scope and accuracy of the environmental outlook. UN Environment has now published the 'living document' of the Integrated Environmental Assessment Guidelines with its partner GRID-Arendal. <http://web.unep.org/geo/guidelines-conducting-integrated-environmental-assessments>

The Integrated Environmental Assessment (IEA) guidelines are now on a six-month road test which commenced at the first author's meeting of the sixth edition of the Global Environmental Outlook (GEO-6) assessment at Frascati, Italy. The draft is well improved by the review from the full scientific and technical review of our community of Global Environmental Outlook (GEO).

Cycling in Nairobi

by Pierre Boileau

Cycling in Nairobi is a challenge, but there are ways to make it fun and safe. My history with cycling in cities is a long one, starting in 1998 when I worked for Environment Canada and participated in a programme called the Commuter Challenge. The Commuter Challenge encouraged people to choose other modes of transportation, other than the single person car, to get to work. People were encouraged to carpool, take the bus, or even ride a bicycle. I chose the last option and found it fun and energizing.



Since then I have always tried to find alternative ways to get to work, choosing, for example, to live walking distance from my office when I lived in Paris. This is because the statistics on single driver cars used to get to work are staggering. For example, more than 76% of workers drove to work alone in the United States in 2013. In Canada, 74% of Canadians used a private vehicle to get to work in 2011 and 71% of Australians use a car to get to work in 2013 and 64% of trips made in the United Kingdom in 2016 were in a car. Now I'm not sure what the statistics are in Kenya, but the number of cars in Nairobi is certainly impressive and it leads to quite impressive traffic jams.



Heavy trucks in Nairobi

For a cyclist this can be a difficult but not an impossible task to manage. What is more challenging is when commuters don't obey the rules of the road. This makes cycling unpredictable and unsafe. Nairobi traffic has a mix of pedestrians, cars, heavy trucks and public transportation (small vans or buses called Matatus or motorcycles called Bodabodas). There are a few cyclists, but not that many. In Nairobi stopping at a traffic light seems to be optional, even though there are not many of them. Much of the traffic at intersections is either uncontrolled or controlled by traffic police. This makes crossing intersections the most challenging task for a cyclist. I have chosen to walk my bicycle across most intersections, although pedestrians also face many risks in traffic in Nairobi as well.



A matatu in Nairobi

So to make cycling in Nairobi safe and fun, there are four simple rules:

- Make sure that your bicycle is in good working order and please wear a helmet (it has saved my life on a few occasions)
- Be visible and predictable. Make sure that drivers can see and can understand what you will be doing on the road.
- Cycle defensively. Assume that drivers will do the most unexpected things and be prepared.
- Keep a positive attitude on the road. Don't engage with angry motorists.



An intersection in Gigiri, Nairobi

Despite all these challenges, I still feel that cycling in Nairobi is a fantastic way to get around. The terrain is quite hilly and therefore provides good exercise; the scenery is spectacular and enriches each day; and of course the weather is always beautiful, even in the rainy season. Nairobi would be the perfect place to have many cyclists going to work, if there was greater safety on the roads and if there was some financial incentive to help with the purchase of a bicycle. I hope to be able to encourage the city of Nairobi to start to recognize this potential and make the transition to a cycling-friendly city, just as many other cities (e.g. Paris, London, Washington) have done in the past few decades.