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**United Nations
Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment
Programme**

**United Nations Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment Programme
Fifth session**

Nairobi (hybrid), 22–26 February 2021
and 28 February–2 March 2022*

**Draft resolution on the future of the Global Environment
Outlook****

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*In accordance with the outcome of the meeting of the [subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives on 14 December 2021](#), this draft resolution is presented by the secretariat as a starting point for Member States' consideration of the matter and for possible adoption at the resumed session of UNEA 5. The draft is fully based on a text that has been developed by a friends of the Chair group under the Intergovernmental Steering Committee on the Future of Global Environment Outlook, and outlines proposals and options (marked in **bold**) that reflect the outcome of the work conducted by that Committee and the associated extensive consultation process undertaken with member states, stakeholders and experts. While the text has benefited from open informal consultations within the Steering Committee, it has not been formally adopted by the Committee.*

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

PP1 *Being mindful* of the science-policy mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) from General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of keeping under review the world environmental situation of promoting the contribution of the relevant international scientific and other professional communities to the acquisition, assessment and exchange of environmental knowledge and information; and on providing policy guidance and recommendations.

PP2 *Recalling* resolution UNEP/EA.4/RES.23 which established the Steering Committee on the Future of GEO, and requested it to submit an options document to UNEA 5 to inform a decision at this session on the future form and function of the GEO;

PP3 *Recognizing* the role of credible, relevant and legitimate intergovernmental and expert led assessments in promoting dialogues between the science and policy communities and support decision-making on environmental issues to achieve the transformation to a sustainable future consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.

* In accordance with the decisions taken by the Bureau of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its meeting held on 8 October 2020 and by the bureaux of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives at their joint meeting held on 1 December 2020, the fifth session of the Environment Assembly was adjourned on 23 February 2021 and is expected to resume as an in-person meeting in February 2022.

** The present document has not been formally edited.

PP4 Recognizing that the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) process since its inception in 1995 has generated flagship reports, informed decision-making and contributed to key decisions by the Governing Council and the UNEA and the strengthening of UNEP's science-policy interface including by mobilizing in-kind contributions from experts worldwide, also recognizing that the large majority of member states, experts and stakeholders who have responded to the broad consultations favor a continuation of the GEO process.

PP5 *Noting* the criteria set out in the options document by the Steering Committee for evaluating the options: mandate consistency, relevance, legitimacy, credibility, accessibility, added value and overall feasibility.

1. *Reaffirms* that the objective of the GEO process is to keep the world environmental situation under review in order to periodically inform and support collective and individual action by UN Member States, stakeholders and other actors, while strengthening UNEP's science-policy interface.

2. *Affirms* that the aim of the GEO process is to achieve the objectives set out above and undertake an intergovernmental and expert-led assessment and provide support to intergovernmentally agreed needs and terms for capacity building, knowledge generation and policy making.

3. *Requests* the Executive Director to convene an ad-hoc open ended intergovernmental consultative meetings consisting of Member States and accredited observers to UNEA and establish **[a high-level intergovernmental and stakeholder advisory group] [an intergovernmental and multistakeholder steering group, established directly under the auspices of UNEA]** and a multidisciplinary expert advisory group responsible for overseeing the GEO process pursuant to the terms of reference and guidance for selection set out in the Annex to the present resolution;

3 alt Decides to establish a standing ad-hoc open-ended subsidiary body of Member States and accredited observers to UNEA, which would elect its officers constituting its Bureau and establish a multidisciplinary expert panel, responsible for overseeing the GEO process pursuant to the terms of reference and the guidance for selection set out in the Annex to the present resolution;

4. *Takes note* of the options presented in the options document of the Steering Committee and the results of the consultations and decides that the core function of the future GEO process should be to undertake intergovernmental and expert led **[comprehensive global integrated environmental assessments, with regional specificities, every four years] [which include] [syntheses of global assessments] [supplemented by] [thematic assessments, as and when needed] [in combination]**, including a analysis of environmental status and trends, to address identified needs, priorities and emerging issues, based on inputs from Member States, stakeholders and experts;

5. *Also decides* that the GEO process should identify intergovernmentally defined needs and terms for support to capacity building, knowledge generation, and policy making and provide support services for addressing those needs in partnership with relevant institutions, as appropriate.

6. **[Requests the Executive Director, with the guidance from the intergovernmental and stakeholder advisory group, to] [Decides that the mandate of the [intergovernmental steering group] [ad-hoc open-ended subsidiary body] is to]:**

(a) Create a set of procedures considered by Member States that reflects the objectives, core function, set out above and takes into account the criteria and process elements identified by the Steering Committee for the future of GEO **[to be presented at ad-hoc open ended intergovernmental consultative meetings];**

(b) Develop a multi-year work plan and time bound budget to set out a programme of assessments and support services to implement UNEA's decision according to needs identified by Member States and in consultation with stakeholders, including with relevant MEAs and other assessment processes **[to be presented at ad-hoc open ended intergovernmental consultative meetings];**

(c) Facilitate the science-policy interface by developing for each assessment a scoping document and a summary for policymakers prepared by experts which will be considered for endorsement by representatives of Member States;

(d) Scope and approve the undertaking of intergovernmental and expert led assessments in accordance with the multi-year work plan and a time bound budget **[considered in the ad-hoc open ended intergovernmental consultative meetings]**

(e) Ensure that GEO draws from the evidence base of peer-reviewed literature, national peer-reviewed assessments, and other international and UN-led assessments and data, analysis and information and other credible sources such as , the World Environment Situation Room, and elements of knowledge generation within and outside of UNEP, including the Global Environmental Monitoring System (GEMS), the SDG indicators and statistics work, as well as key partnerships with the GLOBE and GRID networks, being embedded in UNEP's Global Environmental Data Strategy.

7. *Requests* the Executive Director, in accordance with the mandate of UNEP on keeping the world environmental situation under review, to administer the GEO process, by developing and implementing streamlined and cost-effective governance and administration, by providing [**adequate, predictable and stable financial**] resources from core funds, including the Environment Fund, by allocating sufficient human resources for UNEP Secretariat and by fostering in-house contributions and expertise, by facilitating partnerships with collaborating centers and assistance from technical support units, and where appropriate by facilitating the mobilization of extra-budgetary resources for the process [**including, for example, through specific vehicles for collection of these resources, [such as a dedicated trust fund]**].

Annex

Terms of reference and guidance for the GEO governance structure

1. The open-ended sessions of representatives from Member States and accredited observers of UNEA in the form of **[ad-hoc consultative meetings] [ad-hoc subsidiary body]** is open to Member States and/or members of United Nations specialized agencies. Any accredited observer of UNEA which has informed the Secretariat of its wish to be represented at sessions of the **[meetings][body]**, may participate as an observer. To facilitate communication, cooperation, nomination of experts and review of reports and other material, Member States are encouraged to designate GEO national focal points responsible for liaising with the UNEP Secretariat.
 2. The **[open-ended sessions] [intergovernmental and multistakeholder steering group] [subsidiary body] [is][are]** responsible for **[advising] [endorsing]** the process, **[planning], [budgeting], [initiation] and [clearance]** of GEO assessments and other deliverables as directed by UNEA.
 3. The **[inter-governmental and multistakeholder advisory group] [inter-governmental and multistakeholder steering group, established under the auspices of UNEA, selected from nominations by Member States or members of United Nations specialized agencies as assessed and approved by the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme] [the bureau of government officials elected by the subsidiary body]** is responsible for presiding over the open-ended sessions, for providing procedural, administrative and financial oversight and representing the GEO process. It will comprise of **[25-30][10-15]** members, and is to be composed of to ensure disciplinary, gender and geographical balance across the five United Nations regions, while taking into account the guidance set out in point (e) below.
 4. The multidisciplinary expert **[advisory group] [panel]** is responsible for presiding over expert meetings, providing scientific oversight, selecting experts, and representing the GEO process. It will comprise of 25 members, and is to be composed to ensure disciplinary, gender and geographical balance across the five United Nations regions while taking into account the guidance set out in subparagraph (e) below.
 5. The following guidelines should be taken into account in the processes for nominating and selecting the members of the above-mentioned bodies:
 - (a) Ability to carry out the functions set out above;
 - (b) Scientific environmental expertise with regard to both natural and social sciences;
 - (c) Scientific, technical or policy expertise and knowledge of the main elements of the GEO's work;
 - (d) Experience in communicating, promoting and incorporating science into policy development processes;
 - (e) Ability to both lead and work in international scientific and policy processes.
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