

Statement by the Global Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Consultation on the
Fifth Global Environment Outlook held in Nairobi from 29 – 31 March 2010

UNEP/IGMC.2 Rev.2

**Statement on the objectives, scope and process of the fifth Global Environmental
Outlook by the Global Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Consultation**

31 March 2010

Introduction

1. *Recalling* the responsibilities of the Governing Council of UNEP, as outlined in General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972.
2. *Recalling* Governing Council decisions 18/27, 19/3, 20/1, 22/1/1B, and 23/6 on the Global Environment Outlook. *Also recalling* decision 25/2/III which requested a fifth iteration by 2012.
3. *Noting* also the importance of valuable experiences and lessons learnt in improving the development of global state of the environment reviews that were gained from the previous GEO assessment processes, in particular the last one, GEO-4.
4. *Noting with appreciation* the invitation by the Executive Director to the Global Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Consultation to agree on the objectives, scope and process for the fifth Global Environment Outlook.
5. *Welcoming* the background note (UNEP/IGMC.1) of the Executive Director on the objectives, scope and process of the fifth Global Environment Outlook.

The Objectives of the Fifth Global Environment Outlook

6. *Recalling* the UNEP Governing Council's Decision 25/2: III, the following objectives for the fifth Global Environment Outlook (GEO-5) report and process are adopted:

- a. To provide a comprehensive, integrated and scientifically credible global environmental assessment to support decision-making processes at appropriate levels.
- b. To engage all Governments, relevant United Nations bodies and stakeholders in GEO-5 in order to support and strengthen further the scientific credibility, policy relevance and legitimacy.
- c. To strengthen the on-going process of capacity building for developing countries and countries with economies in transition to conduct environmental monitoring and assessments at all levels, in collaboration with relevant on-going activities of UNEP and other initiatives, including through south-south and triangular cooperation.
- d. To inform, as appropriate, the strategic directions of the United Nations Environment Programme and other relevant UN bodies.
- e. To strengthen the policy relevance of GEO-5 by including an analysis of case studies of policy options, that incorporates environmental, economic, social and scientific data and information and their indicative costs and benefits to identify promising policy options to speed up achievement of the internationally agreed goals such as those agreed at the Millennium Summit in 2000 and in Multilateral Environmental Agreements.
- f. To inform and learn from relevant global and regional processes and meetings where progress towards these agreed goals will be discussed.
- g. To identify data gaps in the thematic issues considered by GEO-5.

The Scope of the Fifth Global Environment Outlook

7. Since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, global, regional and national concern for environmental and developmental issues has increased. This has led to an extensive range of internationally agreed environmental and development goals. However, progress towards meeting these has in many cases, been slow. One of the outputs of the GEO-5 assessment should be an analysis of the policy options to speed up the achievement of these goals.

8. The GEO-5 report will be published in 2012, the year of the Rio+20 Conference where possible themes include ‘a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication’ and the ‘institutional framework for sustainable development’¹. The GEO-5 assessment should aim to address these and other relevant themes as appropriate.

9. The GEO-5 report will contribute to the process of keeping the environment under review including the proposed UNEP-Live.

10. To deliver on the objectives of GEO-5, the Global Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Consultation adopts the following scope:

11. Part 1: Assessment of the State and Trends of the Global Environment

a. Provide an assessment of the state and trends of the global environment in relation to internationally agreed goals such as those agreed at the Millennium Summit in 2000 and goals in Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs).

b. The Driver, Pressure, State, Impact and Response framework should be the conceptual framework used for the GEO-5 assessment.

c. This assessment should be based upon national, regional and global datasets and models, that are well documented, to ensure open access for further assessments. GEO-5 will build upon national, regional and global assessments and reports as well as peer reviewed scientific literature where databases are accessible.

d. Evaluate the major direct and indirect pressures and drivers of global environmental change and present an indicator-based update of the state and trends of the global environment.

e. Highlight regional differences, diversity, specificities and vulnerabilities, such as of Small Island Developing States, coastal zones, flood plains, arid lands and high mountain regions, as well as regional commonalities through various environmental themes and their interlinkages, including those arising from conflict and disaster.

f. Evaluate the gaps in achieving internationally agreed goals and their indicative implications for human well-being.

g. Review persistent environmental problems, emerging issues and opportunities, thresholds and tipping points to the Earth system, that are well documented in peer reviewed literature, with due regard to various scientific points of view.

h. Conduct a review, from the GEO perspective, of the needs to strengthen the collection, monitoring, interpretation and analyses of environmental, economic and social data relevant to track the state and trends of the environment.

Key questions for Part 1 of the assessment to answer:

- i. What are the current drivers, state and trends of, and outlook for the global environment?
- ii. Do the current drivers, state and trends of the environment reflect progress towards meeting internationally agreed goals?
- iii. What are the main challenges for the life supporting functions of the Earth System and the drivers that cause them?
- iv. To what extent do existing monitoring and observing activities and institutional arrangements meet the needs for keeping the state and trends of the environment under review?
- v. What are the main gaps and barriers to meeting the agreed goals?

12. Part 2: Options for Regional Policy Action

a. Select internationally agreed goals that are based on priority challenges for each region through a regional multi-stakeholder consultation.

b. Review the literature of existing policy approaches, institutional arrangements and capacities for environmental and natural resources management available globally that could have a significant impact on achieving selected goals.

c. Review and assess case studies of policy options that incorporate environmental, social and economic data and information that have facilitated and/or have the potential to facilitate speeding up achievement of internationally agreed goals by providing their indicative costs and benefits for each region.

d. Taking into account in the analysis, regional diversity, cross-regional commonalities and build on existing regional and national processes to avoid duplication.

Key questions for Part 2 of the assessment to answer:

- i. Which internationally agreed goals are high priorities for each region?
- ii. What policy options can be most successfully applied in each region to help speed up meeting internationally agreed goals?
- iii. What policy options facilitate environmental monitoring and its use in decision making?

13. Part 3: Opportunities for a Global Response based on regional priorities

a. Review results from Part 2 and identify policy options, that could potentially work in many regions to respond to the trends identified in Part 1. Identify actions that can be taken at the global level to enable the adoption of these policies (such as investments, other economic incentives and disincentives, governance, legal, institutional and policy frameworks needed to make these policies successful). Identify barriers that need to be overcome for policy uptake.

b. Use existing scenarios to identify options for decision making in order to address the long-term environmental challenges that we face and the achievement of policy goals, including the need for transformational change regarding over-arching pressures and drivers on environmental sustainability.

c. The process would be guided through regional analysis and informed by a consistent global approach designed to focus on key issues. The narrative and global conclusions would be discussed with the different regions.

d. The outputs of existing models from national, regional and global modelling activities would be a primary source of this information to provide insights. Potential additional runs of well-documented and peer-reviewed models, where suggested by identified gaps, could be developed to provide additional information for decision making. However, these should be funded using extra-budgetary sources and in-kind support.

Key questions for Part 3 of the assessment to answer:

- i. What policy approaches could be proposed for scaling-up to speed up meeting internationally agreed goals?
- ii. What types of sustainable change and innovation are needed over the long term?

The Summary for Policy Makers

14. As decided in GC Decision 25/2/III, a Summary for Policy Makers (SPM) report will be produced as a separate report.

15. The High-Level Intergovernmental Advisory Panel will provide guidance on the SPM.

16. The initial draft of the SPM will be written by the lead authors in consultation with the High-Level Intergovernmental Advisory Panel and will be consistent with the findings of the GEO-5 assessment. The final draft of the SPM will be negotiated and endorsed at an Intergovernmental meeting in 2012.

17. The SPM will be consistent with the findings of the GEO-5 assessment and will present:

- a. Key messages from the drivers, state and trends of the global environment.
- b. Progress, barriers and opportunities towards meeting internationally agreed goals.
- c. Main findings of the policy analysis from the regions including the social, economic and environmental benefits of implementing the recommended policies.
- d. Global opportunities to stimulate regional and national actions.
- e. Global and regional policy frameworks and mechanisms to speed up the achievement of internationally agreed goals.

18. In presenting the findings, the summary will be policy relevant without being policy prescriptive.

The Process for the Fifth Global Environment Outlook

19. GEO-5 will use an open and transparent approach, which will be multi-scaled and multidisciplinary, building on previous and ongoing assessment work to avoid duplication, and ensuring scientifically credible and policy relevant outcomes. GEO-5 data and information will be made available in the public domain to the extent possible.

20. Engage the best available scientific and policy expertise, taking into account disciplinary, geographic and gender balance through a merit-based and transparent nomination and selection process.

21. To ensure scientific credibility, policy relevance, legitimacy of, and effective engagement of stakeholders in the assessment:

- a. Engage a wide range of global and regional partners, to include an appropriate balance of developed and developing country participants, in the assessment as authors, experts, peer-reviewers and advisors. Partners should include governments/ministries, United Nations bodies and other international organizations, scientific institutions, regional collaborating centres, NGOs and indigenous peoples networks as appropriate, and the private sector.

b. For content development, constitute multi-disciplinary groups of lead authors and contributing authors who will be nominated by governments and other stakeholder groups including collaborating centers, based on a detailed chapter outline and expertise criteria utilizing a transparent process drawing on the IPCC nomination process. These nominated experts will be selected by UNEP following agreed selection criteria including taking into consideration gender and regional balance.

c. Establish a High-Level Intergovernmental Advisory Panel with adequate representation from all regions to identify relevant goals for Part 1 and provide guidance to chapter authors in Parts 1, 2 and 3 in their consideration of goals and policies. Furthermore, the Panel will consult with lead authors and advise on the Summary for Policy Makers. The Panel will be comprised on high-level policy experts from government.

d. Establish geographically representative and gender-balanced Regional Expert Groups for Part 2, consisting of members that have diverse range of expertise and experience from relevant disciplines. This regional process will be guided by wider regional consultations.

e. Establish a Science and Policy Advisory Board comprising reputable scientific and policy experts to support the process and provide guidance to chapter authors to ensure that the process is scientifically credible.

f. Establish a Data and Indicators Working Group to provide core data support to the assessment process including through national Governments, interagency co-operation and collaborating centres. Help keep the state of the environment under continual review by building on an existing set of GEO indicators and strengthen the existing GEO data portals.

g. Draw on a wide range of publicly available scientific assessments and peer-reviewed reports and authoritative data and information including from Governments.

h. Subject the assessment to an extensive scientific expert peer-review and governmental review.

i. Conduct an evaluation of the GEO-5 process and review the impact of the assessment report to continually learn from and improve the process and its products.

j. Ensure that there is an internal mechanism of communication between all working groups.

22. To continually improve the knowledge base, skills sharing and access to data, methodology, training and collaborating with on-going activities of UNEP and other initiatives:

a. Continue targeted institutional capacity building by engaging developing country

experts in the core activities of GEO-5 and support this capacity building through:

- i. Up-dating and better integrating the global and regional GEO Data Portals, in line with the proposed development of UNEP-Live, and strengthening the ability of governments to monitor the environment and assess data and report on the state of the environment.
 - ii. Providing core data and indicators support to the assessment process, including through inter-agency cooperation and providing capacity building opportunities to help support data-management, data gathering and filling identified data-gaps.
 - iii. Identifying major environmentally related data gaps and suggesting options how these might be addressed.
 - iv. Developing and promoting the use of integrated assessment tools and methodologies, GEO-5 guidelines and training modules.
 - v. Deploying existing and developing new training programmes including for the enhanced policy analyses.
 - vi. Providing training to assessment partners to build capacity in State of the Environment and policy analysis within the regions in cooperation with relevant United Nations bodies and regional institutions, collaborating centres and other relevant stakeholders including young scientists.
 - vii. Using, as appropriate, an E-learning platform to reach out as widely as possible.
 - viii. Assist GEO-5 authors from developing countries and countries with economies in transition with access to scientific literature.
 - ix. Networking and developing relationships with new partners as appropriate.
 - x. Establishing a GEO Fellowship Programme to involve young scientists in the process.
23. To communicate key messages and findings to, especially targeting appropriate, audiences in ways that are accessible, it is recommended to:
- a. Develop a target-driven outreach strategy at the inception to determine how best to reach the target audiences, including by developing intermediate products.
 - b. Make use of a range of multi-media tools and innovative approaches as appropriate to communicate the findings of the GEO-5 assessment and maximize accessibility of GEO-5 information, including in terms of format and languages.

Conclusions

24. The Global Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Consultation:

a. *Requests* the Executive Director to contact governments and other stakeholder groups including collaborating centers inviting them to submit their nominations for experts and expert institutions to participate in GEO-5, making full use of UNEP's regional presence. Nominations should be received 30 days after nomination letters and forms are sent out and published on the website. The deadline for nominations of experts for regional expert groups nominations which will be made one month after the regional consultations that identifies priorities.

b. *Invites* countries in a position to do so and other partners active in the field of development to provide funding for GEO-5, in particular for participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, regional stakeholder consultations, the Global Intergovernmental Consultation and in-kind support for the participation of national experts and institutions.

c. *Taking note* of the production schedule set out in the background document (UNEP/IGMC.1) in Annex V and during the GEO-5 process take stock of achieved progress and adjust according to available resources and time to achieve the production deadlines.

d. *Requests* the Executive Director to invite national governments to utilize the opportunity under the GEO process to produce their own state of the environment reports as appropriate.

e. *Requests* the Executive Director to provide sufficient funds and allocate resources in a timely manner for GEO-5 from the Environment Fund and to carry out the GEO-5 process in a cost-effective manner by utilizing available telecommunication opportunities.