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GEO-7 Coordination
Group meeting

United Nations Environment Programme

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On September 6, 2024, the GEO-7 Coordination Group met to consider the following agenda items:

The objective of the meeting included:

1. Review and provide advice on the steps for the acceptance of the main GEO-7 report and the review and approval of the GEO-7 Summary for Policy Makers.
2. GEO-7 Communication Plan

On these items the meeting decided:

- The review and approval of the GEO-7 Summary for Policy Makers will be done in a paragraph-by-paragraph format.
- Member States will have six weeks to review the Second Order Draft (SOD) of the GEO-7 Summary for Policy Makers (SPM).
- There would be no more than two contact groups during the GEO-7 SPM negotiations.
- The Secretariat to ensure that graphics including maps used in the SPM add to the story of the report and are legend compatible.
- The Secretariat to make regular briefings on the GEO to CPR with the content of the briefing focused on process rather than content.
- The acceptance of the GEO-7 main report would be the first agenda item for the SPM review and approval meeting in November 2025.
- The Secretariat to provide a cover letter that indicates the relationship between the Executive Summary and the Summary for Policy Makers accompanying the draft for the Intergovernmental and expert peer review that starts on 1 Nov – 15 January 2025.
- The SPM should not be renamed to SDM as policy making comes before decision making.
- The GEO communication plan should be developed in collaboration with the Coordination group and should be developed one month from the meeting with the communications team and be finalized by end of the year.
- The Secretariat will work with the IK & LK facilitation team to organize the 3rd Dialogue incorporating the feedback provided by the Indigenous participants in the 2nd Dialogue.
- The Secretariat will ensure the comments received to the SOD of the main report and the FOD of the SPM during the 3rd Dialogue are made available to authors around 15 January 2025.

Rapporteur	Signature
Ignacio Sanchez, UNEP	

Meeting Summary September 6, 2024

Review and provide advice on the steps for the acceptance of the main GEO-7 report and the review and approval of the GEO-7 Summary for Policy Makers.

The Secretariat provided a briefing on the expected timeline for the review and approval process of the GEO-7 Summary for Policy Makers (SPM) noting the Coordination's group vital role. The Coordination Group members with experience chairing SPM negotiations for environmental assessments shared their experiences noting that the role is more of a facilitation role that is based on style and personality. The former chair of the GEO-6 SPM negotiation noted that the GEO-6 SPM negotiation was done word by word which was not an ideal format and group members suggested that a paragraph-by-paragraph review of the SPM during the review and approval SPM meeting in 2025 would be best. It was also highlighted that there should be no more than two contact groups at the same time as the GEO-6 SPM negotiation had a contact group of 50 people at a time.

On graphics to be used in the SPM, the group highlighted the sensitivity of graphics such as maps noting that graphics are important as they summarize the text, but they should add to the story of the report and the Secretariat should ensure that they are legend compatible. The Ad hoc open-ended chair inquired whether six weeks would be enough for governments to review the SPM and send in written comments to which the Secretariat highlighted that governments would have six weeks to review the Second Order Draft of the SPM prior to the SPM Review and Approval Meeting from 3-7 November 2025 and the Adhoc open ended working group bureau will have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the comments before the meeting. The Secretariat noted that it would be responsible for taking notes during the meeting to ensure an accurate record of proceedings so that decisions are not revisited.

IMAG noted the need to continually update the UNEP Committee for Permanent Representatives (CPR) through regular briefings and especially before the review of the draft SPM. The information presented during those briefings would be based more on process and possible suggestions for future briefings could be on the structure and outline of the SPM. It was further noted that there are CPR subcommittee briefings for various thematic issues, and there is an opportunity to request the Government of Jordan to open a GEO subcommittee. The Secretariat updated that they are planning to provide a briefing to the CPR in the coming week to discuss the outcomes of the author and advisory bodies meetings as well as communicate the request for reviewers given the upcoming First Order Draft review of the SPM and Second Order Draft of the main report. It was mentioned that previous CPR meetings had inquired on the difference between the IPBES transformative assessment and GEO-7 to which the Assessment co-chair clarified that the IPBES assessment does not look at the various sectors and theory on transformation as GEO-7 does but noted that however there is a complementarity and overlap of GEO-7 with the IPBES nexus assessment.

The group agreed that the acceptance of the main report would be the first agenda item for the review and approval of the SPM meeting noting that the validation opinions from IMAG and MESAG that indicate how the process has been followed would be crucial to get the acceptance

of the main report. The Assessment co-chairs highlighted that the FOD review in November will provide the SPM core drafting team with a first sense of government comments. The group, however, noted the need for a cover letter accompanying the SOD indicating the connection between the chapters, the executive summaries and the SPM.

Assessment co-chairs shared a proposal for the possible renaming of the Summary for Policy Makers to Summary for Decision Makers noting the wide variety of actors other than policy makers. It was however agreed that the SPM should not be renamed to SDM as policy making comes before decision making as there is a process of policymaking that occurs before a decision is taken.

Lastly, IMAG followed up on its suggestion from earlier on in the week to add more members to the SPM core team to which the Assessment co-chairs responded that three authors from Africa, Asia Pacific and Eastern Europe had been included in the team to achieve geographical balance.

Review and Provide advice on GEO-7 Communication plans

To prepare for a meeting with UNEP's communication team, the group discussed the communication and outreach of GEO-7. The group indicated several points to raise with UNEP's communication team such as the communication plan and budget, capacity and the outreach activities for youth. IMAG highlighted that the GEO Supporting Services will strengthen the visibility of the GEO, and it was agreed the GEO communication plan to be developed by the communication team should be developed in collaboration with the Coordination Group and be shared with the group one month from the meeting with the communications team.

IMAG noted that the Netherlands would support the development of a GEO communication strategy by providing €150,000. The Secretariat expressed its appreciation to the Government of the Netherlands and welcomed the support. The MESAG highlighted that GEO should be digital, noting the dismal publicity of other UNEP reports. Other publications such as the IPBES and IPCC were mentioned to be more visible, and the group highlighted the need to speak to other audiences outside of UNEA as environmental ministers are not the most powerful. The Ad hoc opened ended meeting chair and the MESAG highlighted that the youth are a powerful voice for the environment and should be also engaged as a key audience through use of social media. The Assessment co-chairs highlighted various forums that the UNEP ED could speak after the launch of GEO-7 such as the World Economic Forum (Davos in January), the development Committee of the World Bank as well as FAO and IFAD meetings.

The Secretariat updated the group on the clear directive from UNEP's ED to the communication team to support GEO communication efforts. The update included an update on the GEO style guide under development with the communication team and the status of the preferred designer to work on the GEO graphics. The Secretariat highlighted the request made to Assessment Co-chairs in a previous meeting with the ED to provide a half pager on key points that could be used as nuggets in the ED's speeches which the ED could use to sell the essential features of GEO-7. The group indicated that the communication plan should go beyond the launch and have sufficient internal outreach to gain traction and have it inform UNEP's MTS. There was a suggestion to possibly launch the GEO in different regions much earlier, but it was noted that these could be overshadowed by the launch of the UNEP gap reports.

Update on IK&LK

The MESAG provided an update on the logistics for the third Indigenous Knowledge and Local Knowledge (IK&LK) Dialogue to be held in January 2025 following the feedback from the

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities participants of the Second IK&LK Dialogue on 11-13th June 2024. It was noted that participants had challenges with booking their own accommodation as well as the structure of the dialogues and virtual calls. MESAG indicated that the Secretariat should try incorporating the suggestions provided after the 2nd Dialogue so as not to undermine the GEO process. The MESAG also noted that generally January is not a good time to have the dialogue in Asia Pacific region given the holiday period and noted the severe constraints on the facilitators.

The Secretariat explained that given the timeline of GEO-7 it would not be possible to have the 3rd Dialogue earlier in December and that the participants preferred to have the dialogues on Indigenous lands thus the Chiang Mai location in Thailand. The Secretariat further explained that the UK has provided targeted funding for the dialogue and the IMAG member representing Indigenous groups is in conversations with the facilitator on how to efficiently manage the dialogues.

It was further explained that that there was a strong preference to keep the same facilitator as engaging a new facilitator would not be possible due to timing associated with recruitments and setting up of partnerships. The Secretariat also mentioned that requests to IPBES and UNESCO to support the GEO on IK&LK did not pan out. IMAG indicated that there would like to revisit the issue on the dialogues in a future meeting and MESAG indicated that MESAG would provide a strong suggestion for improvement for IK&LK for the next GEO.

Annex 1 - Participants List

Nyovani Madise	Co-chair of the Assessment
Bob Watson	Co-chair of the Assessment
Edgar Gutierrez-Espeleta	Co-chair of the Assessment
Ying Wang	Co-chair of the Assessment
Arthur Eijs	IMAG Co-chair
Anna Mampye	IMAG Co-chair
Mar Viana Rodriguez	MESAG Co-chair
Nick King	MESAG Co-chair
Rosemarie Casimiro (online)	MESAG Vice-Chair
Lorenzo Ciccicarese	Ad hoc Open-ended Chair
Thuraya Al Sariri	Ad hoc Open-ended Chair
Pierre Boileau	Secretariat
Ignacio Sanchez Diaz	Secretariat
Caroline Kaimuru	Secretariat