

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Subcommittee Meeting
Nairobi, 17 April 2025
09:00 – 12:15 and 13:00 – 14:45 (GMT+3)
Hybrid meeting
Conference Room 4 (in person)
and Microsoft Teams (online)

Chair's Summary

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.

1. H. E. Mr. Firas Khouri, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), Ambassador of Jordan to Kenya and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), opened the meeting and chaired the morning session. H. E. Ms. Nicol Adamcová, Vice Chair of the CPR, Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Kenya and Permanent Representative to UNEP, chaired the afternoon session.
2. The [agenda](#) was adopted.

Agenda item 2: Review of UNEP's thematic programmes.

3. The Secretariat provided a review of the following two UNEP thematic programmes: "[Science and Transparency](#)", and "[Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity](#)".
4. Delegations¹ that took the floor welcomed the presentation and provided the following comments in summary:

Science and Transparency

- a. Welcomed the programme's role in strengthening the Enhanced Transparency Framework under the Paris Agreement, particularly its contribution to building the capacity of developing countries to report consistently and effectively.
- b. Acknowledged UNEP's support for [Biennial Transparency Reports](#) (BTRs), National Communications, and early warning systems, recognizing them as instrumental tools for evidence-based policymaking and disaster preparedness.
- c. Highlighted the importance of stakeholder engagement and the development of systems that ensure national ownership and institutional sustainability.
- d. Emphasized the need to address capacity retention challenges, noting that trained experts are often lost due to the short-term nature of project-based employment and budgetary constraints in public sector.
- e. Requested UNEP to provide further information on:
 - i. Funding sources, including a breakdown and timeframe for the \$263 million portfolio, and future funding expectations.
 - ii. The use and accessibility of the [Climate Transparency Platform](#), including whether it is open access and how quality assurance is conducted prior to submissions to the [United Nations Framework Convention On Climate Change](#) (UNFCCC).
 - iii. Its alignment with adaptation efforts and collaboration with other agencies and national

¹ European Union, Chile, Finland, France, Spain, United Kingdom, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Mexico, Argentina, Indonesia, Brazil, Portugal, Spain, Kenya, State of Palestine, Children and Youth Major Group.

- meteorological services in early warning systems.
- iv. How lessons learned will be incorporated into the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) for the period 2026-2029.
- v. The integration and scalability of digital solutions to improve data accessibility across different national infrastructure contexts.
- vi. The [Global Transparency Forum 2025](#), including its objectives, planned format, and linkages with other similar international conferences.
- vii. How UNEP measures the impact and cost-efficiency of transparency efforts.
- f. Inquired about how the programme plans to ensure coordination across divisions, such as with UNEP's Early Warning and Assessment Division, and with other transparency-supporting agencies.

Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity

- g. Welcomed the programme's work in protecting terrestrial, marine and freshwater ecosystems, especially in Latin America and other regions.
 - h. Encouraged UNEP to focus on enhancing the portfolio of marine and freshwater ecosystems, building on the [Third United Nations Ocean Conference](#) (UNOC3) and the [Agreement on Marine Biodiversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction](#) (BBNJ Agreement).
 - i. Urged the programme to consider the findings and preliminary deliberations of the [Expert Workshop](#) on the Monitoring Framework for the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, which delivered specific proposals for indicators on the economic valuation of ecosystem services.
 - j. Requested UNEP to provide further information on:
 - i. The initial investment towards unlocking private funding and how UNEP can leverage its experience to catalyse additional resources.
 - ii. The possibility of a new portfolio on Nature-based Solutions in the upcoming MTS.
 - iii. Alignment of its projects with the [Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#) (KMGBF).
 - iv. Its work on freshwater ecosystems, including the collaboration with the [Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat](#) (Ramsar Convention) and the [United Nations Water initiative](#).
 - v. The representation of various ecosystems in flagship projects under the [United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration](#).
 - vi. Main challenges faced in implementing global projects.
 - vii. How UNEP is utilizing the findings of the assessments reports approved by the [eleventh session of the plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#) (IPBES-11) to ensure its projects are transformative and maximise co-benefits across climate, food, water and health.
 - k. Requested UNEP to schedule briefings on; i) UNEP's vision to scale up Nature-based Solutions; and ii) the impact of subsidies harmful to biodiversity, including UNEP's work in this area in line with [target 18](#) of the KMGBF.
5. In response, the Secretariat thanked delegations for their comments and provided the following clarifications:

Science and Transparency

- a. Informed that the programme supports over 100 countries through initiatives such as the [Capacity-building Initiative for Transparency](#) (CBIT), [Enabling Activities](#), the [Initiative for Climate Action Transparency](#) (ICAT), and [early warning systems](#), which are funded primarily by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Green Climate Fund (GCF), and the Systematic Observations Financing Facility (SOFF).

- b. Explained that the [Climate Transparency Platform](#) is open access, offering tutorials, event listings, and tools for quality checks on reports, while also enabling countries to submit support requests directly through the platform.
- c. Clarified that UNEP collaborates closely with national meteorological services and other UN agencies, and that UNEP's Early Warning and Capacity Building Unit will be moved to the Climate Change Division to further strengthen linkages with adaptation work.
- d. Acknowledged challenges in retaining trained personnel and highlighted ongoing efforts to institutionalize capacity, including through partnerships with universities and integration of training into national systems to ensure sustainability.
- e. Highlighted that many countries had not previously submitted BRTs and informed that UNEP's support has so far facilitated 25 first-time submissions, along with the establishment of 14 national Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) databases.
- f. Further highlighted digital innovations, such as remote sensing and machine learning technologies including those employed by the [International Methane Emissions Observatory](#) (IMEO), as valuable tools for enhancing monitoring capabilities and targeting resources more effectively.
- g. Recognized the value of integrating transparency reporting across the [Multilateral Environmental Agreements](#) (MEAs) to reduce costs and improve institutional coherence.
- h. Confirmed the programme's alignment with UNEP's science-driven mandate while reiterating that transparency will remain central in the upcoming MTS.
- i. Informed that the [Global Transparency Forum 2025](#) will take place in the Republic of Korea from 4 to 5 September 2025, focusing on information exchange, matchmaking between countries and donors, and scaling transparency support.

Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity

- j. Noted the differing levels of development and financial resources across countries as a challenge to the delivery of global projects, while also highlighting opportunities for cross-regional collaboration and the exchange of lessons learned.
- k. Highlighted the initial investment in the land-use finance project and explained that UNEP is exploring various tools and partnerships to mobilize private sector financing.
- l. Offered to compile and share details on UNEP's freshwater portfolio, and mentioned collaboration with Ramsar Convention to advance the goals of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, with side-events planned at the [fifteenth meeting of its Conference of the Contracting Parties](#), scheduled for 23 to 31 July 2025 in Zimbabwe.
- m. Clarified that Nature-based Solutions are considered pathways to change and are being integrated into programmatic design, rather than being established as an independent portfolio.
- n. Explained that project design and co-creation processes at UNEP are structured to ensure alignment with the targets of the KMGBF, as well as insights from major scientific assessments such as those of IPBES.
- o. Mentioned that a report on the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration will be presented at next year's session of the UN General Assembly, and assured that a balanced representation across freshwater, marine, and terrestrial ecosystems will be maintained in flagship initiatives.
- p. Acknowledged the interest of Member States in subsidies harmful to biodiversity and offered to engage in a deeper discussion on the matter in future sessions.
- q. Informed that further information on the portfolio will be provided at the upcoming subcommittee meeting scheduled for 15 May 2025, under the thematic programmes on "Mainstreaming Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Across Sectors and Systems" and "Governance and Accountability for Biodiversity".

Agenda item 3: Briefing on the Global Environmental Data Strategy.

- 6. The Secretariat provided a [briefing](#) on the [first draft](#) of UNEP's [Global Environmental Data Strategy](#) (GEDS).

7. Delegations² that took the floor welcomed the presentation and provided the following comments in summary:
- a. Emphasized the importance of data sovereignty, calling for mechanisms that respect national autonomy in data collection and sharing, while strengthening national capacities and preventing duplication.
 - b. Requested further information on:
 - i. The proposed implementation mechanisms, including clearer contextualization of timelines, differentiation between quick wins and complex actions, prioritization of efforts, and identification of opportunities to accelerate progress.
 - ii. How GEDS would be operationalized, including clear distinctions between national and international roles and responsibilities.
 - iii. The role and capacity of the [World Environment Situation Room](#) (WESR) in supporting the implementation of GEDS.
 - iv. How GEDS fits within the broader digital ecosystem, including its interlinkages with other ongoing digital initiatives, and its integration into UNEP's Programme of Work (PoW) for the period 2026-2027.
 - c. Recommended that interoperability efforts avoid additional burdens on countries and prioritize the use of existing national systems.
 - d. Underscored risks associated with [Artificial Intelligence](#) (AI), including embedded biases, and called for GEDS to strengthen national reporting systems under the [MEAs](#) by strengthening national systems for reporting obligations.
 - e. Called for equitable financing mechanisms, equitable access to digital tools and technical support to enable inclusive GEDS implementation and data sharing.
 - f. Recommended that the strategy be accompanied by a clear and structured roadmap, including best practices, resource estimates, expected outcomes, and targeted engagement with end users.
 - g. Suggested regular briefings with regional groups and dialogue with regional data institutes to integrate regional priorities.
 - h. Expressed support for establishing a clearing house mechanism for environmental data associated with GEDS implementation.
 - i. Encouraged the integration of gender analysis across all pillars of GEDS to promote inclusion, ensure accessibility, and address AI-related gender biases.
 - j. Recommended leveraging institutional strengths, such as the [Global Resource Information Database Centres](#) (GRID) and the [United Nations Statistical Commission](#) (UNSC), to enhance cohesion in data governance.
 - k. Stressed that UNEP's role should remain normative, with implementation led by Member States and supported through UNEP's capacity-building efforts.
 - l. Inquired the composition and establishment of the proposed expert group on interoperability and recommended the inclusion of national environmental agencies.
 - m. Called for stronger references to regional legal frameworks such as the [Escazú Agreement](#) in Latin America and consideration of regional experiences, including the [Common European Data Spaces](#), as inputs to inform the development of GEDS.
8. In response, the Secretariat thanked delegations for their comments and provided the following clarifications:
- a. Emphasized the WESR is a key priority within [UNEP's Digital Transformations subprogramme](#) and serves as an entry point for implementation.
 - b. Welcomed suggestions to enhance focus on end users and gender, confirming that the second draft

² European Union, Brazil, Mexico, Norway, United Kingdom, Kenya, Germany, France, Morocco, Spain, Chile, Switzerland, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), State of Palestine, Women Major Group.

- will include a clearer roadmap and a more user-cantered structure.
- c. Clarified that GEDS will guide UNEP-wide initiatives, including data projects, the [Digital Accelerator Lab](#), and the innovation sandbox, in alignment with the strategy's principles and policies.
 - d. Confirmed that regional experiences such as the Common European Data Spaces and the Escazú Agreement will inform the strategy's development, and that background documents will be shared with interested Member States.
 - e. Stated UNEP's commitment to supporting countries in adopting context-appropriate approaches and announced plans for regular dialogue with Member States.
 - f. Clarified that the expert group on interoperability could be established based on Member States' preferences, and UNEP is prepared to offer technical support and virtual briefings.
 - g. Highlighted the need to differentiate between statistical and environmental data governance, as each requires tailored frameworks to address their unique technical and institutional specificities.
 - h. Acknowledged that the implementation of GEDS will be reflected in UNEP's upcoming PoW and will contribute to inform broader programme delivery.
 - i. Noted that twelve UN agencies participated in four consultations on GEDS, and that UNEP continues its engagement with the Global Digital Compact's working group and the UN-wide data governance group.

Agenda item 4: Update on the status of the production of the seventh edition of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO-7).

9. The Secretariat provided an [update](#) on the [status of the production](#) of the seventh edition of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO-7).
10. Delegations³ that took the floor welcomed the presentation and provided the following comments in summary:
 - a. Highlighted the [GEO-READ platform](#) as an efficient tool for the digital review process, as well as the preparatory webinars that supported the peer review while expressing interest in simplifying the submission of comments from governments, similar to the spreadsheet-based approach used by IPBES and the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) (IPCC).
 - b. Requested further information on:
 - i. How the results of GEO-7 will be aggregated at the regional level and the level of detail to be included.
 - ii. The key issues raised in the reviewers' comments.
 - iii. The regional distribution of the comments received, including the breakdown between developed and developing countries.
 - iv. Whether the comments and corresponding responses will be made available to Member States ahead of the Summary for Policy-Makers (SPM) negotiation meeting scheduled for 3 to 7 November 2025.
 - v. The key messages emerging from the dialogues with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and how their contributions will be integrated into the GEO-7 report.
 - vi. The role of AI in the preparation of GEO-7 and its expected influence on future GEO assessments.
 - vii. The planned interactive digital tools of GEO-7, their functionality and their relationship with the [WESR](#).
 - c. Raised concerns about the short timeframe between the deadline for submitting comments on the Second Order Draft (SOD) of the SPM and the scheduled SPM negotiation meeting, emphasizing the need for adequate time for Member States to analyse and prepare their positions.

³ European Union, Egypt, Argentina, United Kingdom, Kenya, Spain, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Brazil, Children and Youth Major Group.

- d. Urged for an action-oriented SPM that would feed into the National Environmental Action Plans of Member States and reflect national priorities, while also calling for greater engagement of youth in the GEO-7 process and strengthened capacity-building efforts.
 - e. Requested that the GEO-7 report be launched early in the week of the seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7) to allow sufficient time for Member States to review and synthesize its findings, ensuring that it informs UNEA discussions and is meaningfully reflected in the ministerial declaration.
11. In response, the Secretariat thanked delegations for their comments and provided the following clarifications:
- a. Shared that the GEO Secretariat, in collaboration with UNEP's Communication Division, is developing an updated communication and outreach strategy, alongside planned national-level presentations with policymakers to maximize the uptake of the report's key findings.
 - b. Explained that while constrained by page and word limits, the regional chapters will go beyond generalities and provide sufficient detail to ensure relevance and value for policymakers.
 - c. Reported an increase in the total number of comments received compared to the First Order Draft (FOD) peer review period of the GEO main report, while also noting that although 44 Member States had nominated reviewers during the SOD review period, only 34 submitted comments. The regional distribution has been made available [here](#).
 - d. Confirmed that the comments and corresponding author responses will be made available once the review cycle is completed by the end of May 2025.
 - e. Informed that key issues raised during the review included: i) the need for improvement in the narrative; ii) reduction of duplication; iii) better integration across chapters and sections of the report, and iv) the inclusion of more data in the SPM to strengthen the evidence base.
 - f. Informed that Member States will receive the SOD of the SPM and an embargoed version of the main report on 15 August 2025, with written comments accepted until 12 October 2025 to allow sufficient time for authors and co-chairs to prepare responses ahead of the SPM negotiation and approval meeting.
 - g. Appreciated the proposal to adopt the reviewer comment templates used by the IPCC and IPBES and noted the GEO Secretariat's flexibility in accepting spreadsheet-formatted comments, which could subsequently be uploaded to the GEO-READ platform.
 - h. Confirmed that GEO-7 will be launched in the early days of UNEA-7, possibly on 8 or 9 December, with ongoing discussions aimed at ensuring the launch effectively informs negotiations, leadership dialogues, and UNEA decisions.
 - i. Reiterated that GEO-7, through the solutions pathways, will deliver an action-oriented SPM that will be valuable to Member States.
 - j. Explained that AI will not replace authors, as expert validation is essential to ensure the quality of information and that authors who have made use of AI tools are required to disclose their usage by submitting a form to the GEO Secretariat, further informing that the [Multi-disciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group](#) (MESAG), the scientific advisory body of GEO-7, has provided guidance stating that AI may be used to improve grammar and assist with literature searches, but must not be used to generate original content.
 - k. Elaborated that the GEO-7 process has incorporated digital tools, including an online collaboration platform for authoring and version control, a review platform to enhance transparency throughout the review process and a glossary tool, while noting that, in collaboration with UNEP's Digital Transformations team, a more interactive digital version connected to live data sources such as WESR and incorporates AI tools will be developed subject to resource availability.
 - l. Explained that a separate report on the outcomes of the dialogues with Indigenous Knowledge and Local Knowledge will be published and shared key messages from these dialogues, including i) the need for proper analysis and inclusion of Indigenous and Local Knowledge; and

- ii) the acknowledgement of the implications of solutions pathways to Indigenous Peoples' rights and territories.
- m. Informed of the inclusion of youth in the GEO-7 process through the GEO fellowship programme, where young fellows support authors in the development of the report and participate in key meetings such as drafting and negotiation of the SPM.

Agenda item 5: Other matters.

- 12. No other matters were raised.

Agenda item 6: Closing of the meeting.

- 13. The meeting closed at 14:45 (GMT+3).