

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Subcommittee meeting
Nairobi, 14 May 2026
09:00 – 12:00 and 13:00 – 16:00 (GMT+3)
Hybrid meeting
Conference Room 4 (in person)
and Microsoft Teams (online)

Agenda item 2: Lessons learned from the GEO-7 process as input for UNEP's future global environmental assessment.

The Office of Science will provide an update on the outreach efforts and impact so far as well as the lessons learned from the Seventh Edition of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO-7) process and how they will fit into the consultation process for UNEP's future global environmental assessment. More specifically, this will include:

- An update on the outreach efforts for the GEO-7 report;
- Key aspects of lessons learned from the GEO-7 process; and
- Provisional plans for the consultative process for UNEP's global environment assessments.

Following the presentation, the Committee will be invited to take note of the briefing and engage in an exchange of views with its members and the Secretariat.

1. GEO-7 Outreach

The [GEO-7 report](#) and its [Executive Summary](#) were launched in December 2025 at the seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7). During that week, a number of events were organized to promote the report, including a press conference, an official side event, a GEO-7 exhibition and the participation of GEO-7 experts in different panels, including the Indigenous Peoples Dialogue, among others.

On the day of the launch, various resources were also made available on the UNEP website, including a [video](#), an [interactive webpage](#) focused on the key findings, a [press release](#), a collection of [key messages](#) from the report and an [interactive modelling dashboard](#) exploring the results from the GEO-7 modelling exercise.

Around the launch period, approximately 200 social media posts were shared across [X](#), [BlueSky](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [WhatsApp](#), [Threads](#) and [Weibo](#) in all six UN official languages. Five web [stories](#) were also published on the report on [unep.org](#). Two of these ([Without big changes, this is what the environment will look like in 2050](#) and [Here's the recipe for fixing the planet, according to a landmark new report](#)) were among the four most-read stories during 2025.

These efforts resulted in:

- 1,200+ news stories mentioning GEO-7 in 83 countries and 33 languages
- 18 million people seeing social media posts about the report
- 110,000+ people reading UNEP stories about the report
- 10,000+ downloads of the main report
- 1.5 million times people reacting to GEO-7 social media posts
- 117,000 total views of the five web stories on [unep.org](#)
- A strong score in Altmetric (289), a monitoring tool that tracks engagement with scientific research. This score was the second-highest for a UNEP report.

The report was mentioned by hundreds of media outlets, including large, global media companies (like The New York Times, BBC, The Guardian, Agence France-Press and EuroNews), national media (including South Africa's Mail & Guardian, Colombia's El Tiempo and India's New Indian Express) and dedicated environmental media (such as Down to Earth and Mongabay).

As of end of April 2026, the main report was downloaded 14,339 times and the Executive Summary 2,433 times.

UNEP continues its effort to promote the report through different networks and specifically the dissemination of the report at the national level. Since its launch, the report has been presented to different audiences, including a) the Independent Group of Scientists (IGS) of the Global Sustainable Development Report 2027, b) the Climate and Environment Parliamentary Group of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, c) the European Environment Information and Observation Network (Eionet), d) the UNEP Country Teams Network, e) the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICED), f) the Charles University of Prague, g) the Autonomous University of Mexico, h) Avfallsforsk, a Norwegian leading network for research, development, and innovation (R&D&I) within the fields of waste, recycling, and circular economy and i) the Global Forum for the GEF Integrated Programmes. The report was also the central focus of the first webinar of the UNEP Science for Impact Series, an initiative led by the UNEP Office of Science and open to all UNEP personnel, designed to strengthen the integration of science into UNEP's policy, programme, and strategic work. This first session was joined by over 120 participants from all UNEP divisions and offices.

Several events focusing on GEO-7 are being planned for the next few months, including a) a presentation to the European Commission; b) two outreach events in Latin America and the Caribbean (both in English and Spanish)

to launch the Spanish version of the Executive Summary, in collaboration with UNEP's Regional Office; c) an event in the Asia and the Pacific Region; and d) a workshop in Geneva in collaboration with the Geneva Environmental Network (GEN) focusing on the GEO-7 solutions.

The GEO-7 Executive Summary has been translated into German and is being translated into Spanish, Chinese and Korean. All the translated versions of the document will be uploaded to the UNEP website to be publicly available.

In terms of its use at the academic level, many GEO-7 experts reported using it at their universities or national institutions throughout all UNEP regions.

Together with the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), one of the GEO-7 collaborating centres, UNEP is developing a series of interactive *science-to-policy* seminars. These capacity-building seminars aim to support policymakers in understanding the GEO-7 findings and translating them into science-based policies that address the socio-economic impacts of the planetary crisis, while proposing solution pathways to transform the human systems driving these challenges. The first seminar of this kind is expected to be piloted during Q2 of 2026.

2. Lessons learned from the GEO-7 process

The Secretariat gathered the following lessons learned through consultations with the GEO-7 advisory bodies, namely the Intergovernmental and Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) and the Multidisciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group (MESAG), as well as with other GEO-7 experts.

1. Focus on the nexus of environmental issues – GEO's unique features

GEO's breadth and flexibility to assess the nexus of environmental issues identified in other major assessments is its unique feature. While other major assessments reports focus on specific topics, a nexus approach could also make the GEO more focused and efficient, especially if combined with an expert-led and WESR informed state and trends section.

2. Consider reviewing the assessment cycle and production time of the report

The timing of the GEO assessment cycle and report production would benefit from a review, with a view to ensuring that future reports are launched well in advance of a session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA). This could enable the assessment results to more effectively inform Member States' deliberations and decision-making processes, thereby enhancing the policy relevance and impact of the assessment.

3. Digitize the state and trends section of the GEO using UNEP's World Environment Situation Room (WESR) online platform

An indicator-base state and trends section of the GEO using the WESR would significantly reduce effort and costs and allow information to be updated more regularly. Further scoping on how the WESR could be used is recommended.

4. Design a future GEO for a digital landscape

With an increasingly digital landscape, the design of any future GEO could be revised to consider how AI and other digital technologies could be used in its development. For example, content could be more interactive and designed to be easily converted for use on digital platforms such as social media.

5. Include a broader range of knowledge types in the scoping of future global environmental assessments from the start of the GEO process

Including a broader range of knowledge types was a key and successful innovation in GEO-7. In GEO-7,

this was done via the inclusion of a 1) Indigenous Knowledge and Local Knowledge (IK&LK) Task Force, 2) Behavioural, Social and Cultural (BSC) Task Group, and 3) a Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) Task Group. This innovation could be further formalized and built upon in future global assessments. Also, early input from Major Groups and Stakeholders could be further enhanced. Experts with a background in these disciplines and knowledge types, as well as any others identified as relevant, could be formally included early on, e.g. at the scoping stages of the GEO process, and then participate throughout.

6. Enhanced engagement with experts from under-represented regions

New ways to ensure that various academic networks are informed about global environmental assessment processes are needed, including the participation of more experts from diverse regions – especially under-represented regions – to ensure a good regional and expertise balance. This would enhance reviewer nominations and involvement by contacting academic societies and environmental institutes which could be effective at contributing comments. Outreach to engage experts could also happen across nomination processes to raise awareness.

7. Strengthen engagement with Member States

In view of the evolving geopolitical landscape, improvements to the intergovernmental nature of future global environmental assessments should be considered. This could be achieved by increasing inclusion of major groups in the GEO process, strengthening the role of IMAG and through other mechanisms including the CPR. For example, Member States could be invited earlier in the review process, depending on the length of the assessment cycle. Any review should be timely, thorough and allow for proper review and input from Member States.

8. Build in a strong communication and outreach strategy from the start of the process in collaboration with the UNEP Communications Division

To ensure effective and impactful outreach and communication of future UNEP global environmental assessments, it should be ensured that the UNEP Communications Division can be fully ready and equipped to support the GEO from the start of the process (e.g., the scoping of the assessment).

An outreach and communication plan could be made available upfront and the various target audiences for the different sections or volumes of the environmental assessments could be better defined to facilitate more targeted communication strategies. GEO experts could be involved in the development of communication material throughout the process alongside a focus on their chapters.

9. Ensure effective relationships with Collaborating Centers

The involvement of GEO collaborating centers in the GEO-7 process was effective, as it allowed for a structural and growing base of partners for future global environmental assessments.

Continuous dialogue and capacity building with collaborating centers could be enhanced to ensure that they further support global, as well as regional and national environmental assessments processes in the future.

10. Invest in long-term institutional capacity on IK&LK and leadership representation of Indigenous Peoples representatives - sustained institutional learning and capacity-building are required.

The GEO-7 experience demonstrated the value of mutual learning between scientific authors, IK & LK contributors and UNEP personnel. Continued investment in staff capacity, guidance materials, and communities of practice within UNEP and across the UN system is necessary to sustain science–policy interfaces that include diverse knowledge systems. Workshops with authors could be organized to ensure

their clear understanding of IK & LK and the importance of its inclusion. Future assessments could also consider strengthening leadership representation, including the possible appointment of a representative from Indigenous Peoples as a co-chair.

3. Consultative review process to develop options for a future UNEP flagship Global Environmental Assessment beyond GEO-7

Following the launch of the seventh edition of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO-7) at UNEA-7 in December 2025, UNEP decided to conduct a review process to develop options for the future of UNEP's flagship Global Environmental Assessment. This decision reflects an evolution in the global environmental assessment landscape, which has changed over time, with specialized assessment processes focusing on specific environmental themes such as climate change, biodiversity, resource use and chemicals, waste and pollution. In addition, there has been a rapid advancement of digital tools, communications platforms, combined with budgetary constraints, and an increasing number of environmental assessments, some of which have overlapping scopes.

While a review of the GEO process was conducted during 2021 and 2022, in the current context it is appropriate to consider again the future of UNEP's flagship Global Environmental Assessment Report to ensure it is fit for purpose. Through this process, UNEP wishes to address some key issues including a clear value proposition of a global environment assessment; how it can better serve Member States and other stakeholders; its impact at the global, regional and national levels; and, how it can be presented and delivered in an accessible and effective manner to different audiences and its specific focus.

To address these issues, UNEP is planning a consultation exercise to elicit what UNEP staff, Members States, the UN system and others would seek to find in a global environmental assessment produced by UNEP. The consultative review process will be managed by UNEP's new Office of Science.

The consultative review process is organized in three phases, outlined below. The process will be iterative and adaptive, evolving in response to emerging findings and analysis to identify the most viable and impactful options for the scope and format of UNEP's future flagship Global Environmental Assessment. The process will be guided by an internal ad-hoc advisory committee.

- 1. Phase 1: Internal consultation (May – July 2026)**, An internal consultation within UNEP will be conducted to solicit views from all Divisions, Offices and to ensure that the perspectives, expertise, capacities and operational realities across the organization are reflected in the analysis. This internal consultation will also consider the discussions of the UN80-WP27 process.
- 2. Phase 2: External consultation (August – October 2026)**
UNEP will convene a structured consultation with external stakeholders to present possible options and gather feedback. This will include engagement with Member States through the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), other UN agencies, MEAs, Secretariats of global and thematic assessments, assessment experts, data platforms, and digital tool providers.
- 3. Phase 3: Formulation of results from the consultations (Q4 2026)**
UNEP develops a report containing the results of the consultations that will inform a paper on the options for a future UNEP flagship Global Environmental Assessment beyond GEO-7, for internal discussion and consultation with Member States and Major Groups.