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

**United Nations Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment Programme
Fourth session
Nairobi, 11–15 March 2019**

**Keeping the world environment under review: enhancing the
United Nations Environment Programme science-policy
interface and endorsement of the Global Environment Outlook***

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Mindful of the mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme as outlined in General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 and other relevant resolutions that reinforce its mandate, including to keep under review the world environmental situation, and recalling Governing Council decision 27/11 of 22 February 2013 on the state of the environment and contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme to meeting substantive environmental challenges,

Recalling the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development “the Future We Want” in particular paragraph 88 (d) calling for UNEP to “Promote a strong science-policy interface, building on existing international instruments, assessments, panels and information networks, including the Global Environment Outlook, as one of the processes aimed at bringing together information and assessment to support informed decision-making”,

Recalling also paragraph 90 of the same document, calling for strengthened assessment activities and improved access to data and information, and noting the need to integrate the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development and to disseminate and share evidence-based environmental information on critical and emerging economic, environmental and social issues,

Noting GA resolution A/RES/71/313 on Statistics for the 2030 Agenda, which establishes the official list SDG indicators for which UN Environment Programme is the custodian of 26 indicators,

Recognizing the potential benefits of a scientifically sound and evidence-based detailed assessment of the state of the environment for awareness-raising, informed policy formulation and decision-making in the context of sustainable development,

Recognizing also that there are gaps in our knowledge of the state of the environment resulting from a lack of current data and information generation and dissemination,

Noting that there is a critical need for Governments to take action to bridge those gaps through building on existing mechanisms and developing capacities for monitoring the state of the

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

environment and producing policy-relevant environmental assessments, which should be based on the use of established and comparable methods for data collection and analysis,

Recalling UNEA resolution 1/4 of 27 June 2014, and also recalling UNEA decision 3/1 from DATE,

1. *Welcomes with appreciation* the 6th GEO report and its SPM as negotiated and approved by Member States from 21-24 January 2019;¹
2. *Expresses appreciation* for the scientists, researchers, authors, peer-reviewers, UNEP staff, and all who contributed to the compilation and publication of this flagship GEO-6 report;
3. *Requests* the Executive Director to continue to provide information from existing and ongoing assessments to guide future policy debates at the Assembly;
4. *Also requests* the Executive Director to assure the promotion of environmental monitoring, assessment and the primacy of a strong science-policy interface within and by UNEP by fostering collaboration with member States, business and experts, multilateral environmental agreement secretariats, relevant United Nations agencies and programmes and scientific panels, and other key partners like the UN Statistics Division, the Regional Commissions, and the Group on Earth Observations;
5. *Further requests* the Executive Director to further develop and prioritize within the programme of work and budget, in consultation with Governments, United Nations agencies and programmes, the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements, and international and regional scientific bodies, a long-term data strategy, with particular attention to regular regional and global analysis of the state and trends of environmental parameters as a basis, inter alia, for the future Global Environment Outlook process, which supports:
 - (a) Identification of comparable methods for data collection and analysis and promote their harmonization, taking into account existing standards, inter alia those of the UN statistical commissions system of environmental economic accounts, in coordination with other parts of the UN system and other relevant scientific institutions, building on international environmental data, and statistical standards;
 - (b) The improvement of platforms that provide a repository function to allow open access to up-to-date, quality-assured, credible and relevant data, including geospatial, statistics, indicators and data analysis on environment, including the work of UNEP GRID Centres;
 - (c) Providing tools and policy advice for integrated approaches to support evidence-based decision making;
 - (d) Accelerating efforts to assist Member States, to develop their national environmental data management capacities and their environmental monitoring systems for air and water quality, deforestation, marine litter, and environmental security, as well as their ability to use data analysis to support evidence-based decision making;
 - (e) Coordinating efforts to fully utilize Earth Observations with the Group on Earth Observations;
 - (f) Encouraging citizen science efforts and their potential contribution as a complementary source to fill data gaps;
 - (g) The UN Resident Coordinator offices to underpin Common Country Analyses with robust environmental data and statistics, in line with the SDG indicators, and to integrate national environmental data management, geospatial information management and statistical capacities into UN Development Assistance Frameworks;
6. *Requests* the Executive Director, in accordance with UNEP's mandate to keep the world environmental situation under review, to prioritize within the Programme of Work and Budget, the preparation of an options document for the future of the GEO process in broad consultation with Member States, stakeholders and other global environmental assessment processes, focusing on the scope and objectives of the GEO process. The options document process and consultation will be

¹ The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the UN Environment Programme concerning the legal status of any country, territory or city or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. For general guidance on matters relating to the use of maps in publications please go to <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/english/htmain.htm>.

overseen and managed by a Steering Committee to be established under the auspices of UNEA and pursuant to Terms of References and the nomination process as annexed herein. Members of the Steering Committee may be nominated by Member States and all members of the specialized agencies and will be approved by the CPR. The options should consider GEO's role in regularly preparing independent, state and trend analysis for the world environment situation. The scope and objectives of the GEO process should be informed by UNEP's Integrated Environmental Assessment Guidelines. The options document is to be submitted by the Steering Committee to the UNEA-5 for consideration, to allow a decision on the future form and function of the GEO;

7. *Also requests* the Executive Director to prepare a proposal for science-policy input on the Global Environment, in consultation with Member States for the commemoration of the creation of UN Environment Programme by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm from 5-16 June 1972, making use of contributions from relevant stakeholders;

8. *Welcomes* Governments, major groups and stakeholders, United Nations specialized agencies and programmes, the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements and international and regional scientific bodies to engage in the future development of UNEP data strategy, and share appropriate, credible and quality-assured data and information resources to support the environmental dimension of sustainable development assessment processes, to be accessible via a UNEP platform;

9. *Reiterates* the request to the Executive Director to strengthen the policy relevance of Global Environment Outlook process through measuring the progress towards the achievement of the internationally agreed environmental goals, to inform relevant global processes and meetings;

10. *Requests* the Executive Director to continue to promote greater coherence and coordination of global assessments undertaken within the UN System, and in cooperation with relevant international bodies and Multilateral Environmental Agreements;

11. *Also requests* the Executive Director to report to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its next session on the implementation of the present resolution.

Annex

Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee (SC) for the preparation of the Options Document for future GEO process

The **Steering Committee (SC)** will be established to **oversee and manage** the preparation of an options document, by the Secretariat, **for consideration at UNEA5**, outlining the key functions, scope and possible form(s) of the GEO process. Key roles and responsibilities of the SC are:

- To oversee the consultation process
- To assure the options are in line with the core mission and mandate of UNEP.
- To consult broadly, taking stock of lessons learned from evaluations of, inter alia, the completed GEO-6 process, as well as from the Evaluation of the ‘Environment Under Review’ Sub-programme
- To submit the options document including an assessment of the impact of the various options and provide recommendations to UNEA5 for consideration

Nomination process of the members of the Steering Committee (SC) for the preparation of the Options Document for future GEO process

The members of the SC may be nominated by Member States and all members of the specialized agencies and will be approved by the CPR.

The Nomination process aims to identify the best available expertise representing a range of disciplines, with geographic and gender balance and a particular emphasis on ensuring full representation from both developing and developed country experts. The nominations should be received through the Nominations Portal on the GEO Community of Practice.

The deadline for submission of nominations for the various roles is 30th of May 2019. The Secretariat will open a secure portal with a template for submitting nominations and all the supporting documentation e.g. CVs, cover letter, clarifying the identity of the Member State and the member of the specialized agency. The names, profiles and Curricula Vitae of all nominees will be made available through the GEO Community of Practice. The Secretariat will only accept nominations that are submitted by Member States or members of specialized agencies. The Secretariat can accept late nominations at the discretion of the SC.

The following criteria should be applied in nominating and selecting members to the SC:

- Significant documented professional experience with international environmental affairs and/or international sustainable development;
 - Comprehensive understanding of environmental assessment processes and their role in informing policy makers;
 - Extensive expertise with the international policy agenda and assessment work;
 - Preferably previous experience with high-level intergovernmental processes in relation to environmental policy and sustainable development;
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