



United Nations
Environment

Distr.: General

October 25, 2019

Original: English



Outcome of the First Authors Meeting of GEO-6 for Cities

The Co-Chairs and Authors met in Vancouver from October 14-18, 2019 to do the following:

1. Familiarize the authors with the GEO process, logistics and procedures.
2. Allow for brainstorming on overall strategy on completing the chapters
3. Provide an orientation session for all authors
4. Expand annotated outlines for each chapter
5. Begin drafting the chapters towards their zero-order draft stage
6. Define next steps, roles and responsibilities

On these issues the meeting decided:

- The storyline that goes across the report should be how cities could be power houses towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals;
- To try and provide hopeful message at the end of the report;
- Start with how diversity of cities affects the vision and pathway to sustainable cities but might not get to specific typologies at the end;
- Cross cutting issues will be defined first and then later a decision will be taken on where to put them;
- Case studies could be used as supporting materials, but the report will need to focus on actual pathways;
- A good purpose statement for the report is ‘showing how cities can set, prioritize and achieve their environmental goals while achieving other social and economic goals and also contributing their fair share to environmental goals’;
- At the end of each chapter, a summary will be provided;
- Co-chairs and secretariat will keep searching additional authors based on gaps analysis in different chapters;
- Secretariat will talk with CLA in Chapter 1 to explain the key points in introduction chapter;
- The zero-order draft will be delivered to Advisory Committee for comments on middle of December, which should include confirmed structure and key messages;

- Secretariat will confirm the date and location for second authors meeting on early November and second authors meeting will be draft meeting;
- Secretariat will organize a call with Advisory Committee to update all the information.

Day 1 CLA Meeting Summary (9.00 am-17.00, lunch break from 12.00pm to 13.00 pm)

Co-Chairs of GEO for Cities gave a warm welcome and thanked everyone for participating in the Coordinating Lead Authors Meeting. After thanking Grid Arendal for hosting this meeting, Co-chairs illustrated the objectives of this five-days meeting:

- Common understanding of where we are going;
- Confirm each chapter what to achieve;
- Discussion on coherence and overlap among different chapters;
- Discussion on how to address city typology issues

After confirming agenda with participants, secretariat highlighted that from discussion with Advisory Committee, this report should consider more about biodiversity and cities since there were already lots of guidance related to climate and cities, also this report planned to be launched on CBD 2020. Representative from Cities Unit of UNEP gave an overview about their work related to cities, they will work together with UN Habitat to support this process.

The team then had a free conversation on the overall strategy of GEO for Cities. Co-Chairs emphasized that this report should be more actionable and policy-related. Some key points are as follows:

- The report should be related to SDG 11 and other SDG targets;
- Key messages exist but ‘how’ messages are not obvious, which should be explore more;
- Cities could be answers and how cities can answer the energy, food and waste questions come from GEO-6;
- Ensure it is environment report not climate report;
- Try to help urban people to understand environment;
- Target audience is multiple but priority one should be confirmed;

After the discussion, co-chair asked the whole team to think about the most useful report in last 3 years and compared the advantages of different reports. Some useful reports were provided by authors also this activity helped to think about niche of this report. Following that co-chairs explained their thoughts of city typology issues. The reason to have typology is not to summarize different types of cities but to provide more target recommendations around different types of cities. To simplify the issues, co-chairs suggested that city topologies should include 3-4 varies and be binery. Concerns about this topic including whether we can measure to describe this clearly, how to define the dividing lines, etc. It was agreed that typology issues will be discussed more on following sessions.

In the afternoon session, CLAs in chapter 1-4 present their view of their chapter. The discussion starts with how to define cities. Apparently, there is no clear definition about cities. Some author mentions it directly connect to who the audience is, also it depends on what issues will be addressed here. It was agreed that there will be 3-4 lines to define the scope of cities in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 was quite clear to describe environment issues of Cities. There was a deeper discussion about typology in Chapter 3. One solution was to start with how diversity of cities affects the vision and pathway to sustainable cities but might not get to specific typologies at the end. Co-chairs and secretariat will keep supporting Chapter 3

group to figure out the typology issues. For Chapter 4, it would be necessary to do deep diving on environment part of SDG 11. Chapter 5 could start to draft later than other chapters, but it's necessary to frame this chapter earlier and think about the connection with other chapters.

It was decided further discussion on different chapters and key points would continue next day and Co-Chairs would work on a document about key messages and niche of this report for discussion. The Secretariat then wrapped up the meeting and provided a short brief of the agenda for next day.

Day 2 Meeting Summary (9.00 am-17.00 pm, lunch break from 12.00pm to 13.00 pm)

More Lead Authors joined the meeting from Day 2. Self-introduction was made at the beginning by all the participants to make the team get familiar with everyone's background. Co-chairs gave a short brief on how we built up this authors team considering gender and geographical balance, also they requested the participants to do gap analysis during these 4 days and additional authors might be join this process later. Secretariat made a presentation on GEO Scenarios to help authors to pick up some pieces and maybe link in back to main reports to support their arguments. It was emphasized again that it would be more opportunity to add biodiversity into this report. It was also agreed that we should try to provide hopeful message at the end and include political economy somewhere in this report.

After break, co-chairs gave a short brief on what we discussed on different chapters the day before to make sure the whole team were in the same page. Chapter 2 will summarize what GEO-6 talked about and then identify the gaps which are not addressed or fully addressed on GEO-6, but only important and relative gaps will be discussed. To avoid overlap and keep coherence, discussion among different chapters are quite important, co-chairs encouraged authors in different chapters to communicate more. Considering about connection with GEO-6, it would be nice to bring the key finding of energy, food and waste to pathway chapter.

Following chapter discussion, co-chairs requested authors to write down the niche they thought for this report. By this way the whole team worked together to figure out what's new for GEO for Cities, co-chairs will summarize the key points based on the team's comments, some comments are as follows:

- Action based report
- Cities need nature and nature needs cities
- Links biodiversity and functioning ecosystems to the healthy cities
- City saves the world
- Focus on local and then push to global

Last session on Day 2 is orientation of GEO for Cities. Secretariat made presentations including chart and maps, writing for assessment, citation and reference to familiar the authors with GEO for Cities process. After that the co-chairs mentioned some changes on the agenda for next day and then wrapped up the meeting.

Day 3 Meeting Summary (9.00 am-17.00 pm, lunch break from 12.00pm to 13.00 pm)

Authors were spilt by chapters to spent one hour discussing about their chapters. When the sub-group came back to plenary, co-chairs gave a presentation on target audience, key messages and niche. The target or priority audience will be urban and environment experts, who are already worked on urban or environment field, this report could help catalyse their action. And the niche of this reports consists of three parts: forward-looking, focus on how, environment at the core. For key messages, 'transformative'

were mentioned to be key word and more information about that should be illustrated. Co-chairs would edit to another version within all the comments and share another version on last day.

On the following sessions, CLA from different chapters gave a presentation about their updated chapter document and the whole group worked together to provide reasonable comments. Chapter 2 consists of three sections, the overall comments are: avoid overlap with chapter 5 on section one, think about the link with chapter one, focus on what's GEO-6 say and not say, move section three to chapter 3. For chapter 5, more discussion is related to pathway, which includes circular economy, decarbonization, redesign current system, blue infrastructure, working with nature, etc. More city-scale pathway should be explored since most pathway mentioned was national scale. Chapter 3 will start with diversity of cities, deep diving will be done on fundamental drivers, political economy will be included in this chapter. Chapter 4 should think about how to organize well to flow to chapter 5. This chapter will also have cross-cutting issues and resilience should be added here. After all the presentations in each group, secretariat emphasized two key points:

- The draft should be fitted in annotated outline which was approved by Advisory Committee;
- All the chapters should focus on environment issues;

It was decided further discussion on different chapters and key messages would continue next day and different chapters will work together discussing about interaction issues. The co-chairs then wrapped up the meeting and provided a short brief of the agenda for next day.

Day 4 Meeting Summary (9.00 am-17.00 pm, lunch break from 12.00pm to 13.00 pm)

Different chapters worked together to solve about overlap and interaction issues between chapters. Authors were requested to expanded more on their chapter and kind of gave a clear structure with headings and sub-headings. Meanwhile, co-chairs joined chapter discussions one by one to make sure all the team move to the right direction. And secretariat worked on the revised timeline and schedule for second authors meeting to prepare for last days discussion. Each chapter gave a presentation about their outcomes later afternoon but no more discussion today. All the team were requested to review others draft and put comments directly on google doc for last day's discussion.

Day 5 Meeting Summary (9.00 am-16.00 pm, lunch break from 12.00pm to 13.00 pm)

In the morning session, chapter authors shared their thoughts based on the comments received from day 4. It was agreed that authors would address the comments and work together after plenary discussion to avoid overlap or linkage issues, for example, authors in chapter 4 will finish one hypothetical case to help understand that to see if it works and connects to chapter 5. Each chapter also did gap analysis after, co-chairs and secretariat will help to find additional authors to fill the gaps below:

- Water quality, air quality and biodiversity in Chapter 2;
- Urban economy in Chapter 3;
- Scenarios and quantity analysis in Chapter 4;

After discussion of the whole report, secretariat gave a presentation on revised timeline and introduction of review process. It was agreed to provide 'zero-order draft' to Advisory Committee in the middle of December to ensure the whole structure and storyline meet the requirement of Advisory Committee before it goes deeper. Considering the intense timeline, co-chairs clarified that 'zero order draft' didn't ask for the completed contexts but should have confirmed structure and key messages in each chapter.

Some chapters almost got to this stage during this five-days meeting and just need some modifications. The timeline in next two months is as follows:

- 15th November, each group submit version 1 to co-chairs and whole authors team;
- 15th December, each group submit version 2 to Advisory Committee for suggestions;
- After submission of version 2, the whole team will work together towards first order draft and prepare for second authors meeting.
- In early November, secretariat should confirm the date and location of second authors meeting.

The Secretariat will address the comments and share the outcome document after the meeting.

Conclusions

The meeting's main objectives were fully achieved:

- The participants were more familiarized with the GEO for Cities process, logistics and procedures after orientation gave by GEO team.
- Each chapter was deeply explored based on annotated outline.
- The linkages and coherence among chapters are well discussed.
- The structure of each chapter is becoming clear and some key messages were confirmed.
- The revised timeline was accepted by authors team and next steps in following months were confirmed.

Annex 1 –Participants List

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