

GEO during Covid-19

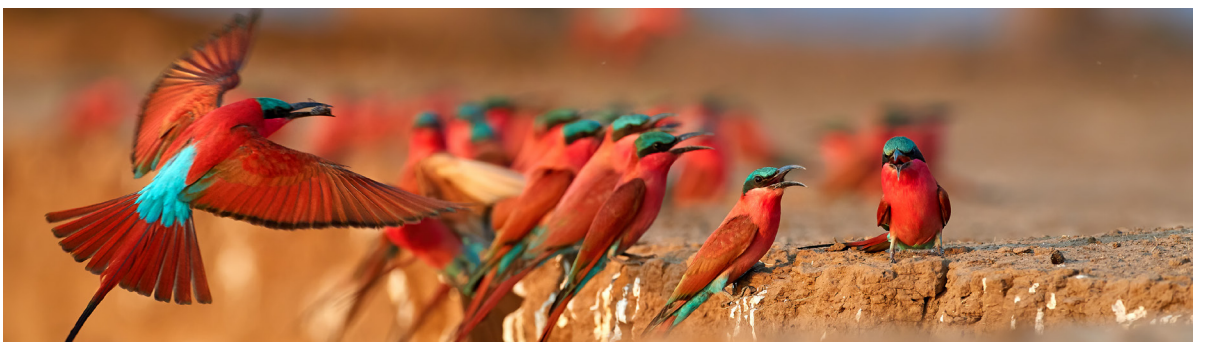
Global Assessments Synthesis Report



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Stemming from the fourth [United Nations Environmental Assembly Resolution 23](#), the Global Assessments Synthesis Report has been developed in response to requests for a science-policy input to allow for better understanding of the recent global scientific assessments. The development of the report began by convening the leading scientific experts to analyze and synthesize the findings from the latest global scientific assessments to fully articulate the key findings of these assessments. The resulting teams include an elite group of authors led by Ivar Baste of the Norwegian Environment Agency and a world-renowned Scientific Advisory Group led by Sir Robert Watson. UNEP has gathered global leaders for both the authors team to write the report and the Scientific Advisory Group to ensure sound methods when creating the report and conducting the scientific review. These teams will produce a report that analyzes and synthesizes the key findings of the latest global scientific assessments to speak to decision makers on the global dire circumstances and necessity of immediate action for nature.

The Global Assessments Synthesis Report will translate the current state of scientific knowledge into crisp, clear, and digestible facts-based messages for the global community to accelerate action toward a sustainable world. The work is underway beginning first with an 'Earth diagnosis' of current and future human-induced environmental change. The report will highlight interlinkages between the many sectors, impacts and required actions to emphasize that key intersections within the current state of the environment present the opportunity to have a wide array of benefits. Building further on the diagnosis, the report will identify shifts required to close the gaps between current actions and required changes to achieve sustainable development; anchored within the current economic, social and ecological reality.



Ultimately, the report is anticipated to serve as a key trigger in the 'super year' for nature to instigate action. Synthesizing the latest scientific knowledge will amplify the key findings to give decision makers concrete evidence for change-making strategies.

The recent internal review of the draft text took place from 5 to 17 May and resulted in a total of 909 comments. Many members of the Scientific Advisory Group provided detailed written comments and attended the teleconference to discuss feedback on the report. 91 UNEP colleagues joined the report briefing on 12 May, during which the Report Leads introduced the report and heard initial feedback. Detailed written comments were received from 13 UNEP colleagues/entities, including UNEP-WCMC; the Secretariat of the Minamata Convention; the Climate and Clean Air Coalition's Secretariat; the Ozone Secretariat; the International Ecosystem Management Partnership; the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions Secretariat; the International Resources Panel Secretariat; and more.

On Thursday, 14 May, the second teleconference of the SAG was held where the Report Leads introduced the draft and received comments. The Leads all met on Wednesday, 20 May to discuss the comments and determine the process forward, agreeing to first share their feedback on the Key Messages (KM) and Executive Summary (ES) before proceeding with edits to the body of the report since the comments on the KM and ES impact the development of the rest of the report. All authors met on Wednesday, 27 May, after the leads have digested the comments and shared their thoughts on the KM and ES, for discussion on the comments and to explain the process moving forward. Following the all authors meeting, the next draft of the report is expected by the end of June, when it will be shared with the SAG and UNEP colleagues for the next two-week review period with another meeting of the SAG to hear comments halfway through the review period. The writing team is currently working on the second order draft to address the many high-quality comments.

What is the Future of GEO?



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The future of GEO process will be taking a crucial step in the coming weeks of May up until June. The hired team of consultants have been working to map out the assessments landscape to determine possible niche for a GEO. In a crowded assessment landscape, it is important that the GEO does not duplicate the work of other assessment but provides a unique function or supplements available assessments synergy.

The options paper will also contain a detailed analysis framework to enable member states, stakeholders and assessments custodians to identify the appropriate form and function a GEO. Cost analysis of the integrated options will be important to enable sound decision making since governance is an important aspect of the quality and scope of a GEO.

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The consultation process of the GEO's options paper will start in mid-July. This will be a six-week review and consultation period that will bring together views from Members states, stakeholders, and assessments experts. In the end, these three categories of experts will highlight their opinion on the presented options document. This was requested by member states through resolution 23 at the fourth United Nations Environment Assembly- UNEA 4. The secretariat is therefore planning for this consultation period by ensuring that all interested and available experts get a chance to input on the options. In the six-weeks consultation period, webinars will be conducted in addition to written comments to facilitate interaction with the consultancy team and ensure inputs are properly submitted.

GEO for Business: By Business for Business

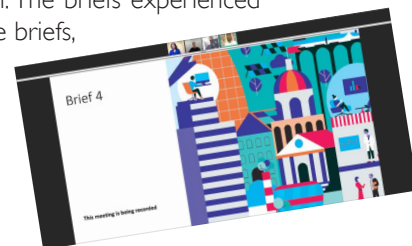
The first Authors Meeting of GEO for Business where the Advisory Committee and Authors met virtually was held in May 13-14 and 18-19, 2020. Updates were provided on the progress of the Briefs and discussions around the content and format of the Briefs were held. The first brief provided some lessons learned from the process of developing Brief 1 with the other Authors. The meeting discussed strategies for communicating the Briefs through different platforms and networks as well as identifying cross-cutting themes and synergies across the Briefs, as well as with the GEO for Cities and GEO for Youth products.



On these issues the meeting decided that the Briefs must be clear on the intended global business audience. Examples need to be drawn from both the Global South and Global North and actions must be widely applicable, while recognising different contexts. It was decided that the Briefs must recognise and consider the impacts of COVID-19, but this should not be the only focus because they will still need to be firmly linked to the science underpinning the business actions. Each of the briefs will need an audience that must be clearly identified and appropriate, the briefs need to have accessible language that should be used throughout.

The Advisory Committee and Authors will identify key actors from companies within their networks to support the communication of the Briefs. Also, the Secretariat will explore options to create an infographic illustrating the cross-cutting themes for GEO for Business and they will continue to work with Authors and the Advisory Committee to identify Authors to complete Author teams for the Briefs that are yet to be complete. For Brief 1 the inclusion of policy as well as business actions are required to adapt to thrive, recognising the need for governments and businesses to work together to achieve a nature positive economy. The Brief 1 Author team will take the feedback from the meeting and work with the Secretariat to incorporate it in the final draft in time for its launch.

As at now, the other five GEO for Business Briefs are currently in drafting stage i.e. Briefs 2, 3, 4, and 5. Brief 6 is yet to be started off because there has not been a fully set up author team. The briefs experienced extensive delays in identifying author teams to build each team for each of the briefs, the COVID-19 pandemic also contributed to these delays with many authors having to pull out from the assignment because of the tight schedules.



The GEO for Business brochure can be found [here](#)

GEO for Youth



GEO-6 for Youth report has experienced a delay due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and UNEP's shift in focus to COVID-19 issues. Despite this, the report's production and layout is coming along well. The production teams are finalizing the layout of the report with the UN printshop. Meanwhile, the reports animations, interactives and quizzes are being developed by the team from YUDU publishing using the YUDU Software and this will be completed by the end of June.



Following this, the GEO-6 for Youth team will work on embedding the animations into the report. This will then be tested across different mobile devices to see how it works and what should be rectified. After this the GEO-6 for Youth team will present this app and its interactive functionalities designed for youth to UNEP's Executive Office.

Repatriation in the Time of COVID-19

By Adele Rocatto

Given the complicated current global situation and the rising of COVID 19 cases in Kenya, some expats decided to leave Kenya for their home countries, I was one of them. Despite the Nairobi Airport being closed since 25th of March 2020, some countries organized repatriation flights for tourists and other individuals who had a specific matter of urgency to leave the country. As an Italian, going back home was more complicated, but finally, with just a couple of days of notice, I booked my Nairobi-Addis Ababa-Frankfurt evacuation flight organized by the European Union. In addition to the astronomic price of this flight, I paid another overpriced ticket from Frankfurt to Rome.

Upon arrival at the Airport in Nairobi, everything was closed. The flight was quite packed, with everyone in what's becoming the norm, MASKS. Sadly, the social distancing was poorly ensured. However, it was a needed way out for many on the flight. Food and water were eventually served but that made passengers question how safe it was to remove masks to eat and drink.

Once in Frankfurt, the situation was more relaxed, staff were not wearing masks or gloves and social distancing was only respected in theory (even if the PA repeated the message in different languages). I found the airport much livelier than expected (Lufthansa is still the most active airline in Europe), I managed to see more people (from a distance) than in the last 6 weeks of quarantine. After 8 hours in Frankfurt, I boarded a flight to Italy (the flight was half full).

In Italy, if you are repatriating, you must auto-certify your reason to be back and talk to someone from the authorities who will double check your information and fine you in case something is not right. Outside a completely empty Fiumicino Airport, my mum was waiting, from a distance wearing a mask, extremely struggling with the no-hugging policy. Five hours later, sitting at the back of the car as far away as possible) we drove to Tuscany. I am staying in a country house in Tuscany, a ten minutes' walk from my parents' house, where I will be quarantining and working for the next two weeks (maybe seeing my family occasionally from the windows).

In summary, there are still many people traveling (more so going back home), and different countries have different ways of dealing with the virus. People are equally scared and would like to spend this time close to their families, and I recognize my privilege of being able to be able to do so and to be quarantining in the beautiful countryside. I think it's important for all humanity to consider what we want to change when the restrictions become more relaxed and this pandemic passes. We need to remember that normalcy is what brought us here. Let's change what we thought was "normal" and try to be different when this is all over. We are learning the hard way that environmental protection is not a luxury, but part and parcel of our life support system.



Tuscany

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