

Our Ref: UNEA/GEOSC/pb/3

March 19, 2020

**‘Future of GEO’ Steering Committee Meeting Summary,
February 27, 2020**

Important Note: In order to make our calls more efficient and effective, Steering Committee members are encouraged to keep their verbal interventions to a maximum of 3 minutes each. Members are encouraged to mute their telephone lines when they are not speaking, to minimize background noise.

The Steering Committee on the Future of GEO met at its sixth virtual call to discuss progress and plan next steps for the future advancement of the process. Agenda items included:

- Update on the Secretariat coordination of the Future of GEO process in GEO Head’s absence
- Introduction of the Consultants team procured for the development of the Options Paper
- Discussion on the preliminary Agenda of the Trinidad and Tobago workshop of the Steering Committee
- Discussion on the proposed six regional meetings planned for Member States consultations
- Any other business

On these agenda items the Steering Committee decided:

- The Consultant team is welcome and the Steering Committee’s support for their work is assured
- The Consultants should start working immediately to develop and map out issues to be assessed as soon as possible for an effective meeting in Trinidad and Tobago. The issues document developed in Prague should be the starting point for the Consultants.
- Consultants should adapt the preliminary agenda drafted by the Secretariat and customize it to their own style to achieve the objectives intended. The facilitation of the workshop should be handled by the consultants with full control of and including flexibility for a virtual workshop
- The consultant team would develop a document that will bridge the issues document and an Options Paper draft for the Trinidad meeting. This should show some preliminary analysis of the issues document to propose some options for the Options Paper draft
- The dates and location of the future planned consultation meetings should be done in consultation with the consultants moving forward. This is to ensure their availability and proper planning to facilitate the consultations.
- The date for the second face to face workshop proposed for Geneva, Switzerland scheduled for the third week of September should be decided soon to ensure proper planning for both the Steering Committee and the consultants since September is a busy month.

Rapporteur	Signature
Mr. Rafael Monge Vargas	

Summary of the meeting

The meeting was chaired by one Chair and one Vice-chair of the Steering Committee.

Update on the Secretariat coordination of the Future of GEO Process

The meeting started with an update from the Secretariat on the latest changes on the management of the Future of GEO process from the organisation. The Secretariat briefed that Head of the GEO programme had left for extended sick leave on doctors advise and the head of the Scientific Assessment Branch of the Science Division would be stepping in to act as the head of the process to ensure continuity. Members of the Steering Committee were advised to avoid communicating to the Head of GEO programme in order to ensure his rest and quick recovery. Instead they were urged to send their communication through the Chief of the Scientific Assessment Branch who will be acting in that capacity with help from the GEO team.

The Secretariat assured the Steering Committee that it is determined to ensure continuity and success of the process in the vision that the head of the programme had envisaged.

Introduction of the Consultants team hired for the development of The Options Paper on the Future of GEO

The Secretariat briefed the Steering Committee that after successful procurement process, a group of consultants had been hired for the development of the Options paper as advised by the Steering Committee. Since the Committee had asked for the consultants to attend that call, the Secretariat invited the team to introduce themselves to the Steering Committee.

The consultants introduced themselves stating that they constituted a group of distinguished experts that was formulated taking into account a range of expertise that was required for the task and account for regional representation. They also considered gender diversity and availability to do the work. The team also has a professional meeting facilitator as requested in the bid. The team thanked the Steering Committee for their confidence in them and the Secretariat in accepting their bid and highlighted their interest in contributing to the process. The team consist of;

Names of Key Personnel

1. Darren Alan Swanson
2. Gillian Martin Mehers
3. Dr. Jill Jager
4. Kali Taylor
5. Dr. Klaus Jacob
6. Dr. Laszlo Pinter
7. Dr. Livia Bizikova
8. Lynn Wagner
9. Prof. Edgar Gutierrez Espelete
10. Nora Mzavanadze

On this agenda item, the Steering Committee appreciated this important step in hiring the consultant and expressed its confidence in the team of consultants. The Committee directed the team to start their work immediately using the issues paper developed by the Steering Committee in Prague as a starting point to ensure that the planned face to face workshop in Trinidad and Tobago is productive.

Discussion on the preliminary Agenda of the Trinidad and Tobago Workshop

The preliminary agenda for the Steering Committee's Trinidad and Tobago workshop has been drafted to reflect the main objective of the workshop. The workshop will have a short session on evaluating the progress of the consultants where the Steering Committee will advise the consultant team based on their progress before focusing on a full consultant's facilitated Workshop harnessing the Steering Committee's expertise on the Options of a Future GEO.

The Steering Committee enquired about the feasibility of the plan by the Committee that was made in Prague on having the Consultant start work in advance and share material with the Steering Committee in advance of the Trinidad workshop. The background document on the agenda included a draft Options Paper and the Steering Committee sort to have the consultant's view of how that would be feasible. The consultant highlighted that having a draft Options Paper will not be possible for the Trinidad workshop because of the short timeline, but they are planning to have an annotated outline of the paper to allow for a productive workshop. The Secretariat reminded the Steering Committee that the bidding process happened with a timeline that would allow enough time for the consultants to produce a draft Options Paper before the workshop, but that time had been lost in the procurement process leaving a very short time for the consultants to work on that task.

On this issue, the Steering Committee advised the consultants to start their work in earnest and consider available material already developed like the issues paper. The consultant would contact the Secretariat with the list of documents/background material for their work. The consultant team would develop a document that will bridge the issues document and an Options Paper draft for the Trinidad meeting. This will show some preliminary analysis of the issues document to propose some options for the Options Paper draft. The Consultants to ensure possible virtual participation.

Discussion on the proposed six regional meetings planned for the member states consultations

A presentation on the status of the planed members states consultations was made. The six meeting dates and locations were explained, and the rationale explained. The African meeting was set for Entebbe and not Kampala as updated on the last call. The central European countries had been moved from the proposed Thailand meeting to the Istanbul meeting on advice from the UNEP regional office. The second Steering Committee workshop dates were proposed for the third week of September.

A clarification was sort by the Steering Committee on the funding methods, strategies and preparedness of the workshops and member states consultations and the expected participants of the member states consultations. On this issue the Secretariat updated that it was expecting funding for these meetings in tranches where funding would be secured for the first meetings and expect other bits of finances along the way. It thanked in-kind contribution from Steering Committee member states like Trinidad and Tobago and Swaziland for showing interest in hosting some of the meetings. This will help reduce the cost for these meetings in overall. On the attendance, the Steering

Committee enquired if the Committee members were not expected to attend the Members States consultation. The Secretariat will invite governments to nominate their representatives for the specific consultation meetings. In cases where the Steering Committee member will be nominated to represent their country in the member states consultation, then he/she will attend in that capacity. All Steering Committee members will have an opportunity to meet again in the September workshop to finalise their work.

Member States Consultations

Type of Meeting	Location	Dates
Member State consultation South America and the Caribbean	Lima, Peru	May 28-29, 2020
Member State consultation for Western Europe and North America	Brussels, Belgium	June 11-12, 2020
Member State consultation for Eastern Europe, the Balkans and Central Asia	Istanbul, Turkey	June 29-30, 2020
Member State consultation for Africa	Entebbe, Uganda	June 18-19, 2020
Member State consultation for West Asia	Manama, Bahrain	Sept. 9-10, 2020
Member State consultation for Asia-Pacific	Bangkok, Thailand	July 7-8, 2020

Facilitated workshops

Type of Meeting	Location	Dates
Facilitated workshop for SC	Trinidad & Tobago	Mar. 26-27 2020
Facilitated workshop for SC	Geneva, Switzerland	Third week of Sept. 2020

On this issue therefore, the Steering Committee agreed that the dates for the member states meeting advance as scheduled. The Secretariat to work with the government Switzerland to propose dates for the final Steering Committee workshop in the third week of September.

Any other business

- Ryan updated the Steering Committee on the availability of a waiver for the countries that may need visa on arrival for the Trinidad Workshop. The Steering Committee members in need of the visa waiver would need to send the required details (specified in an email) as soon as possible since the process needs two weeks advance notice.
- The Steering Committee enquired on the possibility of sending written comments after the Committee's meetings especially in the case of remote participation. The Secretariat assured the Steering Committee that it is possible to have that flexibility with proper planning from the consultants to ensure that feedback after the workshop is factored in the process. The consultants assured the Committee that it will use all means to get input from everyone.
- Having no other issues for discussion the meeting was adjourned at 16h12min (Nairobi time)

Action items

- The Secretariat will prepare a written summary of the meeting and share the link to the recording of the call.
- The Secretaries will consult with the government Swaziland on the best way to determine the meeting dates for the workshop in September. A doodle on the availability of the Steering Committee for the proposed dates options be sent out
- The Steering Committee members who need visa waivers for the Trinidad workshop will send to Ryan Assui the required details (specified in an email) as soon as possible since the process needs two weeks advance notice to facilitate that processing send in.
- The Steering Committee will proceed with sending out nomination request letters for the members states consultations in the planned regions immediately, to proceed with their meeting preparations and visa processes.
- The Secretariat to send to all Steering Committee members the full final version of the proposal after signing by the consultants.

List of Participants

First name	Last name	Affiliation	Nominated by
Anna	Mampye	Ministry of Environment	South Africa
Mona	Westergaard	Ministry of Environment and Food	Denmark
Keisuke (alternate)	Takahashi	Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)	Japan
Najib	Saab	Arab Forum for Environment & Development (AFED)	Lebanon
Suzan	Alajjawi	Supreme Council for Environment, Bahrain	Bahrain
Marcos	Serrano	Ministry of Environment Chile	Chile
Toral	Patel-Weynand	US Forest Service	USA
Salla	Rantala	Finnish Environment Institute	Finland
Mira	Zovko	Ministry of Environment and Energy	Croatia
Charles	Lange	National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)	Kenya
Nino	Gokheshvili	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia	Georgia
Rafael	Monge Vargas	Ministry of Environment and Energy	Costa Rica
Carlos	Cordero Vega	Ministry of Environment and Energy	Costa Rica
Ryan	Assiu	Environmental Management Authority	Trinidad and Tobago
Sebastian	Jan Konig	Swiss Federal Office for the Environment,	Switzerland
Claudia	Kabel	German Environment Agency	Germany
Chatchai	Intatha	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand	Thailand
Kazuhiko	Takeuchi	Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)	Japan
Narges	Saffar	International Affairs & Conventions Center, Department of Environment	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Marcel	Kok	Environment Assessment Agency (PBL)	The Netherlands
Lynn	Wagner	Future of GEO Consultant	
Dr. Laszlo	Pinter	Future of GEO Consultant	
Dr. Klaus	Jacob	Future of GEO Consultant	

Apologies

First name	Last name	Affiliation	Nominated by
Ivar Andreas	Baste	Norwegian Environment Agency	Norway
Huang	Yi	Peking University	China
Ouedraogo	Desire	Ministry of Environment, green economy and climate change	Burkina Faso
Isaac	Dladla	Eswatini Environment Authority	Swaziland
Nadia	Chenouf	Ministry of the Environment and Renewable Energy	Algeria
Christine Okae	Asare	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	Ghana
James	Mathew	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change, Government of India	India
Aliya	Shalabekova	Ministry of Energy	Kazakhstan
Mery	Harutyunyan	Ministry of Environment	Armenia
Jock	Martin	European Environment Agency (EEA)	European Union
Ivana	Stojanovic	Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism	Montenegro
Keri (alternate)	Holland	US Department of State	USA

Paul (alternate)	Lucas	Environmental Assessment Agency (PBL)	The Netherlands
Jerome	Sebadduka Lugumira	National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)	Uganda
Apsara	Mendis	Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment	Sri Lanka
Celso	Moretti	Agricultural Research Corporation	Brazil
Andrew	Stott	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs-UK	United Kingdom and Northern Ireland
Teshia	Jn Baptiste	Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development	Saint Lucia
Marek	Haliniak	Ministry of the Environment, Poland	Poland
Shanna (alternate)	Emmanuel	Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development	Saint Lucia
Cathy (alternate)	Maguire	European Environment Agency (EEA)	European Union
Ambinintsoa Lucie	Noasilalaonomenjanahary	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	Madagascar