

# **Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme**

**UNEP/GC.23/CRP.5**

22 February 2005

English only

**Twenty-third session of the Governing Council/  
Global Ministerial Environment Forum**  
Nairobi, 21–25 February 2005

## **Statement by the Global Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Consultation on the fourth Global Environment Outlook, held in Nairobi on 19 and 20 February 2005**

The annex to the present note contains the statement by the global intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder consultation on the fourth report in the Global Environment Outlook series (GEO-4), held in Nairobi on 19 and 20 February 2005. The annex is being issued as submitted to the secretariat, without formal editing.

K0580630 230205

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## Annex

### **Global Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Consultation on the fourth Global Environment Outlook (GEO-4), 19 – 20 February 2005, Nairobi, Kenya**

#### **Statement by the Global Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Consultation on the scope and process of the fourth Global Environment Outlook**

*The Global Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Consultation on the Scope and Process of the fourth Global Environment Outlook,*

#### **A. Introduction: The Global Environment Outlook report series and the fourth Global Environment Outlook report design process**

1. *Recalling* the responsibilities of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), as outlined in General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, to keep under review the world environmental situation in order to ensure that emerging environmental problems of wide international significance receive appropriate and adequate consideration by Governments and, among other things, to promote the contribution of international scientific and other professional communities to the acquisition, assessment and exchange of environmental knowledge and information,
2. *Recalling* the Governing Council decision SS.VII/1 which requests the GC/GMEF, in order to play its role as the high-level environmental policy forum, to keep under review the world environment situation and develop policy responses in order to ensure that emerging environmental problems of wide international significance receive appropriate and adequate consideration based on sound science,
3. *Recalling* further Governing Council decisions 18/27, 19/3 and 20/1 on the Global Environment Outlook, and in particular decision 22/1 I B which extended the interval between the comprehensive Global Environment Outlook reports to five years and requested the fourth iteration by 2007,
4. *Noting with appreciation* the invitation by the Executive Director and the support from the Governments of the Netherlands and Norway for the second Global Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Consultation on strengthening the scientific base of United Nations Environment Programme and its focus on the process and scope of the fourth Global Environment Outlook,
5. *Welcoming* the note of the Executive Director on the proposed scope and process of the fourth Global Environment Outlook, including the report on the extensive consultative process for the design of the Outlook involving governments, experts, partners, collaborating centres and regions,
6. *Noting* with appreciation that the comprehensive Global Environment Outlook report series has now been supplemented by the Global Environment Outlook Yearbook series and also by regional, sub-regional, national, cities and thematic environmental outlook products in a manner which constitutes the foundations for a modular approach to keeping the global environment under review;
7. *Recognizing* the important role governments and stakeholders have and should continue to play in identifying the key issues to be assessed by GEO-4 and their active role in providing data, information and knowledge, from regional, national, local and indigenous sources, reviewing draft findings and considering actions based on the final report;

#### **B. The objective, scope and overall outline of the fourth Global Environment Outlook Report**

8. *Recommends* that the objective, scope and overall outline of the fourth Global Environment Outlook should be to provide a global, comprehensive, reliable and scientifically credible, policy-relevant and legitimate up-to-date assessment of and outlook regarding the interaction between environment and society by:

- (a) Presenting a summary for policy-makers focusing on the main issues identified in the fourth Global Environment Outlook which are of particular interest to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of UNEP and policy-makers at large;

(b) Presenting an introduction which places the fourth Global Environment Outlook report in the context of the development of international environmental governance and its relation to the internationally agreed sustainable development goals and targets since the World Commission on Sustainable Development (the Brundtland Commission, 1987), inter alia in the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, the Millennium Declaration, the Johannesburg Declaration and its Plan of Implementation and relevant environmental global and regional instruments;

(c) Assessing the state and trends of the global environment in relation to previous GEO reports: an overview of the major environmental challenges and emerging issues seen from a global perspective, in a manner which reflects their subglobal characteristics, inter alia by analysing human driving forces and pressures and the impact of natural phenomena on the environment; primary and secondary environmental impacts of such pressures; the consequences of environmental change for ecosystem services and human well-being; progress and barriers towards meeting commitments under multilateral environmental agreements; and the effectiveness of policy responses. The analysis will be based on clearly defined methodologies and formulation of scenarios, will make use of appropriate indicators, and will highlight critical data gaps;

(d) Assessing interlinkages between major environmental challenges and their consequences for policy and technology response options and trade-offs, identifying success stories and lessons learned, and assessing opportunities for technology and policy interventions for both mitigating and adapting to environmental change;

(e) Assessing challenges and opportunities by focusing on certain key cross-cutting issues inter alia as they relate to those included in the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building relating to how environment can contribute to the sustainable development goals and targets and how environmental degradation can impede progress towards those targets, with a focus on vulnerable groups, species, ecosystems and locations;

(f) Presenting a global and subglobal outlook, including short-term (up to 2015) and medium-term (up to 2050) scenarios for the major societal pathways and their consequences for the interaction between environment and society using examples from global, regional and local level wherever possible;

(g) Assessing environment for human well being and prosperity, focusing on the state of knowledge regarding the effectiveness of various approaches to overarching environmental policies, in particular mainstreaming environmental concerns into the plans and policies of social and economic dimensions of sustainable development including major sectors and enforcement of and compliance with multilateral environmental agreements;

## C. Key questions for the fourth Global Environment Outlook report

9. *Calls on* the Executive Director, the involved experts and collaborating centres to respond to the following indicative list of key questions as they relate to the recommended scope of the fourth Global Environment Outlook:

- (a) Summary for policy-makers;
  - (i) How are various forms of natural and human-induced global and relevant sub-global environmental change affecting our current well-being and development opportunities?
  - (ii) What are the key policy-relevant issues and findings relating to the interaction between environment and society where there is a need for further action?
  - (iii) How far do environmental policies act as a driver for environmental change, what are the most efficient and effective ways to implement them, what are the barriers and what are the corrective measures that could be taken?
- (b) Introduction;
  - (i) Where do we stand in the evolution of ideas and concepts on the environmental dimensions of sustainable development?
  - (ii) How does the fourth Global Environment Outlook deal with the multidimensional, multiscalar, multidisciplinary and temporal nature of the interactions between environment and society?

- (iii) How does the environment contribute to sustainable development, human well-being, prosperity and alleviation of poverty, and which groups and geographical areas are vulnerable to environmental change?
- (iv) What has been the outcome of the follow up to the recommendations of the Brundtland Commission and other relevant global and sub-global goals, targets and recommendations?
- (c) State of and trends in the global environment: an overview;
  - (i) What is the current state of knowledge regarding the environmental challenges and emerging issues relating to biodiversity; freshwater; coastal and marine areas; forest; land; desertification; mountain areas, urban areas; polar areas; atmosphere; disturbed bio-geochemical cycles, chemicals, waste and natural and human induced hazards and conflicts, including peace and security?
  - (ii) What are the current internationally agreed biophysical, institutional and governance goals, targets and standards for environmental governance relating to the major environmental challenges and what indicators and data are available to measure progress towards them?
  - (iii) What are the current status of and trends in environmental change and the interaction between environment and society seen in relation to the internationally agreed environmental goals and targets?
  - (iv) What are the drivers of environmental change and alterations in environmental services, how do they affect human well-being and prosperity, and which groups, ecosystems and geographical areas are vulnerable to change?
  - (v) How is the environment contributing to the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, in areas such as human health, food security, poverty alleviation, energy and disaster-preparedness?
  - (vi) What policies are in place and what action is being taken? How effective are the responses by governments, civil society and international organisations and what are the consequences of inaction?
- (d) Interlinkages between major environmental challenges;
  - (i) What are the key interlinkages between the various forms of environmental change and human activities?
  - (ii) What would the consequences be of an increasingly complex set of human pressures on the environment in terms of system-wide environmental change, exceedance of biophysical thresholds, and potential sudden and unexpected effects?
  - (iii) How are the human drivers, activities and impacts interlinked and to what extent can they be decoupled in order to change the human-environment interaction if need be?
  - (iv) How are the responses and interventions currently linked and to what extent can they be decoupled or regrouped in order to change the human-environment interaction if need be?
  - (v) What are the implications of interlinkages on enforcement and compliance regimes under the various multilateral environmental agreements?
- (e) Challenges and opportunities;
  - (i) From reference points such as the Brundtland Commission and Agenda 21 and other relevant international documents, where did we want to be in 2007? How far have we got? How did we get here? What can we learn from success stories?
  - (ii) Where do we stand on the environmental contribution to the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and in particular Millennium Development Goal

- number 1 (poverty alleviation), 3 (gender equality) and 7 (ensuring environmental sustainability)?
- (iii) Does environmental governance adequately take into account the links between environment and cross-cutting challenges inter alia as they relate to those listed in the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building such as poverty alleviation and improvements to health, institutions and governance better access to and use of science and technology, and more equitable trade, and equal opportunities for the sustainable use of environmental resources?
  - (iv) How vulnerable are human and/or social systems to natural and human-induced disasters?
  - (v) What policies are in place to address the mitigation, coping, and adaptation capacity needs of groups vulnerable to environmental change?
- (f) Global and subglobal outlook;
- (i) What are the likely future consequences for environment and human well being of existing environment and environmentally relevant policies and actions?
  - (ii) What are the likely future consequences for environment and human well being of environment and environmentally relevant policies and choices that may be taken in the future?
  - (iii) What are the likely future environmental trends?
  - (iii) What are the likely consequences of the various policy options and choices for the environment under various scenarios?
  - (iv) What are the likely impacts or effects of promising opportunities for policy innovations on the interaction between environment and society?
  - (v) How would the various policy and technology trade-offs between different environmental challenges affect the interaction between environment and society and what is the role of society and enterprises in helping to shape the environment in the future?
- (g) Environment for development;
- (i) What are the main conclusions and overarching policy findings of the fourth Global Environment Outlook, and is there a need to adjust our approach to implementation of the existing goals and targets?
  - (ii) How can the environment sector most effectively ensure compliance with and enforcement of multilateral environmental agreements?
  - (iii) What are the financial, institutional and practical requirements for promoting new and innovative policies, strategies and response measures, including social learning to support environmental management?
  - (iv) What instruments exist to mainstream environmental concerns into social and sectoral plans and policies, including contributing to sustainable-development and poverty-reduction strategies?
  - (v) How do we address the need for science, data, indicators, monitoring and assessment to measure progress towards the environment dimension of the Millennium Development Goals?

#### **D. The process of preparing the fourth Global Environment Outlook Report and related capacity-building activities**

10. *Recommends* that the aim of the fourth Global Environment Outlook production process should be to generate an integrated assessment report of the world environment by utilizing the best scientific knowledge and expertise in a geographically, disciplinary and gender-balanced way for interacting with policy-makers and civil society and analysing critical environmental issues through an open and transparent, multiscaled, multisectoral and multidisciplinary integrated assessment process of high legitimacy, credibility, and utility;

11. *Welcomes* the process and schedule presented by the Executive Director for the preparation of the fourth Global Environment Outlook through an incremental and adaptive approach;

12. *Further recommends* that the process and schedule presented by the ED for the preparation of the GEO-4 should take into account existing regional capacities in consultation with national focal points through UNEP regional offices and strengthening those capacities where needed, including by:

- (a) Establishing expert working groups, identified through various processes including nominations by governments, relevant international and regional bodies and collaborating centers, chosen on the basis of scientific merit, paying due attention to the need to ensure balanced geographical, disciplinary and gender representation and taking into account the need to also include local and indigenous knowledge;
- (b) Paying particular attention to ensure interaction with existing relevant ongoing assessments at global, regional, sub-regional and national levels;
- (c) Establishing a regionally and gender-balanced coordination mechanism to ensure the smooth running of the assessment process chaired by the Executive Director;
- (d) Establishing a guideline for the assessment process based on the outcome of the consultative design process to ensure that the assessment process is independent and credible and that experts are given the flexibility to respond to the key questions within a coherent analytical framework and in accordance with the latest state of scientific knowledge;
- (e) Providing core data support to and mobilizing analytical capacity in support of the assessment process, including through inter-agency cooperation and providing capacity building opportunities to help support data- management, data gathering to fill identified data-gaps and relevant disciplinary and interdisciplinary training at regional and sub-regional levels;
- (f) Subjecting the assessment to an extensive expert and government peer review;
- (g) Undertaking a round of consultations with regional stakeholder groups based on the draft report in 2006;
- (h) Convening a global intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder consultation in 2007, subject to the availability of extra budgetary funds, to consider the findings of the assessment and its summary for policy-makers;
- (i) Forwarding the fourth Global Environment Outlook, together with the outcome of the global consultation, to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum for its consideration;
- (j) Developing and undertaking a monitoring and outreach strategy that is relevant to all regions and stakeholders;

13. *Requests* the Executive Director to contact governments and partners inviting them to submit their nominations for experts to participate in the GEO-4 making full use of UNEPs regional presence;

14. *Stresses* the need to ensure developing-country-expert participation in the assessment process of the fourth Global Environment Outlook and to continue efforts for capacity-building related to global and subglobal environment outlooks;

15. *Invites* countries in a position to do so and other partners active in the field of development to provide funding for the fourth Global Environment Outlook, in particular, for developing-country-expert participation; the regional stakeholder consultations; the global intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder consultation; capacity-building; and in-kind support for the participation of national experts and institutions.

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