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SUMMARY OF THE UNEP GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT OUTLOOK REGIONAL CONSULTATION FOR AFRICA: 20-21 SEPTEMBER 2010

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Global Environment Outlook (GEO) Regional Consultation for Africa took place in Nairobi, Kenya, on 20 and 21 September 2010. The regional consultation brought together over 34 participants representing a range of stakeholders, including UN agencies, government departments, research and academic institutions, the private sector, and regional and sub-regional organizations from Africa.

This meeting was the fifth in a series of seven regional consultations being undertaken by UNEP as part of the preparation for the production of the fifth GEO (GEO-5). The principal output of these consultations is a final report for each region containing the outcomes of the meeting, including key recommendations, regional priorities, agreed goals and target audiences.

The Africa regional consultation took place in plenary, with discussions focusing on identifying the key environmental issues and challenges for the regional chapter of GEO-5, selecting associated internationally agreed goals, and outlining policy gaps and successes related to these themes. This consultation resulted, *inter alia*, in agreement on regional priority environmental issues and challenges as follows: climate change; soil, land use, land degradation and desertification; freshwater; biodiversity; and oceans and seas.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE GEO PROCESS AND THE REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS

The UNEP GEO was launched in 1995 in response to a request by the UNEP Governing Council for a comprehensive report on the state of the world environment. The GEO is a process of conducting a global integrated environmental assessment to deliver the best available scientific findings to policy makers and provide them with sufficient information to effectively respond to environmental challenges. The output of the GEO process is an assessment report of the state and trends of the global environment.

UNEP has so far produced four GEO reports. GEO-1, published in 1997, provided a comprehensive overview of the state of the world's environment and showed that although significant progress had been made in confronting environmental challenges in both developing and industrialized regions, there was still a need to pursue environmental and associated socioeconomic policies vigorously.

GEO-2000, published in 1999, concluded that if current trends in population and economic growth and consumption continued, the natural environment would be increasingly stressed.

GEO-3 was published in 2002 and provided an overview of the main environmental developments over the past three decades demonstrating how social, economic and other factors

contributed to the changes that had occurred. It highlighted increasing poverty and concluded that the world was characterized by four major divides threatening sustainable development: the environmental divide; the policy divide; the vulnerability gap; and the lifestyle divide.

GEO-4, published in 2007, assessed the state of the global atmosphere, land, water and biodiversity, as well as the human dimensions of environmental change, and presented scenarios and policy options for action in the context of environment for development. It issued an urgent call for action in dealing with persistent and urgent environmental problems, such as climate change, that undermine human wellbeing and development.

GEO-5 was requested by the 25th session of the UNEP Governing Council, held in February 2009, in Nairobi, Kenya. Although GEO-5 will provide an analysis of the state and trends of the global environment, it will differ from previous GEO reports by shifting from assessing priority "problems" to include assessment of priority solutions. It aims to, *inter alia*, provide a scientific analysis of selected environmental challenges and the solutions available to address them, including their economic, environmental and social costs and benefits. GEO-5 will also have a strong regional emphasis. The report will be published in 2012 to coincide with the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio+20) and one of the objectives of the GEO-5 assessment is to address the themes of this Conference.

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The GEO-5 report will consist of three major parts: an assessment of the global state and trends of the environment; regional policy analyses; and potential opportunities for action at the global level. Seven regional consultations are part of the GEO-5 production process. The dates and locations of these regional consultations are: 2 September in Washington DC, US; 6-7 September in Panama City, Panama; 9 September in Gatineau/Hull, Canada; 16-17 September in Bangkok, Thailand; 20-21 September in Nairobi, Kenya; 23-24 September in Geneva, Switzerland; and 4-5 October in Bahrain. The overall aim of these consultations is for stakeholders and the UNEP Secretariat to: agree on priority environmental issues and challenges within each region; and select internationally agreed goals that are directly related to these regional environmental priorities in order to develop the regional components of the assessment.

FIRST GLOBAL INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION: The First Global Intergovernmental and Multi-stakeholder Consultation on GEO-5 was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 29-31 March 2010, and marked the start of the GEO-5 process. The aim of the consultation was for governments and other stakeholder groups to discuss, agree on and adopt the objectives, scope and process for GEO-5. The Consultation adopted seven objectives for GEO-5, which include: providing a comprehensive, integrated and scientifically credible global environmental assessment to support decision-making processes at appropriate levels; strengthening the ongoing process of capacity building for developing countries and countries with economies in transition to conduct environmental monitoring and assessments at all levels; and strengthening the policy relevance of GEO-5 by including an analysis of policy option case studies to identify promising policy options to speed up achievement of internationally agreed goals such as the Millennium Development Goals and those in multilateral environmental agreements.

As part of the GEO-5 process, the Consultation also established a High-Level Intergovernmental Advisory Panel to, *inter alia*, identify relevant goals for Part 1 of the GEO-5 report.

FIRST MEETING OF THE HIGH-LEVEL INTERGOVERNMENTAL ADVISORY PANEL: The Panel met from 28-30 June 2010, in Glion, Switzerland, to choose the internationally agreed goals that would be analyzed in the GEO-5 process and that would frame the regional policy assessments. The Panel also provided high-level strategic advice to guide chapter authors when evaluating the gaps in achieving these goals and identifying the policy options for speeding up their achievement.

NORTH AMERICA REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS: Two regional consultations were held for the North America region, in Washington DC, US, and Gatineau/Hull, Canada, on 2 and 9 September 2010, respectively. At each of these consultations, participants selected three environmental challenges, together with related internationally agreed goals. The environmental challenges and goals selected by the Washington DC regional consultation were: land use, with the goal of developing and implementing integrated land management and water-use plans that are based on sustainable use of renewable resources and on integrated assessments of socioeconomic and environmental potentials, contained in paragraph 40(b) of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002; environmental governance, with the goal of advancing the concept of a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication in order to address current challenges, contained in Section 13 of the

Nusa Dua Declaration, which was adopted by the 11th Special Session of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum in 2010; and freshwater, with the goal, in paragraph 26(c) of the JPOI, of improving the efficient use of water resources and promoting their allocation among competing uses in a way that gives priority to the satisfaction of basic human needs and balances the requirement of preserving or restoring ecosystems and their functions.

At the Gatineau/Hull regional consultation, participants selected: climate change, with the goal of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system, contained in Article 2 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adopted by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992; environmental governance, with the goal in paragraph 40(b) of the JPOI; and freshwater, with the goal in paragraph 23 of the UN Millennium Declaration, UN General Assembly resolution 55/2 of 2000, which requires the development of water management strategies that promote equitable access and adequate supplies, at the regional, national and local levels in order to end the unsustainable exploitation of water resources.

These independent outcomes of the two North America regional consultations are not the final selection of regional environmental priorities and related internationally agreed goals. The UNEP Secretariat, in consultation with the Chairs of the two regional consultations, will reconcile these outcomes and prepare a harmonized report for North America, containing one final selection of priorities and goals.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGIONAL CONSULTATION: The Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Consultation was held in Panama City, Panama, from 6-7 September 2010. Participants at the consultation selected a set of regional environmental challenges, together with a set of internationally agreed goals for these challenges, as follows: biodiversity, with the goal of adopting measures relating to the use of biological resources to avoid or minimize adverse impacts on biological diversity, contained in Article 10 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), adopted in 1992 by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee; climate change, with the goal in Article 3, paragraphs 1-3 of the UNFCCC, referring to the protection of the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind; freshwater, with the goal in paragraph 26(c) of the JPOI; seas and oceans, with the goal of promoting the conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine ecosystems, and their natural resources, contained in the Jakarta Mandate on Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity adopted by the second Conference of the Parties to the CBD in 1995; soil, land use, land degradation and desertification, with the goal in paragraph 40(b) of the JPOI; and environmental governance, with the goal in paragraph 5 of the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, which provides for collectively advancing and strengthening the interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development - economic development, social development and environmental protection.

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGIONAL CONSULTATION: The Asia and the Pacific Regional Consultation was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 16-17 September 2010. At this consultation, participants identified five regional environmental priorities, namely: climate change; environmental governance; biodiversity; freshwater; and chemicals and waste.

They also voted for one associated internationally agreed goal for each theme, although, in discussions, noted multiple relevant goals for each. For climate change, participants chose UNFCCC Article 3, paragraphs 1-3. For environmental governance, participants selected paragraph 5 of the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development. The biodiversity goal chosen by participants was Article 1 of the CBD, *inter alia*, the objectives of conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity along with the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. For freshwater, participants adopted paragraph 26(c) of the JPOI. On chemicals and waste, participants agreed to paragraph 23 of the JPOI, referring to the goal of sound management of chemicals throughout their lifecycle and of hazardous wastes for sustainable development and the protection of human health and the environment.

REPORT OF THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION FOR AFRICA

OPENING SESSION

On Monday morning, Frank Turyatunga, Regional Coordinator for Africa, UNEP Division of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA), welcomed participants to the meeting. Mounkaila Goumandakoye, UN Environment Programme Regional Office for Africa (UNEP ROA), noted the wide range of expertise represented by participants. He listed some of the objectives of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) process, such as engaging governments, UN agencies and other stakeholders in the process, and strengthening the capacity of less developed countries and countries with economies in transition to carry out required GEO assessments. He called on participants to identify priority issues and challenges for Africa, link these to internationally agreed goals and formulate ways to achieve these goals on the continent.

Matthew Billot, GEO Unit, UNEP DEWA, highlighted the importance of regional consultations in the GEO-5 process, and stressed GEO's specific mandate to identify policy options and solutions to speed up progress in meeting internationally agreed goals. He noted these aims are particularly relevant in 2010, the International Year of Biodiversity, since targets to reduce biodiversity loss have not been met.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

On Monday, Ndey Sireng Bakurin, National Environment Agency, Gambia, and Oliver Chapeyama, Enviroplan, Botswana, were elected as Co-Chairs by acclamation. Joel Célestin Mamboundou, Croissance Saine Environnement, Gabon, and Abu Bakr Elsidid Ahmed Eltohami, Omdurman Ahlia University, Sudan, were elected to assist the Co-Chairs.

A discussion on the consideration of small island developing States (SIDS) in the GEO process, particularly with respect to the potential need for an additional regional consultation and specific chapter, was deferred, with Co-Chair Chapeyama acknowledging that concerns about SIDS had been noted and would be considered later in the meeting. Participants adopted the meeting agenda by consensus.

PRESENTATION BY UNEP ON THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING AND ON THE GEO-5 SCOPE, OBJECTIVES AND PROCESS

On Monday, Billot provided an overview of the consultation's goals, procedures and timelines. He outlined the meeting's aims, including: the identification of one internationally agreed goal associated with each of three to five regionally-relevant environmental themes and challenges; the identification of gaps where policy development or strengthening could be beneficial; and the sharing of

experiences and case studies of promising solutions. Billot explained that GEO-5 authors would use the integrated environmental assessment methodology, and emphasized that the current work would build on previous GEO reports.

He described the importance of outreach and capacity building, noting that the shift from scientific assessments to policy considerations has broadened the target audience for GEO reports, and affects, among others, finance, tourism and urban planning ministries.

On the content of GEO-5, Billot discussed, *inter alia*: links between GEO-5 and other international processes, including the Conference on Sustainable Development (CSD) and Rio+20; identification of thresholds and tipping points; the development of regionally-meaningful scenarios; transformative policies that might be transferable, replicable, or scalable; consideration of international environmental governance and green economies; and assessments of costs and benefits of policy options. He also presented a timeline for the GEO-5 process, noting its intended completion in 2012.

Some of the issues considered by participants in the ensuing discussion were: the need to involve regional economic communities (RECs) and relevant government ministries, specifically ministries of environment and health, in GEO-5 discussions; the importance of GEO-5 in science education; the value of learning from past GEOs; and institutional barriers to cross-cutting responses to environmental issues.

FEEDBACK ON QUESTIONNAIRE DISTRIBUTED IN THE REGION

On Monday Gertrude Ngenda, UNEP ROA, offered an overview of environmental priorities in the region, explaining that an initial list of common priorities for Africa had been synthesized from a number of regional and sub-regional environmental agreements and processes, such as: the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) sessions; the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Action Plan of the Environment Initiative; RECs' sub-regional environmental action plans; and the Marrakech Process on sustainable consumption and production. She mentioned, among other themes, climate change, energy and renewables, chemicals and waste, and biodiversity, but noted that many issues are interlinked and cautioned that the list is not exhaustive. Ngenda outlined internationally agreed goals related to the priority environmental issues, including Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 7 on the sustainable use of the environment, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building.

Describing the networks through which a questionnaire on 10 pre-selected environmental challenges and issues had been circulated to GEO-5 partners and stakeholders in the region, and the breakdown of respondents by sector, Turyatunga presented an analysis of the resulting rankings. He identified the top five themes that had emerged from the questionnaire, namely: climate change; soil, land use, land degradation and desertification; freshwater; biodiversity; and forests. He listed specific challenges mentioned under each broad category, highlighting cases in which similar issues came up under multiple headings, and noted that the scope and content of each category needed further clarification. He also highlighted some existing effective and ineffective, or even counter-productive, policy instruments identified by respondents, along with relevant regional and sub-regional agreements and processes that might be linked with the priority themes.

In the ensuing discussion, one participant inquired about the number of respondents and the regional representation of the results, and others asked about the overarching and sector-specific environmental problems, as well as the sub-regional

priorities, identified by the questionnaire. While agreeing that climate change should be a priority issue, many participants raised concerns that environmental governance scored so low on the questionnaire. Others queried the omission of environment and health from the list of priority areas. One participant suggested that agrobiodiversity be considered under biodiversity, and another called for the inclusion of integrated coastal management in the list of priorities for the region.

Some participants called for the integration of good practices from regional and sub-regional initiatives into GEO-5, and others lamented the absence of a chapter dedicated to SIDS' issues and goals. Participants stressed the need for the GEO-5 process to include government actors. Many participants described environmental governance as underlying all environmental issues and challenges. Some stressed the importance of community participation in core governance activities and decisions, and called for cross-sectoral information sharing, both within government and with private sector stakeholders and civil society. One urged fellow participants to encourage parliamentarians to pass laws on environmental education as a means to building capacity. Another drew attention to the exclusion of a health component within the current National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) process under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

On a question on the need for UNEP to strengthen its scientific base, participants were informed of the appointment of UNEP's new Chief Scientist, Joseph Alcamo, whose role is to strengthen scientific research under the themes of climate change, disasters and conflicts, ecosystem management, environmental governance, harmful substances, and resource efficiency.

DISCUSSION AND SELECTION OF PRIORITY ENVIRONMENTAL REGIONAL ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

On Monday, Billot explained that concerns had arisen that the proliferation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and other internationally agreed goals were hindering action, and that, in response, a shortlist of the 10 main themes of these goals had been compiled through a multistakeholder process. Adding the MDGs as an 11th theme, he listed:

- air pollution and air quality;
- biodiversity;
- chemicals and waste;
- climate change;
- energy;
- forests;
- freshwater;
- oceans and seas;
- soil, land use, land degradation and desertification; and
- environmental governance.

Explaining that GEO-5 authors would aim to develop policy solutions, Billot asked participants to identify the themes for which policy solutions would be most important for the region. He underscored that the themes are interlinked, and all are priorities, but encouraged participants to identify "key themes" for Africa, along with associated goals. He further clarified that participants should elaborate on the aspects of each theme that are most relevant in the region and sub-regions, and consider a broad range of costs and benefits of possible policies. He added that participants could ask authors to consider interlinkages among goals.

Co-Chair Chapeyama urged participants to justify their proposals for priority issues, as this would provide guidance to the GEO-5 authors. Participants expressed various views on how to identify and define key themes and associated goals. Some participants expressed concern that the themes conflated

threats, drivers, pressures and responses, and requested clarification on how these issues were clustered. Another commented that many of the themes reflect environmental problems that are symptomatic of root causes, providing the example of climate change as a symptom of natural resource misuse. He also suggested that the issues could be collapsed into fewer categories, with, for example, biodiversity encompassing energy, forests, soil and land use issues. Others added that environmental governance could include many of the themes.

A number of options for moving forward were discussed, with some participants suggesting restructuring the themes, and some proposing the time be spent identifying specific concerns for Africa within each of the 10 themes and subsequently ranking the priority themes. Others suggested that the group start with the internationally agreed goals, determine which related policy solutions would be of greatest importance in Africa, and then rank the themes accordingly.

Participants also debated whether to deal with each priority separately in break-out groups or whether to work together to rank the list of agreed priorities. Following several interventions, the Co-Chairs suggested, and participants agreed, to reach consensus on the five priority issues for Africa, and then discuss each individually, identifying relevant goals. Participants then drew out the following five priorities: climate change; soil, land use, land degradation and desertification; freshwater; biodiversity; and oceans and seas. They agreed to discuss emerging and cross-cutting issues, including governance, under each priority.

There was further debate on whether to use a matrix evaluating each priority issue against GEO's pre-defined ranking criteria and discuss each priority in plenary, or whether to first discuss each priority in break-out groups and reconvene in plenary to rank them according to the GEO criteria. They agreed to the former approach, adding a column to the matrix to highlight governance-related issues, and also decided not to rank the priorities at this meeting.

DISCUSSION AND SELECTION OF GOALS FOR THE REGION

On Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning, participants deliberated on the goals associated with each of the five themes, opting for consensus rather than voting to make the final selections. In discussions, several participants questioned the merit of choosing a single goal for the themes, but were reassured by Billot that, although they were limited to one goal per theme, they could nonetheless direct GEO-5 authors to consider additional relevant goals through guidance notes.

CLIMATE CHANGE: Participants clustered relevant issues into the categories of climate extremes; adaptation; mitigation; financing; governance; climate monitoring and information; and capacity building among stakeholders. The Secretariat was advised to take note of the AMCEN list of priorities, which some participants described as representative of the region's needs. Regarding goals, one participant suggested the Bali Action Plan, which calls for, *inter alia*, nationally appropriate mitigation actions by developing countries. However, most favored UNFCCC Article 3 paragraphs 1-3 on responsibilities, specific needs and special circumstances of parties to the UNFCCC and on precautionary measures to anticipate, prevent or minimize the causes of climate change, and mitigate its effects. They also requested the authors to reference paragraph (e) of the Delhi Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change and Sustainable Development, which calls for the support of effective and results-based measures for the development of approaches on vulnerability and adaptation.

SOIL, LAND USE, LAND DEGRADATION AND DESERTIFICATION:

On topics of concern under this priority, participants identified, *inter alia*: soil erosion, salinization and acidification; desertification resulting from increased temperatures and erratic rainfall; pollution from chemicals and toxic waste; population growth, uncontrolled transhumance and unplanned urban expansion; and invasive alien species and biodiversity loss. Related to governance, participants noted issues of: land tenure and management; indigenous knowledge systems and practices; and the role of multinational corporations in land ownership, resource extraction and environmental governance. One participant highlighted the impact of armed conflicts on land use. In debates about the goals, one participant recommended combining JPOI paragraph 40(b), referring to integrated land management and water use plans that consider socioeconomic and environmental potentials, with CSD Resolution 17/1 paragraph 9(d), on equitable access to land and secure land tenure, to fully address governance and integrated land management issues. After discussion, participants adopted Article 2 of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), on combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought in the framework of an integrated approach consistent with Agenda 21.

FRESHWATER: Participants highlighted issues including access to drinking water, pollution, water resources management, eutrophication, invasive plant species, and protection of aquatic ecosystems. Co-Chair Chapeyama suggested that participants' references to specific sources of water pollution, including farm-based chemicals and mining, be reflected in an advisory note to the authors. One participant called for gender mainstreaming in the water sector, and another recommended focusing on water quality. Many agreed on the importance of water availability, with one highlighting the importance of distribution issues. Participants further identified governance strategies to improve freshwater management including promoting integrated water resource management, strengthening education for sustainable development, and replicating the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management in the water sector. Participants unanimously adopted JPOI paragraph 26(c) as the regional goal. This paragraph calls for improving the efficient use of water resources and promoting their allocation among competing uses in a way that gives priority to the satisfaction of basic human needs, and balances the requirement of preserving or restoring ecosystems and their functions.

BIODIVERSITY: Co-Chair Chapeyama proposed and participants agreed, to request the authors to consider biodiversity in its entirety. Participants clustered the issues into three broad categories. Under conservation of biodiversity, issues identified included, among others: unsustainable forest resource use; illegal hunting and poaching of wildlife; urban area expansion; wetlands depletion; and habitat loss. Under sustainable use, participants identified, among other issues: ecosystem services; transboundary management of forests lands; management of wood and non-wood products; agrobiodiversity and mining. Under access and benefit sharing, they identified: genetic resources; bio-prospecting; trade in medicinal plants and plant extracts; bio-piracy; and access to benefits linked to forests, wetlands and key habitats.

Participants discussed governance issues, including the integration of biodiversity into agriculture. One participant suggested that the authors take note of the governance issues highlighted by the African Biodiversity Collaborative Group, including collaboration, communication, and financing for biodiversity conservation.

Although a few favored the adoption of Article 1 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), participants opted for CBD Article 10 as the region's goal on biodiversity. This article calls on contracting parties to: adopt measures relating to the use of biological resources to avoid or minimize adverse impacts on biological diversity; protect and encourage the customary use of biological resources in accordance with traditional cultural practices that are compatible with conservation or sustainable use requirements; support local populations to develop and implement remedial action in degraded areas where biological diversity has been reduced; and encourage cooperation between its governmental authorities and its private sector in developing methods for sustainable use of biological resources.

OCEANS AND SEAS: participants listed concerns, including: the effects of ocean circulation on global weather patterns; overexploitation of marine, ocean and coastal resources, including fisheries; ocean acidification; marine pollution; and urban development in coastal areas. Some participants named governance-related issues such as integrated coastal management, negotiations over maritime borders, piracy, and the development of marine protected areas. Others commented on capacity building for the implementation of existing conventions, with one referring to regional agreements on marine and coastal environments and on transboundary movement of hazardous wastes. As the associated goal, participants agreed to Article 192 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which provides that States have the obligation to protect and preserve the marine environment. One noted similarities of Article 192 with other goals, such as the Jakarta Mandate of the CBD, on promoting conservation and sustainable use of marine resources, and another pointed to additional goals that should be referenced in the guidance notes for the GEO-5 authors.

DISCUSSION OF POLICIES (GAPS, PROMISING POLICIES AND OVERVIEW OF THE POLICY ANALYSIS PROCESS)

On Tuesday morning, Billot presented an overview of the policy analysis process, explaining that GEO-5 includes a working group of five policy experts, in collaboration with regional lead authors, tasked with creating a cost-benefit assessment framework for policies. He elaborated that the GEO-5 working group would use the framework to assess policies that could facilitate or accelerate the achievement of regionally-identified key goals. On Tuesday morning and afternoon, Co-Chair Bakurin invited participants to propose policy gaps and weaknesses for the chosen regional themes.

One participant noted that the problems with reaching goals might not be an absence of good policies but rather gaps in the capacity to implement and enforce policies, as well as a failure to provide viable livelihood alternatives to communities to replace restricted activities. Another encouraged GEO-5 to consider not only the costs and benefits of proposed policies but also to assess the costs of inaction and failure to meet policy goals.

On implementation challenges for sustainable development goals, one participant highlighted the need for education and research, with particular reference to the need for support for equipment and training for scientists, as well as a renewed focus on developing values, not just expertise, through education. Billot agreed that education is central to improving the environment and promoting sustainable development, and noted that this implicates education as well as environment ministries.

Some participants raised doubts that they could identify policy gaps without first identifying existing policies, with one encouraging the group to refer to the list of policies identified

in the questionnaire in order to determine where gaps still remain. In response, Co-Chair Bakurin showed participants the lists of effective and ineffective policy instruments identified by questionnaire respondents, then led the group through each of the five key themes, asking for examples of policy gaps and successes at regional and sub-regional levels for each, and recording the contributions in a matrix. She commented that inadequate enforcement and implementation of existing policies had been highlighted as problems across the themes, and participants listed additional cross-cutting issues, such as challenges involved in developing strategic environmental assessments. In addition to the discussion, Co-Chair Bakurin asked participants to submit their suggestions on policy gaps and success stories in writing.

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES: Some participants noted that commitment to international conventions must be followed by national-level policies if they are to be effective in enacting change. Participants identified funding, policies to facilitate access to appropriate technology, and harmonization of national policies as important considerations, and also mentioned a lack of policy review mechanisms and inadequate legal mechanisms for policy coordination.

CLIMATE CHANGE: Under the UNFCCC, one pointed to the success of African countries in submitting national communications, but noted that inadequate financing hampered implementation of many of the recommendations in these communications. One participant pointed to the need for programmatic rather than project-focused initiatives, highlighting NAPAs as examples of intervention-oriented, project-based approaches that have not been effective. One lamented the lack of success of the Clean Development Mechanism in Africa, and queried whether the failures might be related to conditionalities and the need for technical expertise. Participants wondered whether reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries (REDD) and carbon taxes might prove to be effective policies for some African countries. One recommended promoting greater involvement by African representatives in the development of climate models and science.

SOIL, LAND USE, LAND DEGRADATION AND DESERTIFICATION: One participant noted that action plans for combating land degradation exist but have not been implemented because of challenges with resource mobilization. Another suggested that the absence of policies to support farmers' livelihoods leads to agricultural practices that degrade land.

FRESHWATER: On freshwater policy successes, one participant pointed to transboundary water management agreements, and another highlighted the integrated approach of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. In terms of continuing challenges, one raised concern that wetland protection is not included in development agendas, and another highlighted environmental health issues associated with poor sanitation, linking these concerns to the lack of institutional synergies at the national level. One participant suggested that policy development should carefully consider the baselines used to set regional and global goals.

BIODIVERSITY: Participants expressed divergent views on whether policies of prior informed consent represented policy successes or still required strengthening. Co-Chair Bakurin noted that there is variation within the region on policy implementation and effectiveness. One participant pointed to successes in protected area networks and biodiversity working groups.

OCEANS AND SEAS: One participant highlighted political, market and technical failures as reasons for the limited implementation of existing coastal and marine

policies. Participants offered examples of such failures, with one participant pointing to limited technology transfers, lack of trained personnel and economic incentives for coastal development as barriers to enacting policies for integrated coastal zone management and for combating coastal erosion. One suggested greater emphasis on research and evaluation of technical solutions to policy issues. Participants also highlighted sub-regional variation in policy development to prevent and respond to oil spills.

DISCUSSION ON THE GEO-5 PROCESS IN THE REGION

On Tuesday afternoon, Billot and Angele Luh-Sy, UNEP ROA, addressed: chapter working groups; the regional nomination process; the production schedule for GEO-5; and outreach in the Africa region.

CHAPTER WORKING GROUPS: Billot informed participants that each regional chapter will be developed by a working group comprising 15-20 experts, nominated through a regional nomination process, with each chapter having two coordinating lead authors, lead authors, contributing authors and chapter reviewers. The working group will be drawn from both science and policy realms, and will need to reflect sub-regional perspectives and gender balance. The two coordinating lead authors will be nominated by UNEP and will provide input into the selection of the other members of the chapter working groups.

REGIONAL NOMINATION PROCESS: Billot said UNEP ROA was in charge of the regional nominating process for the region, and that nominations are to be made via the UNEP GEO website. He then described the website as the key communication tool for the process, containing past and upcoming meetings, lists of experts, old GEO data reports, capacity building resources, news, and updates. Billot explained the online nomination process, and urged participants to make their nominations as soon as possible, in order for adequate preparations to be made for lead authors to participate in the first production meeting.

PRODUCTION SCHEDULE: Billot noted that the process would start with the first production meeting in November 2010, in Cairo, Egypt, and conclude with the publication of the GEO-5 report in 2012, as an input to Rio+20.

In the ensuing discussion, participants discussed how GEO would deal with the common themes among the regions and recommended that a link to collaborating centers be included on the GEO website. They also considered the viability of self-nominations to the working group.

OUTREACH IN THE AFRICA REGION: To guide the discussion on Africa's outreach strategy, Luh-Sy asked a series of questions on how to engage and approach stakeholders, and measure the impacts of outreach activities. She suggested that the outreach process commence in earnest in November 2010, with stakeholders discussing the outreach strategy and implementation plan.

In the discussion that followed, participants suggested that UNEP ROA come up with a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation process for the third Africa Environment Outlook (AEO-3). They sought to know whether there would be a mechanism for sharing regional outreach experiences, and how best to raise awareness of GEO and involve a range of stakeholders, including women, youth, policy makers and the media, in the entire process. Many participants urged the replication of best practices from sub-regional initiatives. One participant suggested that UNEP mobilize future leaders by setting up training programmes, and another suggested the formation of an online community of practice to share knowledge with stakeholders from the continent and beyond.

AGREEMENT ON RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

On Tuesday afternoon, participants adopted four recommendations on the way forward, namely that: the matrices used at this regional consultation be included in the GEO-5; a comprehensive and targeted information and dissemination mechanism be created; a robust monitoring and evaluation programme be mandated to monitor the GEO-5 process; and UNEP be called to encourage countries and RECs to take ownership of the GEO-5 process and institutionalize it at the national- and REC-levels.

One participant proposed building a network of “centers of excellence” on research and development in the identified key themes, as well as assessing the professional development needs in all the thematic areas in the region. Participants agreed that this should be included in the advisory note to the authors.

CLOSURE OF THE GEO-5 AFRICA REGIONAL CONSULTATION

Turyatunga thanked the Co-Chairs and participants on Tuesday afternoon for their commitment to the GEO-5 process, and urged them to stay informed via the GEO website. He indicated that the documents will be disseminated within five days, and that feedback would be expected with 15 days, in order for the documents to be ready for the first production meeting.

Pascal Houenou, Network for Environment and Sustainable Development in Africa, Côte d'Ivoire, voiced thanks on behalf of participants, concluding “the future is not a blank slate: our dear planet will survive.”

Salif Diop, UNEP DEWA, urged those concerned to link this meeting's discussions with the discussions on AEO-3, and hoped that the commitment to the process would result in a successful output in 2012. Turyatunga closed the meeting at 5:24pm.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

UNEP GEO-5 Regional Consultation, Geneva: The aim of the consultation is to agree on priority environmental issues/challenges and their related internationally agreed goals for Europe. **dates:** 23-24 September 2010 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** GEO Unit, Division of Early Warning and Assessment, UNEP **phone:** +254 20 762 4546 **email:** matthew.billot@unep.org **internet:** http://www.unep.org/geo/GEO_Meetings.asp

UNEP GEO-5 Regional Consultation, Bahrain: The aim of the consultation is to agree on priority environmental issues/challenges and their related internationally agreed goals for West Asia. Discussions will also be held on the development of the regional chapter and on the GEO-5 process. **dates:** 4-5 October 2010 **location:** Bahrain **contact:** GEO Unit, Division of Early Warning and Assessment, UNEP **phone:** +254 20 762 4546 **email:** matthew.billot@unep.org **internet:** http://www.unep.org/geo/GEO_Meetings.asp

Seventh African Development Forum on Climate Change and Development: This forum, convened by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Development Bank (AfDB), aims to raise awareness and mobilize effective commitment and actions on the part of all stakeholders and partners at all levels to effectively mainstream climate change concerns into development policies, strategies, programmes and practices in Africa. **dates:** 10-15 October 2010 **location:** Addis Ababa, Ethiopia **contact:** Isatou Gaye **phone:** +251 11 544 3089 **fax:** +251 11 551 4416 **e-mail:** igaye@uneca.org **internet:** <http://www.uneca.org/adfvii/>

CBD COP 10: The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is expected to assess achievement of the 2010 target to reduce significantly the rate of biodiversity loss, adopt an international regime on access and benefit-sharing and celebrate the International Year of Biodiversity 2010. **dates:** 18-29 October 2010 **location:** Nagoya (Aichi), Japan **contact:** CBD Secretariat **phone:** +1 514 288 2220 **fax:** +1 514 288 6588 **e-mail:** secretariat@cbd.int **internet:** <http://www.cbd.int/meetings/>

First All-Africa Energy Week: The First All Africa Energy Week (AAEW) is organized by the African Development Bank in cooperation with the African Union (AU) Commission and the Economic Commission for Africa, with the theme: “Energy Infrastructure and Services in the Context of Climate Challenges.” The All-Africa Energy Week will be organized jointly with the Pan African Investment Forum and the AU Conference of African Energy Ministers. **dates:** 1-5 November 2010 **location:** Maputo, Mozambique **contact:** Yvan Cliché **e-mail:** y.cliche@afdb.org **internet:** <http://www.afdb.org/en/news-events/article/afdb-organizes-the-first-all-african-energy-week-7191/>

First GEO-5 Production Meeting: The meeting will take place after selection of coordinating lead authors, lead authors, contributing authors and reviewers, and will discuss the details related to the production of the GEO-5 report. **dates:** 8-11 November 2010 (tentative – dates to be confirmed) **location:** Cairo, Egypt **contact:** GEO Unit, Division of Early Warning and Assessment, UNEP **phone:** +254 20 762 4546 **email:** matthew.billot@unep.org **internet:** http://www.unep.org/geo/GEO_Meetings.asp

UNFCCC COP 16 and COP/MOP 6: The 16th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 16) to the UNFCCC and the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP/MOP 6) will be held in Mexico. **dates:** 29 November – 10 December 2010 **location:** Cancún, Mexico **contact:** UNFCCC Secretariat **phone:** +49 228 815 1000 **fax:** +49 228 815 1999 **email:** [secretariat@unfccc](mailto:secretariat@unfccc.int) **internet:** <http://unfccc.int> and <http://cc2010.mx/en/>

UNEP GC-26/GMEF: The 26th session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF) will address major and emerging environmental policy issues, and approve the budget and work programme for the 2012-2013 biennium. **dates:** 21-25 February 2011 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** Jamil Ahmad, Secretary of the UNEP Governing Council **phone:** +254 20 762 3431/3411 **fax:** +254 20 762 3929 **email:** jamil.ahmad@unep.org; **internet:** <http://www.unep.org>

Intergovernmental GEO-5 Meeting: The meeting will review and endorse the GEO-5 Summary for Policy Makers. **dates:** February 2012 **location:** to be confirmed **contact:** GEO Unit, Division of Early Warning and Assessment, UNEP **phone:** +254 20 762 4546 **email:** matthew.billot@unep.org **internet:** http://www.unep.org/geo/GEO_Meetings.asp

GEO-5 Launching: GEO-5 will be launched in 2012. **dates:** 2012 (dates to be confirmed) **location:** to be confirmed **contact:** GEO Unit, Division of Early Warning and Assessment, UNEP **phone:** +254 20 762 4546 **email:** matthew.billot@unep.org **internet:** http://www.unep.org/geo/GEO_Meetings.asp

UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD): This meeting is also referred to as Rio+20. In December 2009, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution calling for a UNCSD to be convened in Brazil in 2012. This meeting will mark the 20th anniversary of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which convened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. **dates:** 14-16 May 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **e-mail:** uncsd2012@un.org **internet:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>