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SUMMARY OF THE UNEP GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT OUTLOOK REGIONAL CONSULTATION FOR EUROPE: 23-24 SEPTEMBER 2010

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Global Environment Outlook (GEO) Regional Consultation for Europe took place in Geneva, Switzerland, from 23-24 September 2010. The regional consultation brought together 53 participants representing a range of stakeholders, including UN agencies, government departments, research and academic institutions, the private sector and press from Europe.

This meeting was the sixth 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 regional consultation for Europe 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 related policy gaps and successes. This consultation resulted in agreement on key regional environmental issues and challenges as follows: air quality and air pollution; biodiversity; chemicals and waste; climate change; and freshwater; with environmental governance as an overarching issue.

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 finalized in 2012 in order to feed into 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.

The GEO-5 report will consist of three major parts: an assessment of the state and trends of the global 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;

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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 component 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, on the state and trends of the global environment.

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 (WSSD) 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 selected a set of regional environmental challenges, together with a set of internationally agreed goals for these challenges, as follows: biodiversity, with the goals contained in Article 10(b)-(e) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), adopted in 1992 by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, related to sustainable use of biodiversity; 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 (Decision II/10); 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 WSSD, 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, which refers to the objectives of conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, and 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 selected 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.

AFRICA REGIONAL CONSULTATION: The Africa Regional Consultation was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 20-21 September 2010. Participants identified five priority environmental issues and challenges for the Africa region, as follows: climate change; soil, land use, land degradation and desertification; freshwater; biodiversity; and oceans and seas, and agreed to discuss emerging and cross-cutting issues, such as governance, under each priority. Participants also selected one internationally agreed goal for each of these issues and challenges, but provided additional guidance to

the regional chapter authors to take other relevant goals into consideration when undertaking the policy analysis in the chapter. For climate change, participants selected UNFCCC Article 3 paragraphs 1-3. For soil, land use, land degradation and desertification, participants chose Article 2 of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, on combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought through an integrated approach. JPOI paragraph 26(c) was adopted as the freshwater goal for the region. Participants adopted CBD Article 10(b)-(e) related to sustainable use of biodiversity as the biodiversity goal for the region. Finally, for oceans and seas, participants adopted Article 192 of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides that countries have an obligation to protect and preserve the marine environment.

REPORT OF THE GEO-5 REGIONAL CONSULTATION FOR EUROPE

OPENING OF THE MEETING

On Thursday morning, Christophe Bouvier, Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Office for Europe, opened the meeting and welcomed participants. He underscored the importance of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) process and of the Europe regional consultation, noting that the region can make a substantial contribution given the knowledge and experience, as well as the variety of circumstances found within it.

Ron Witt, Regional Coordinator for Europe, UNEP Division of Early Warning and Assessment (DEWA), noted the challenges to be met during the regional consultation, such as defining regional priorities and selecting one goal per priority.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

On Thursday, Dalia Maier, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Romania, and David Stanners, European Environment Agency, were elected as Co-Chairs of the meeting.

PRESENTATION ON THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

On Thursday, Matthew Billot, Head, GEO Unit, UNEP DEWA, presented the background, process and objectives of GEO-5. He underscored that it focuses on regional environmental priorities, as well as on policy options and their indicative costs and benefits. Regarding the GEO-5 process, Billot stated *inter alia* that: the first production meeting will take place in November 2010; annotated chapter outlines and drafts will be prepared during 2010 and 2011; and a second production meeting will be held in August 2011. He highlighted that the summary for policy makers, which will be based on the key scientific findings of the GEO-5 report, will be negotiated and endorsed by an intergovernmental panel in February 2012. It will then be presented to the third Preparatory Committee for the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 Conference), with the intention that it will feed into the Rio+20 Conference and inform some of its resolutions and other outcomes. Finally he outlined the purpose of this regional consultation as follows: selecting three to five key regional environmental issues and challenges; selecting one internationally agreed goal per regional environmental issue or challenge; identifying policy gaps in achieving the selected goals, as well as ineffective policies; identifying policy options that could help speed up achievement of the goals; and discussing the establishment of working groups and contribution to capacity building and outreach.

In the ensuing discussion, participants commented on: the linkages between the GEO reports and other similar products; the role of the Europe regional chapter in the GEO-5 report; and lessons learned from GEO-4 and how these are reflected in the GEO-5 process. Responding to questions about the GEO-5 process and purpose, Billot underscored that: the analysis of the costs and benefits of policy options will go beyond economic costs and benefits, and will, for example, include political, social and environmental costs and benefits; the biggest challenge and task of GEO-5 is to influence global and regional policy development and change; and the GEO-5

target audience includes the UNEP Governing Council and its member states and representatives, as well as ministries other than environment ministries. One participant asked about the approach and organization of work in relation to Polar regions and the issues that affect them. In response, Billot said partner institutions would advise on how polar issues should be dealt with at the regional level. Volodymyr Demkine, UNEP DEWA, outlined the intention to establish a semi-formal group, consisting of five to six prominent experts on polar issues, including UNEP GRID-Arendal and Gateway Antarctica, to advise the regional chapter authors. He noted that this will be discussed at the first production meeting in November.

FEEDBACK ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE DISTRIBUTED IN THE REGION

On Thursday, Witt summarized the outcome of the questionnaire that was sent out to GEO-5 partners and stakeholders in Europe, noting that 25 responses were received. These responses highlighted regional environmental priority issues and challenges, provided examples of both effective and non-beneficial policy instruments, and identified relevant regional policies and processes. The top five priority issues that emerged from the responses to the questionnaire were: climate change; biodiversity; air pollution and air quality; chemicals and waste; and environmental governance.

Witt reported that most of the effective policy instruments identified related to climate change and environmental governance, while very few biodiversity-related instruments were identified. He gave examples of instruments identified in the area of environmental governance, such as summits and conferences, specialized networks, commitments and specific strategies. He explained that regarding non-beneficial policy instruments, responses were less comprehensive and detailed, with respondents tending to cite broad categories, such as “inadequate financial support or instruments” and “harmful economic subsidies”, rather than providing specific examples. Witt concluded that responses to the questionnaire did not necessarily reflect the views in the room.

DISCUSSION AND SELECTION OF PRIORITY REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

On Thursday, Barbara Clark, European Environment Agency, presented on the European Environment State and Outlook Report (SOER) 2010. She explained its structure, which includes thematic assessments, assessments of global megatrends and country assessments. Expanding on the SOER approach, she said *inter alia* supports assessments at different geographical levels, such as at the pan-European level. Clark further explained that the SOER process enabled countries to focus on common issues, such as air pollution, freshwater, nature protection and biodiversity, land, climate change mitigation, and waste, from their national perspectives.

In discussions, participants noted: an absence of cost and benefit assessments in the SOER; the usefulness of the report at the national level; and the need to link the different reports and their findings.

Billot then outlined the objectives of the regional chapter, which are *inter alia* to: identify key environmental issues and challenges in the region; select internationally agreed goals related to these issues and challenges; and identify five policy options, instruments or clusters of options, including their costs and benefits, which will help speed up the achievement of these goals. He asked participants to select five challenges and identify sub-themes or areas within these challenges, to provide guidance to the regional chapter authors on where policy responses are needed. Billot highlighted that the responses to the questionnaire and the SOER had both identified the same five challenges as follows: climate change; biodiversity; air pollution and air quality; chemicals and waste; and environmental governance.

Co-Chair Stanners then invited participants to identify the top five key regional environmental issues, as well as the aspects of these issues that require consideration. He said

participants should state whether they agree with the five already identified in the questionnaire and, if not, define which ones should be added to, or removed from, the list.

Regarding key environmental issues and challenges other than the five already listed, participants identified: sustainable production and consumption; freshwater; resource efficiency; floods; disaster management; environment and security; vulnerability; and health and the environment. Several participants emphasized that biodiversity should be addressed in the ecosystem context and one highlighted that there is a distinction between ecosystem management and ecosystem conservation. One participant suggested clustering issues, saying that for example, climate change, energy and forests could be put in one cluster. In response, Co-Chair Stanners suggested identifying areas within specific issues that require attention, and said that, for instance, energy and forests could be identified as areas that require attention under the climate change issue. Participants also highlighted cross-cutting issues including: climate change and migration; and land degradation and climate vulnerability. One participant noted that past regional environmental ministerial conferences had identified key environmental challenges in Europe, such as water, including integrated water management and access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. He said water should therefore be added to the list of key issues.

Several participants highlighted that environmental governance, unlike other issues identified, is a cross-cutting and overarching issue. Another participant underlined that governance should not be restricted to environmental governance but should also include other governance issues such as economic development policies that impact on environmental outcomes. A participant suggested addressing environmental governance as an overarching issue and adding freshwater to the list of key environmental issues.

Participants agreed that environmental governance should be addressed in the chapeau as an overarching issue, and that freshwater should be added to the list of key environmental issues instead of environmental governance. The five environmental issues finally agreed on are: air pollution and air quality; biodiversity; chemicals and waste; climate change; and freshwater; with environmental governance identified as an overarching issue.

Billot then highlighted that coordinating lead authors had expressed concern about whether there would be sufficient time and resources to effectively address more than three environmental challenges. He suggested that a way to deal with this is to rank the five issues using specific criteria, noting that this would enable authors to go through the list of issues according to the order of ranking, and address as many issues as the available time and resources would allow. Participants were then invited to identify criteria which the regional chapter authors could use to rank the challenges. Participants suggested: prioritizing those issues that can be regarded as "burning issues" for Europe; using the rankings identified in the responses to the questionnaire; prioritizing issues that are easily manageable and can be addressed quickly; prioritizing issues that involve policy innovation; and using the degree of scientific uncertainty as a criterion for ranking.

DISCUSSION AND SELECTION OF GOALS FOR THE REGION

On Thursday, Co-Chair Stanners suggested that participants should consider what they want the regional chapter to focus on, rather than what the regional priorities are, and asked them to identify: what they are proud of as a region; what they are ashamed of; and where their responsibilities lie.

FRESHWATER: Several participants underscored the complexity of the issues pertaining to this resource. Some favored paragraph 26(c) of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) which refers to 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. One participant highlighted the need to consider the provision of

new and additional water resources, noting that the current focus is on preserving existing resources. Some participants preferred paragraph 23 of the UN Millennium Declaration, 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.

Participants eventually agreed to select paragraph 26(c) of the JPOI as the regional goal for freshwater for GEO-5. They agreed that in undertaking the policy analysis, the regional chapter authors should also consider: pollution; technology; energy; sub-regional differences regarding the availability of water resources; and new sources of water resources.

CLIMATE CHANGE: Participants highlighted the need to consider both mitigation and adaptation activities. Some expressed preference for Article 2 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which requires stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system. Others preferred paragraph (e) of the Delhi Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change and Sustainable Development, which provides that effective and results-based measures should be supported for the development of approaches on vulnerability, adaptation and capacity building, for the integration of adaptation concerns into sustainable development strategies.

Noting that its scope was broader, participants agreed to adopt Article 2 of the UNFCCC as the regional goal for climate change for GEO-5.

AIR POLLUTION AND AIR QUALITY: Participants considered the different internationally agreed goals, eliminating the ones regarded as less relevant for Europe. They noted that the two goals that are most relevant to the regional context are: Agenda 21, chapter 9, paragraph 27, which *inter alia* requires developing and applying pollution control and measurement technologies for air pollution sources, developing alternative environmentally sound technologies, and observing and assessing the sources and extent of transboundary air pollution; and paragraph 21(a) of the JPOI, on implementing transport strategies for sustainable development, in order to improve the affordability, efficiency and convenience of transportation as well as urban air quality and health, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

After comparing the two options, participants agreed to adopt Agenda 21, chapter 9, paragraph 27, as the regional goal for air pollution and air quality for GEO-5.

CHEMICALS AND WASTE: Several participants highlighted lifecycle management and pollution sources. Some participants favored the preamble of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, which refers to protecting human health and the environment against the adverse effects of the generation and management of hazardous and other wastes. Others noted the importance of paragraph 22 of the JPOI, on preventing and minimizing waste and maximizing reuse, recycling and use of environmentally-friendly alternative materials, whilst others said paragraph 23 of the JPOI is broader and more comprehensive.

Participants agreed to adopt paragraph 23 of the JPOI, which contains the overarching 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, as the regional goal for chemicals and waste for GEO-5.

BIODIVERSITY: Participants discussed the impact of activities within the region on natural resources both within and beyond its border, as well as Europe's responsibility towards biodiversity protection and conservation. One participant noted Europe's unique approach to spatial planning, underscoring that positive lessons could be learned in that field, and favored paragraph 1.2.3 of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas annexed to CBD Conference of the Parties (COP) Decision VII/28, on integrating systems of protected areas into the broader land and seascape. Another stressed the importance of CBD COP Decision VII/30

(Strategic Plan), Annex II, Goal 6, on controlling threats from invasive alien species. Participants noted that some goals were too broad or outdated and that CBD Article 10 captured, amongst other things, the will to minimize adverse impacts on biodiversity, within and beyond the region, and agreed that this broadest goal was the most appropriate.

Participants selected Article 10 of the CBD as the regional goal for biodiversity for GEO-5, with a note for the authors to also address invasive alien species.

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

On Friday morning, Billot presented an overview of the policy analysis component of the regional chapter. He explained that the objective of the analysis is to identify policy solutions that could help speed up the achievement of internationally agreed goals, including the indicative costs and benefits of such policies.

In the subsequent discussion, participants debated the methodology for undertaking the cost and benefit analysis, and highlighted the need to: use GEO-5 to promote understanding of how to capture the value of ecosystems; include values beyond monetary and market values; account for social and environmental costs and benefits, such as human wellbeing and vulnerability; and maximize cost effectiveness. One participant noted that the best option might not necessarily be the least-cost option and another highlighted policy implementation constraints.

Several participants raised concern about the “cost and benefit analysis” terminology, with one noting that the costs and benefits analysis of policy options must be based on empirical evidence, identify whether policies are working and identify the indicators used to measure their effectiveness.

One participant noted that there are successful policies, policy instruments and projects within Europe that should be taken into consideration in undertaking the policy analysis. Another participant agreed that although successful examples should be taken into consideration, GEO-5 should also identify the limitations of existing instruments and policies. Responding to some of these comments, Billot explained that although no new methodology is envisaged for undertaking the policy analysis, the GEO-5 mandate requires consideration of the costs and benefits of policy options.

Participants also noted the need to ensure effective communication of outcomes to promote understanding of policy shortcomings amongst policy makers, and capture the region’s innovations in the areas of environmental management and governance.

Billot then invited participants to focus on the five priority issues defined on Thursday, and identify gaps in policies pertaining to these issues, as well as success stories and ineffective policies, at the international, regional, sub-regional or national levels. Noting that in the questionnaire responses, some policies had been identified, he asked participants to highlight additional policies, as well as policy assessments such as the SOER. One participant said he lacked the relevant expertise to comment on specific policy gaps or ineffective policies and Co-Chair Stanners suggested that participants could comment on the list of policies compiled from the questionnaire responses and state how effective or ineffective these have been in their countries or sub-regions. He added that participants could also identify successful strategies and initiatives from which lessons could be learned. One participant suggested that the general focus should be on positive lessons learned, rather than on shortcomings.

CLIMATE CHANGE: Some participants identified the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol as a useful tool to address climate change. One participant noted that the SOER, which will be published in November 2010, is a useful policy assessment and contains a review of country policy responses to the environmental challenges identified. She suggested that UNEP can make use of this report and the assessments it contains to identify successful case studies and promising policies, underlining that this could also be done for

the other key regional environmental issues identified. Another participant added that UNEP should send another questionnaire to those countries not covered by the SOER, asking them to identify useful policy responses and options.

AIR QUALITY AND AIR POLLUTION: Regarding useful policies, one participant drew attention to transportation standards for phasing out unleaded petrol, implemented in the Russian Federation over the past decade. Participants also identified policy gaps, including: the need for capacity building to apply technological solutions to deal with air quality issues in Estonia; setbacks in the application of the polluter pays principle in Ukraine; and lack of effective policy implementation and enforcement in many countries.

CHEMICALS AND WASTE: Participants drew attention to European Community Regulation No 1907/2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH Regulation). One participant also highlighted the “Costs of Inaction/Benefits of Action” paper submitted to the Basel Convention COP to contribute to its cost-benefit analysis framework.

FRESHWATER: On policy gaps, participants highlighted: a lack of practical implementation of policies in Ukraine; inadequate implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes in many countries; and controversies on the pricing of water resources. Participants also identified promising and successful examples, such as: a new programme in the Russian Federation involving the municipal and communal sectors in payments for water resources; and a project in Hungary on ecosystem indicators, funded by the Global Environment Facility.

BIODIVERSITY: Participants highlighted the Natura 2000 network of protected areas and certification schemes, such as fair trade certifications, as examples of best practice within the region. They identified specific effective instruments, such as: forest certification schemes in the Russian Federation; case studies from the multimedia Environmental Atlas of Europe; the Pan-European Biological Diversity and Landscape Strategy; and “The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity” process. One participant highlighted ongoing discussions regarding the possibility of establishing a green development mechanism for biodiversity.

Participants also identified areas requiring policy development or change, such as: access to genetic resources and benefit sharing, noting negotiations on this have not yet resulted in agreement; some European policies, such as on agriculture, fisheries and biodiversity, that have adverse impacts within and outside the region; and ecological networks.

DISCUSSIONS ON THE GEO-5 PROCESS IN THE REGION

On Friday afternoon, Ron Witt presented on the GEO-5 process in Europe. He outlined that a variety of stakeholders are involved in this process, including: academia; research and scientific bodies; the business and private sectors; religious and youth groups; civil society organizations; and European and global GEO collaborating centers.

CHAPTER WORKING GROUPS: Witt outlined the preliminary composition of the Europe regional chapter working group as follows: the Central European University; the European Environment Agency; Moscow State University; the Regional Environmental Centre; and UNEP/GRID-Arendal. He further outlined a pre-selection of contributing authors including from Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. Witt then noted that a second nomination process for regional chapter authors was now open.

REGIONAL NOMINATION PROCESS: Witt said the second nomination process for regional chapter authors is open for 30 days and that nominations should be made via the new UNEP GEO website, which will be used as the main communications tool during the GEO-5 process.

PRODUCTION SCHEDULE FOR GEO-5: Witt outlined key elements of the production schedule as follows: the first production meeting in November 2010; the second production

meeting in 2011; peer reviews in mid-2011; author sign-off in late 2011; a final intergovernmental meeting in early 2012 to endorse the summary for policy makers; and the launch and publication of GEO-5 tentatively on 5 June 2012, on World Environment Day.

OUTREACH IN THE REGIONS: Witt highlighted that outreach activities commenced at the start of the GEO-5 process. He mentioned some of the methods for outreach, such as reports, press releases, and press and radio interviews in multiple languages. Witt underscored that the purpose of the outreach is to effectively communicate GEO-5 messages to inform relevant events and processes, such as the Rio+20 process, by: creating awareness of the process and its major findings; keeping stakeholders informed and engaged throughout the process; and building anticipation for the ultimate findings of GEO-5. He further identified the target audience as: the UNEP Governing Council; other UN agencies including those involved in the Rio+20 process; decision makers and policy makers at all levels; and ministries other than the ministries responsible for the environment, such as ministries of finance and foreign affairs. Finally, he stressed that the process will ensure greater accessibility to findings by using different forms of media, such as online tools and the publication of briefing notes and case studies.

In the subsequent discussions, one participant stressed that media outreach would be “a waste of time” unless there are “groundbreaking” findings to report, stating that politicians only take notice of what is in the press. Another asked for clarification on how GEO-5 would feed into the Rio+20 process, and Billot explained that the summary for policy makers would be available by the Rio+20 Conference. Responding to a comment about promoting GEO-5 at the national level, Witt suggested that a series of launches in European capital cities on the GEO-5 report release date is an option that could be implemented with the help of national counterparts. Participants also discussed approaches to capacity building and training activities, including: progress on the GEO training manual; training of trainers; increasing the number and types of institutions involved in the process; and other products such as “GEO for Youth.” On the production schedule, Billot underscored that GEO-5 was being produced faster than previous reports, to ensure it could feed into the Rio+20 process.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Co-Chair Maier made a request to Belgium, as the current EU Council Presidency, to bring the GEO-5 process to the attention of the next meeting of the EU Working Party on International Environment Issues. Witt reiterated the intention of the UNEP Secretariat to prepare and circulate the report of the regional consultation to all invitees to the consultation, whether or not they were in attendance.

CLOSURE OF THE GEO-5 EUROPE REGIONAL CONSULTATION

On Friday afternoon, Billot thanked all participants for their work and involvement in the GEO-5 process. He underscored that the meeting had achieved its objectives and that participants had also provided strategic advice to the regional chapter lead authors, to assist them and their writing team in fulfilling their mandate. Co-Chair Maier praised the GEO process, stressing that decisions would ultimately be implemented at the regional and national levels. Witt closed the meeting at 4:00 pm.

GEO-5 West Asia Regional Consultation: The seventh and last of the GEO-5 regional consultations will be taking place in Bahrain from 4-5 October 2010.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

UNEP GEO-5 Regional Consultation, Bahrain: The aim of the seventh and final regional consultation is to agree on priority environmental issues and 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 fifth Global Environment Outlook (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 **e-mail:** matthew.billot@unep.org **internet:** http://www.unep.org/geo/GEO_Meetings.asp

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 significantly reduce 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/cop10/>

First GEO-5 Production Meeting: This meeting will take place after selection of coordinating lead authors, lead authors, contributing authors and reviewers, and will discuss details of the GEO-5 report production process. **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 **e-mail:** 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 **e-mail:** [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 **e-mail:** jamil.ahmad@unep.org; **internet:** <http://www.unep.org>

Seventh “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference: This Conference will address two main themes: sustainable management of water and water-related ecosystems; and greening the economy: mainstreaming the environment into economic development. **dates:** 21-23 September 2011 **location:** Astana, Kazakhstan **contact:** UNECE Secretariat **phone:** +41(0)22 917 44 44 **fax:** +41(0)22 917 05 05 **e-mail:** info.ece@unece.org; **internet:** <http://www.unece.org/env/efe/Astana/welcome.html>

Intergovernmental GEO-5 Meeting: The meeting will negotiate 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 **e-mail:** matthew.billot@unep.org; **internet:** http://www.unep.org/geo/GEO_Meetings.asp

UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD): This meeting, also referred to as Rio+20, will mark the 20th anniversary of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which convened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992. The event will focus on: a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and the institutional framework for sustainable development **dates:** 14-16 May 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **e-mail:** uncsd2012@un.org; **internet:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

GEO-5 Launch: The GEO-5 report will tentatively be launched on World Environment Day, in 2012. **dates:** 5 June 2012 (tentative) **location:** to be confirmed **contact:** GEO Unit, Division of Early Warning and Assessment, UNEP **phone:** +254 20 762 4546 **e-mail:** matthew.billot@unep.org; **internet:** http://www.unep.org/geo/GEO_Meetings.asp