

The sixth Global Environment Outlook Launched!

The sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook which is the most comprehensive and rigorous assessment on the state of the environment completed by the United Nations in the last five years was published on 13 March 2019 during the fourth United Nations Environment Assembly. The launch of the report included a series of interactive dialogues and presentations.



From left to right: Pierre Boileau (GEO Head), Paolo Soprano (Co-chair of the High-level Intergovernmental and Stakeholder Advisory Group), Paul Ekins (Co-chair of GEO-6), Yi Huang (Co-chair of the High-level Intergovernmental and Stakeholder Advisory Group), Nadya Hutagalung (UN Environment Goodwill Ambassador), Joyeeta Gupta (Co-chair of GEO-6), Bob Watson (Chair, Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, IPBES), Lewis Pugh (UN Environment Patron of the Oceans).

The first session saw the Global Environment Outlook team present the findings from the report. The moderator Nadya Hutagalung, UN Environment Goodwill Ambassador, opened the session followed by Jian Liu, UN Environment's Chief Scientist and Director for Science Division. The panel for the first session included Paolo Soprano, Co-Chair of the High-level Intergovernmental and Stakeholder Advisory Group (HLG), who explained how the report had been prepared in an [18-month process](#) culminating in January 2019, when the Summary for Policy-Makers was negotiated and approved at a four-day (21 to 24 January) meeting in Nairobi. His Co-chair Yi Huang highlighted the report's relevance for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the fight against climate change. Joyeeta Gupta and Paul Ekins, Co-Chairs of the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook introduced the theme of the report, "Healthy Planet, Healthy People." They highlighted the drivers of an unhealthy planet, and presented statistics on the crosscutting issues of chemicals, waste, resource use, energy consumption, and food waste. They also discussed policy innovation, noting that the report contains case studies of policy effectiveness on environmental issues. Bob Watson, Chair, Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), noted that the message of all global assessments from the GEO process, IPBES and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), is the same: that without rapid transformative change, global warming, biodiversity loss and land degradation will continue.

Pierre Boileau, Head of the Global Environment Outlook Unit, UN Environment, explained that the [Measuring Progress Report](#), which is a derivative of the main Global Environment Outlook, had considered progress towards 93 SDG indicators and that data was lacking on more than 40 indicators, highlighting the need for more data and information to adequately assess progress toward global goals.

The second session saw the youth panel made up of authors of the Global Environment Outlook-6 for Youth report highlight issues including the need for systems thinking, environmental education in schools and relevant work skills for green jobs. Speakers from the floor proposed many ideas for action and urged participants to bear in mind “the power of human emotion” to bring change. Lewis Pugh, UN Environment Patron of the Oceans and an endurance swimmer, spoke to the audience about his first-hand experiences witnessing the degradation of oceans around the world.



Youth Panel Members from Left to Right: Mohsen Gul, Maria Jesus Iraola, AlAnoud Alkhatlan, Mandy van den Ende, Sarah Nyawira.



Kenyan speechwriting competition winners presenting a speech during the Youth Panel Session. From left: Charlotte Wanja, student at Alliance Girls High School in Kikuyu and Shlok Sachdev, a student at Premier Academy in Nairobi.

The third session focused on transformational change and on the possibility of everyday actions to promote sustainability. The [GEO-6 report](#), which was produced by more than 200 scientists and experts from more than 70 countries, says that we must drastically scale up environmental protections or we could see great environmental disasters. It also warns that pollutants in our freshwater systems will see anti-microbial resistance become a major cause of death by 2050 and endocrine disruptors impact male and female fertility.

The [sixth Global Environmental Outlook](#) released at the world's highest-level environmental forum, the Fourth UN Environment Assembly where policymakers are expected to tackle critical issues such as stopping food waste, promoting the spread of electric mobility, and tackling the crisis of plastic pollution in our oceans. Joyce Msuya, Acting Executive Director of UN Environment mentioned that the report is an outlook for humanity and if we continue on our current path, we will have a bleak future for humankind.

The projection of a future healthy planet with healthy people is based on a new way of thinking where the 'grow now, clean up after' model is changed to a near-zero-waste economy by 2050. At present the world is not on track to meet the SDGs by 2030 or 2050. Urgent action is required now. The [report](#) advises adopting less-meat intensive diets, and reducing [food waste](#) in both developed and developing countries, would reduce the need to increase food production by 50 per cent to feed the projected 9-10 billion people on the planet in 2050. At present, 33 per cent of global edible food is wasted, and 56 per cent of waste happens in industrialized countries.

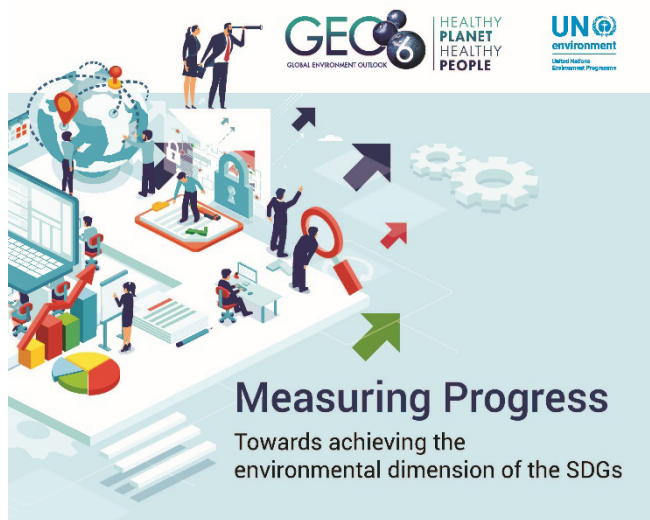
The [report](#) calls for action to curb plastic pollution going into oceans each year. While the issue has received increased attention in recent years, there is still more to be done to tackle marine litter.

[Click here to access the Report](#)

The Key messages video of the report is available [here](#). A video of the Making of GEO-6 is available [here](#).

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Measuring Progress: Towards Achieving the Environmental Dimension of the SDGs



Measuring Progress: Towards Achieving the Environmental Dimension of the SDGs is a derivative product of the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook. It provides an overview of the current state of the environmental dimensions of sustainable development based on the SDG indicators – including the availability of statistical and spatial data, analytical methods and visualizations – and identifies knowledge and information gaps in terms of assessing progress towards the environmental dimension of the SDGs.

The publication was launched on the 10th of March 2019 during the Science Policy Business Forum 2019, at UN Environment Headquarters in Gigiri, Nairobi, Kenya by the lead author Jillian Campbell from UN Environment. Thematic and Regional experts also contributed to the publication.



Of the 93 environment-related SDGs indicators, there are 22 (23%) for which good progress has been made over the last 15 years. If this progress continues, it is likely that these SDGs targets will be met. However, for the other 77 per cent of the environment-related SDGs indicators, there is either not sufficient data to assess progress (68%) or it is unlikely that the target will be met without upscaling action (9%).

Jillian Campbell, Statistician, SDGs Data & Environment Statistics Unit, UN Environment

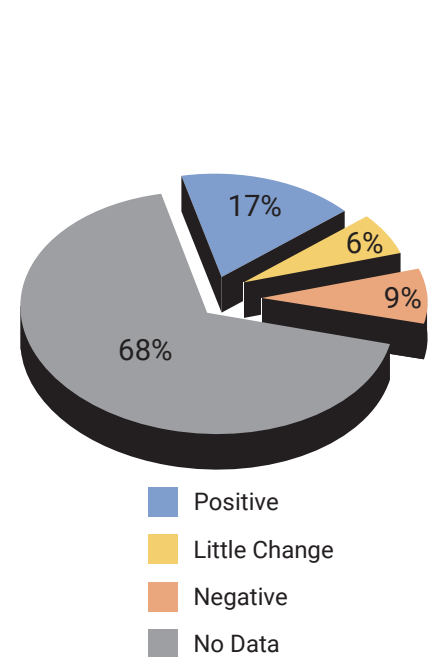
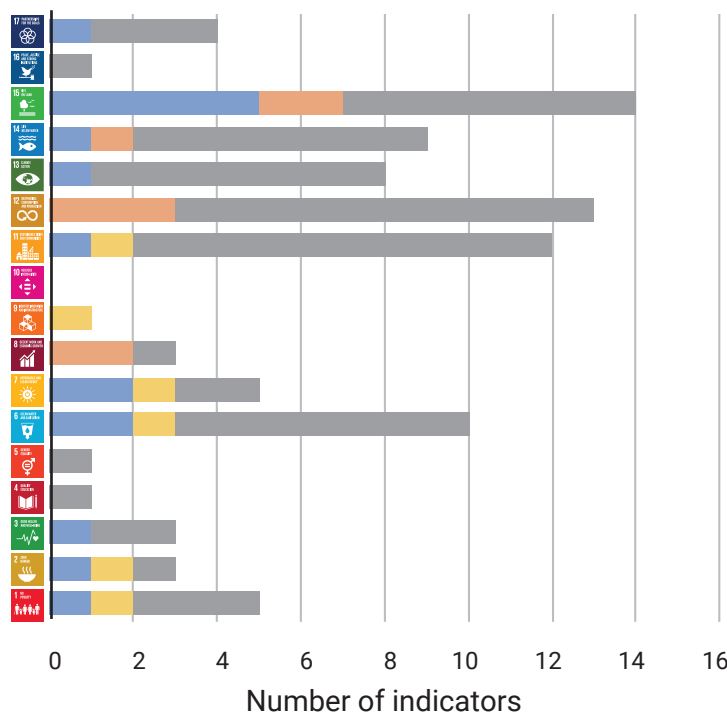


Figure 1: Overview of SDGs Progress (SDG Tree)

More than 30 per cent of the environment-related SDGs indicators still do not have an agreed-methodology. A major challenge is developing methodologies which provide high quality information without requiring a prohibitive amount of financial resources.

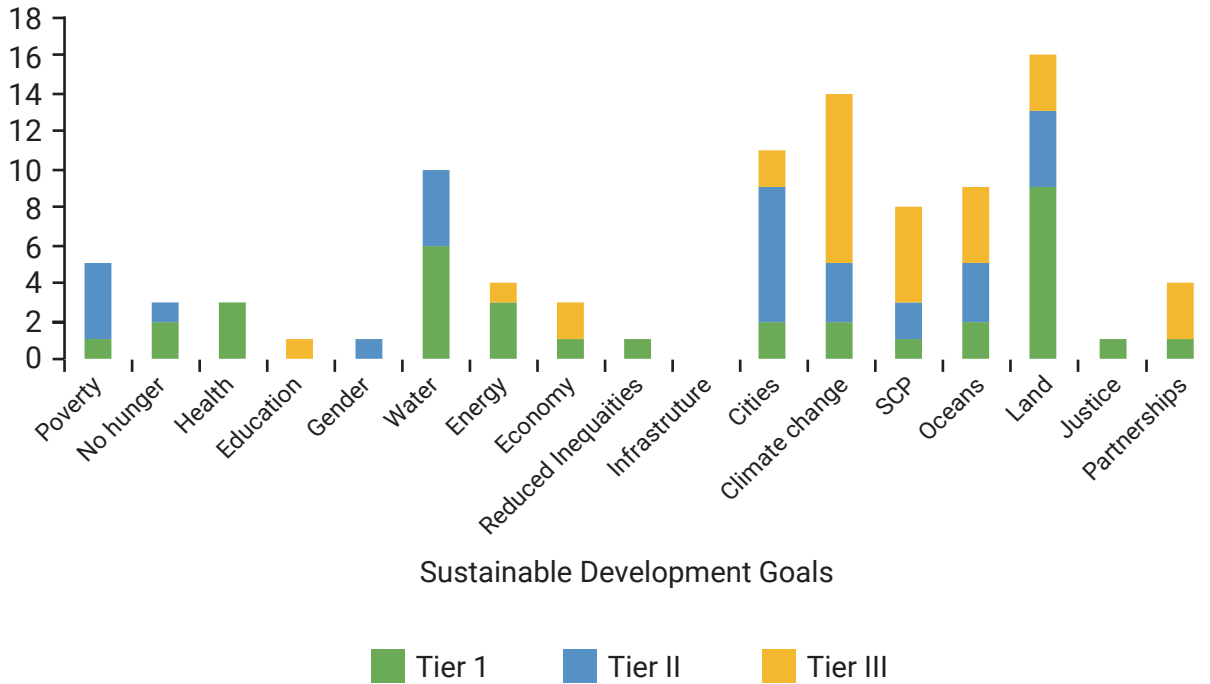


Figure 2: Environment-related SDGs indicators by Tier

Data is needed to explore interlinkages across environmental areas together with social and economic information in order to produce insights. There is a need not only for national level statistics, but for geo-spatial data and data which can be disaggregated for vulnerable populations.

In order to achieve this, it will require bringing together new and existing data: citizen science, satellite, in situ, survey, transactional and other forms of data. This is the case for building a digital ecosystem for the environment.

There is a need to scale up support for environmental monitoring and analysis and to promote using data for action in order for the environmental dimension of the SDGs to be met.

The publication can be accessed from [here](#).



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