UN environment

GEO MATTERS

GEO 6 GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT OUTLOOK

HEALTHY PLANET HEALTHY PEOPLE

MARCH 2017

Outcomes of the First Global Authors meeting of the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook

An exciting week of meetings to launch the drafting of the sixth Global Environment Outlook came to a close on 24 February 2017 in the beautiful town of Frascati, Italy, just outside of Rome. The meeting, graciously funded by the Italian government and hosted at the European Space Agency facilities, brought together several different groups of experts, including:

- Authors for the thematic and cross-cutting chapters of the assessment,
- The High-level Intergovernmental and Stakeholder Advisory Group,
- The Scientific Advisory Panel,
- The Global Environmental Outlook Fellows,
- The Assessment Methodologies, Data and Information Working Group, and
- The Innovative Outlooks Group.

These groups met to participate in:

- Basic orientation sessions,
- Briefing sessions on the roles of the advisory bodies,
- Planning sessions for key elements of the Global Environment Outlook process, such as the drafting of the Summary for Policy Makers,
- Interactive sessions among the various participants to ensure good collaboration and communication among the different groups.

European Space Agency (ESA) in Frascati, Italy

The co-chairs and vice-chairs of the sixth Global Environment Outlook, Professor Paul Ekins, Professor Joyeeta Gupta, Dr. Jane Bemigisha and Dr. Jiang Kejun, guided the groups masterfully through the week's agenda. This agenda included joint meetings of the advisory bodies with the authors, collaborative drafting sessions between thematic and cross-cutting authors, joint sessions of the advisory bodies as well as the closing plenary where the outcomes document and path forward were discussed. Important decisions were made to provide additional space in the document for explaining the linkages among the cross-cutting issues as well as ensuring the sixth Global Environment Outlook articulates environmental linkages to global policy, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals and the existing set of environmental agreements.

The Open Dialogue entitled "Environmental Security in a Changing world" in Frascati, Italy

Participants to the first global authors meeting of the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook

With such ambitious goals, a revised timeline for completing the assessment was also agreed as well as an expanded peer review process for the assessment. The UN Environment Secretariat was tasked with preparing a revised work plan for the assessment given these important changes to the Global Environment Outlook process.

Authors are now expected to produce zero order drafts of the first nine chapters by 15 March 2017 and they will be asked to address the comments from the first order draft review at the next authors' meeting scheduled for 22-26 May 2017 in Bangkok, Thailand. The intergovernmental and expert review period of the second order draft is now planned from 1 July to 15 September 2017, allowing authors to address the comments and prepare their final drafts at the third authors meeting, from 9-13 October 2017. The meeting also established timelines for preparing a progress report on the sixth Global Environment Outlook for Ministers at the third UN Environment Assembly, scheduled from 4-6 December 2017.

Authors of the sixth edition Global Environment Outlook at a discussion session

Although the week was packed with extensive discussions and chapter drafting, there was time for some fun and learning, with a reception hosted at the famous Villa Grazioli and a tour of the facilities of the fantastic European Space Agency, who were the gracious and generous hosts for the first Global Environment Outlook author's meeting. With this friendly atmosphere, authors and other participants were able to work hard and begin to see their chapters evolve into the foundations of a Global Environment Outlook, which, being presented to the UN Environment Assembly in 2019, and providing a first tracking of progress towards the targets of the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals, presents a particularly important opportunity for the world's policymakers to engage positively with global environmental realities.

Villa Grazioli in Frascati, Italy

Integrated Environmental Assessment Update

The update of the Integrated Environmental Assessment (IEA) guidelines now means that the practice of integrated environmental assessment (IEA) will evolve significantly from the last set of guidance which was developed by UN Environment in 2007. Among the objectives of the current draft of the guidelines is to evolve the traditional Demand-Pressure-State-Impact-Response (DPSIR) model for conducting Integrated Environmental Assessment (IEA) by a more holistic and fluid assessment approach which recognizes that clear separation between these concepts is no longer possible. This will present an approach to conducting assessments that is more inclusive regarding the depth of state of the environment analysis, the expansiveness of the policy response review and the scope and accuracy of the environmental outlook. UN Environment has now published the 'living document' of the Integrated Environmental Assessment Guidelines with its partner GRID-Arendal. http://web.unep.org/geo/guidelines-conducting-integrated-environmental-assessments

The Integrated Environmental Assessment (IEA) guidelines are now on a six-month road test which commenced at the first author's meeting of the sixth edition of the Global Environmental Outlook (GEO-6) assessment at Frascati, Italy. The draft is well improved by the review from the full scientific and technical review of our community of Global Environmental Outlook (GEO).

Cycling in Nairobi

by Pierre Boileau

Heavy trucks in Nairobi

Cycling in Nairobi is a challenge, but there are ways to make it fun and safe. My history with cycling in cities is a long one, starting in 1998 when I worked for Environment Canada and participated in a programme called the Commuter Challenge. The Commuter Challenge encouraged people to choose other modes of transportation, other than the single person car, to get to work. People were encouraged to carpool, take the bus, or even ride a bicycle. I chose the last option and found it fun and energizing.

Since then I have always tried to find alternative ways to get to work, choosing, for example, to live walking distance from my office when I lived in Paris. This is because the statistics on single driver cars used to get to work are staggering. For example, more than 76% of workers drove to work alone in the United States in 2013. In Canada, 74% of Canadians used a private vehicle to get to work in 2011 and 71% of Australians use a car to get to work in 2013 and 64% of trips made in the United Kingdom in 2016 were in a car. Now I'm not sure what the statistics are in Kenya, but the number of cars in Nairobi is certainly impressive and it leads to quite impressive traffic jams.

For a cyclist this can be a difficult but not an impossible task to manage. What is more challenging is when commuters don't obey the rules of the road. This makes cycling unpredictable and unsafe. Nairobi traffic has a mix of pedestrians, cars, heavy trucks and public transportation (small vans or buses called Matatus or motorcycles called Bodabodas). There are a few cyclists, but not that many. In Nairobi stopping at a traffic light seems to be optional, even though there are not many of them. Much of the traffic at intersections is either uncontrolled or controlled by traffic police. This makes crossing intersections the most challenging task for a cyclist. I have chosen to walk my bicycle across most intersections, although pedestrians also face many risks in traffic in Nairobi as well.

So to make cycling in Nairobi safe and fun, there are four simple rules: