



**UNEP RRC.AP/ GEO
Regional Planning Meeting on GEO-4**

**The Montien Hotel
Bangkok, Thailand, 18-19 November 2004**

MEETING RECORD

Thursday 18th November 2004

1. Regional Planning Meeting for GEO-4 was organized in order to discuss and seek for guidance and mechanisms on GEO 4 outline and its implications on regional preparations and preparatory process, strengthening the scientific base of GEO-4 Report and enhancing the networking and partnership for the GEO process in the region. It was taken place at the Montien Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand during 18-19 November 2004. Participants include representatives from GEO collaborating centres and assessment partners in Asia and the Pacific, namely IGES, SEPA, TERI, TEI, IGCI, USP, AIT and SIC; representatives from DA and UNEP/ROAP, and UNEP RRC.AP staff. (Attachment 1: List of participants)
2. Mr. Jinhua Zhang, Regional Coordinator, welcomed Ms Cristina Boelcke, Director of Regional Cooperation Division, Mr. Surendra Shrestha, Director of UNEP/ROAP and other distinguished participants. Ms. Cristina Bockle was invited to do the opening remarks. Her brief remarks included the essence of GEO process and its contents to the region, the significance of its participatory process, its relevance to data/indicators and information, its emphasis on policy relevance and finally its contribution to emerging and transboundary issues.
3. Mr Shrestha was invited to address the opening remarks. He first welcomed USP back into the GEO collaborating centre in Asia and the Pacific and stressed the roles of USP, IGCI and SPREP in South Pacific in the context of capacity building. It was emphasized that GEO is a participatory process that provided advise on state, trend and policy on emerging issues through policy dialogue of government and civil society
4. The meeting started with suggestion that midway review for data used in GEO-4 should be conducted since the collection starts in 2004 and publication will be in 2007. Then, there was a response to the concern of cost of inaction that it was discussed in June meeting on Chapter 5 where there is a mechanism called financing where there is a sub-section called "cost of inaction". And it was confirmed that issue of poverty reduction and equity and would be included in Chapter three.
5. There was suggestion that one chapter should deal with environment for prosperity and well-being and how to make GEO-4 Report more policy relevant rather than policy prescriptive. Also a concern that global assessment through GEO-4 should focus on sub-regional information to avoid diluted and unclear information at the regional reporting. Argument was brought up that it could be a thought of bringing to sub-regional level from global level. The response was that NBO would finalize the comments and send back guideline for report preparation in the near future.
6. Another concern was on importance of having standard indicators and suggestion to have chapter 6 to develop indicators. Finally, before the meeting was called for coffee break, it was mentioned that RRC.AP has published indicators for each sub-region which will be useful guidelines to put information together for entire region.
7. The argument on report was continued by focusing on sub-regional and regional priorities issues in the global report and clarification of possibility to have a regional report. It was responded that there were

two subjects: issues and approaches to work on as a team and data-indicators issues. In addition, it was mentioned that to regional contribution to the global report was the first product, the second issue was on if there would be regional report and the third on if there would be a sub-regional report. There was possibility based on strong networking at the sub-regional level to have first sub-regional and follow by regional.

8. There was support on the idea to have report at sub-regional level and clarification that GEO references had to follow GEO style. It was raised that entry point for Chapter 2 had changed according to the Design Meeting in Nairobi. There was a discussion on energy stock, energy, security and energy production.
9. Further question was on the procedure of producing the regional report since CC was sub-region based, it was easier for the CC to produce sub-regional report. The response covered the comment that harmonization of data and indicator was important and at the regional level, UNEP takes lead but consultation process that includes all the people.
10. The question were on the approach used for GEO report; top-down or bottom-up, and missing issues e.g. regional cross boundary and inclusion of Pacific Islands in regional capacity building. It was replied that both top-down and bottom-up approaches were applied as well as feedbacks would be used and at the same time, regional priorities will be decided by the regions.
11. Focusing on Pacific Islands, Pacific was missed out in the capacity building and in the regional meetings. Islands have very different issues and have re-affirmed commitment to international treaties as well as committed to SD. More challenges resulting from climate change and other ones such as IT, globalization. However, countries have the data, but is poor in communicating the data to RRC.AP, UNEP etc. For example, in UNEP subregional indicator publication, data used for Islands was at 1992.
12. The response on Pacific Islands was that SPREP played important role in previous GEO process. Always found problem with data. Need for new data and capacity building. Further response on the previous issue was that regional issues were region-specific. In the global process too, the same CC go there. So the global process also is being developed by the experts of the region. Following the global process, we come down to the regional level.
13. Comment from Central Asia was that Central Asia has specific issues, which are different from issues of this region. Official state statistics in CA are different and some indicators are missing in their state statistics. The methodology and tools are different. In all the countries, they have National environmental action plan and at sub-regional level, they have sub-regional action plan. It implied that some input in Central Asia in GEO will not be provided such as indicators such as poverty.
14. Further question was how reliably, correctly can they use such scientific, technical data in the GEO report, because in every country, there are organizations that deal with scientific data but are using different methodology and tools and their output is also different. It was commented that there was a need to agree on data, harmonization of data and integration from national, sub-regional and regional level. It was raised that since GEO can have global report and regional report, quantitative data can be replaced by qualitative statement.
15. It was raised for discussion if marine issue should stand alone or be a part of water, if energy will be a part of renewable and what are regional transboundary issues in the region. The responses on transboundary issues at the global level included CO₂ and climate change, at the regional included acid rain, especially for China and Japan, brown haze effects, and dam construction and urban air pollution at the local level.
16. It was agreed that it is important to ensure scientifically credible information that will be used in drafting issue and to follow GEO 4 reference style. It was recommended to use graphical presentations including diagrams, and photos in place of boxes to present data. It was announced that the headquarter was preparing the GEO manual before the meeting was called for lunch.
17. The Meeting was divided into groups to discuss data-indicators. (Attachment 2: output from the group assignment) There was a presentation on Integrated Environmental Assessment (IEA) methodologies

with the last comment on the importance of organization, institutional arrangement and finance to guarantee success for a policy. The closing for Day 1.

Friday 19th November 2004

18. The presentation on GEO Scenario was conducted. The first question was on the difference between Outlook and Scenario and SREC scenario can be applied. The response on SREC scenario was that SRES scenario could not be utilized for overall process because it was only for climate change while some elements of SRES scenario can be used in the GEO process. The meeting started discussing on difference between Outlook and Scenario.
19. It was stated that purpose of scenario is to bound the probable outcome. Scenario building exercise should include both less likely pathway and highly probable scenario. Also it depended on what kind of environmental issue that were being studied. Scenario for 2050 is important and is was a need to be linked to long term planning process. All major documents focuses on fifty year planning. It was mentioned that scenarios were the means by which we arrive at the various outlooks.
20. Further comment was that to develop scenario is to see if we can go further and should be connection between environment, socio-economic issues. In the model in the scenario, we shall reach this data in ten years as the matter of fact that no scenario shows stabilization of the situation. It also should not be documented for decision makers. If GEO report is as a handbook for just ordinary people and not policy makers, it is ok. But if it is developed for policy makers, we should review the methodology and have more scientific approaches.
21. It was responded that scenarios were Asia and the Pacific region should be consistent with time horizon for scenario and should stay constant on types and number of scenarios decided at the global. There was the challenge of the diversity and different growth and development in the region. It was ultimate to aggregate these differences into the storyline, and due to different kind of developing status of countries, it was a big challenge to predict a pathway for this region.
22. No further discussion on outlook as the explanation of Outlook was not provided in the GEO glossary. However an additional point of including urban air into the GEO scenario. It was informed that scenario could not be listed based on one issue, and finally recommended an attempt to build on the existing mechanism, rather than duplication of the efforts. There was a brief on discussion of scenario in Nairobi meeting before the meeting was called for break.
23. The meeting started with the discussion on GEO Yearbook because all CC should be committed to provide data, feedback, comments and suggestion. It was emphasized that Yearbook would likely present only new information about the issue, and tracking of information of events that are taking place. There was a recommendation to encourage CC to be proactive (provide information to RRC.AP) than reactive, to provide CC with guidelines to decide about the issue and criteria to judge the issue, and to extend relationship beyond ToR.
24. It was underlined that sharing and dissemination of information between RRC.AP and CCs is very important and yearly data should be both quantitative and qualitative by referring that particular year as baseline. Still it should be union between science and policy. It was informed that though 1987 was the year of Bruntland report and the concept of sustainable development, 1990 should be base year for data.
25. Emphasis was on the training for policy makers and public to build their capacity, and on the possibility to make GEO publicity through media by media, it would deliver message to the policy makers. Data was similar, only different in nomenclature (classification) which is available and can be retrieved from the website. Finally it was emphasized that the major MEA would be incorporated in all chapters, and draft of ToR were distributed for comments.
26. The afternoon session began with EKC's presentation on its concept and implication. Question started with the coordination between EKC and GRID within RRC.AP and the response was provided that password and login system was available for accessing and downloading data. Further request to GRID could be conducted if difficulties were met while downloading.

27. The comment was that the accessibility was limited to people with access to computers and internet, and CD and publication were the most solutions. A concern was raised that users should be involved from the beginning and a need for quality control of the information, which was a challenge for credibility and reliability. However, this could be a good source of new knowledge on environment for student and research communities.
28. It was stated that Data Portal is a information portal, not knowledge portal. Main difference between information portal and knowledge portal was the interactivity. In this portal, the only interaction was the search function and exchange information, not good enough to qualify as knowledge portal. So, it was recommended to put case studies and good examples on scientific and technological issues to order to have more sense of knowledge centre.
29. It was agreed that discussion/comments from this meeting could be incorporated into presentation of the coming CAN (Collaborative Assessment Network) meeting. Then the meeting was circulated list of GEO data issues on demand and supply for discussion and feedbacks. Discussion and suggestion included adjustment of the table from supply to "available" and demand to "need", request for new data and links to the portal, inclusion of emerging and transboundary issues.
30. The objectives of this discussion was to explore what is available and lacking in the region and it was peer review for data to be used for GEO-4 report preparation. Data Portal was a valuable tool which required more consultation. Besides, the concern of clarification on GEO process was raised that the GEO guidelines and procedure is required for increasing and sharing common understanding among CC.
31. The meeting had come to an end. The following points were conclusion and recommendation from the meeting.
 - GEO 4 should be built on process and content – report, data, tool, methodology and networking among collaborating centres themselves and with regional collaborating centres should be strengthened.
 - Emerging and transboundary issues at the regional/subregional level should be specific as well as down to top and top to down approach.
 - Focus should be on prevention in Chapter 5 – 3 R/ circular economy/ middle path and GEO referencing style is agreed to be followed.
 - Definition, time horizons and pathways on GEO scenario and outlook should be clearly informed by Nairobi. Focus of scenario outcome in 2015 to produce scenario 2032 by using data from IPCC and GEO.
 - Peer review of data/information will be focused in 2006 and 2007. Data and information should be provided to GEO data portal/SRES for developing scenario. It was recommended that Baseline should be 1987 – 2004 and assistance and partnership from CCs is required for data and information sharing to strengthen EKC as well as GEO Data portal at the regional level.
 - CCs's assistance in completing GEO Yearbook and information tracking is required as well as CCs's response to indicator work with targets of Land/air/water.
 - Two-way capacity building should be undertaken by CCs. And capacity on IEA should be built as a useful process to integrate policy with SoE
 - GEO should outreach to Minsiter, CSO, media, and press