

UNEP REPORT TO BE NEGOTIATED BY POLICY-MAKERS

Global Environmental Outlook-5: Summary for Policy Makers

VENUE: Gwangju, Metropolitan City, Republic of Korea, 29 – 31 January 2012

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has the mandate of keeping under review the state and trends of the global environment. One of the tools it uses to do this is the UNEP flagship assessment process and report – the Global Environment Outlook.

UNEP is working with scientific and policy experts around the world on the fifth assessment – GEO-5. GEO-5 will be published in June 2012. In addition, findings, specifically relevant to policy-makers, have been distilled from the GEO-5 assessment into a **GEO-5 Summary for Policy Makers (SPM)**. Governments from across the world are meeting in Gwangju, South Korea to negotiate and endorse this draft SPM.

The SPM draft text being negotiated talks of how critical thresholds in the Earth System have been or are close to being reached, due to human pressures on the planet. The impacts of exceeding these thresholds, it says, include serious consequences for human well-being.

The SPM states that evidence-based policy making requires more, reliable data; shifting the policy focus to address socio-economic and cultural forces that account for pressures on environmental conditions; scaling up promising practices from the regions; and innovative responses.

It also says that solutions are within reach, but early action is imperative if the international community is to avoid further, escalating economic, environmental and human well-being costs.

Once negotiated, the endorsed version of the SPM will be published and launched at the UNEP headquarters in Nairobi during the UNEP Governing Council Special Session on 20 February 2012.

About GEO-5

The fifth edition of the Global Environmental Outlook is the work of hundreds of scientists, policy experts and civil society representatives, who have produced a comprehensive assessment of the world's environment. Experts have analyzed relevant internationally agreed environmental agreements to identify those with the potential to help speed up local, national, and international momentum towards achieving sustainable development.

The final GEO-5 report, the UN's authoritative assessment of the global environment, will be launched on 5 June 2012, on World Environment Day - one month ahead of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20 Conference) in Brazil.

For previous GEO assessments and more information on the GEO-process – visit www.unep.org/geo

Special event in Gwangju

Date: Sunday 29 January 2012

Time: 5.30-7.00 pm

Venue: Holiday Inn/Convention Hall

'Sustainable urban management: cities responding to current global and local challenges'

This special event will be hosted jointly by the Metropolitan City of Gwangju, the Government of the Republic of Korea and UNEP.

Building on the increasing attention and interest in sustainable urban management in the context of climate change and resource efficiency, this Special Event will draw on the outcomes of the recent Urban Environmental Accords Gwangju Summit and GEO-5 city-related assessments, to discuss the stakes, challenges and opportunities for cities in contributing to delivering a green economy and advancing the transformative change towards sustainable development.

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Other resources for journalists:

Keeping Track Of Our Changing Environment

The environmental changes that have swept the planet over the last twenty years are spotlighted in a recently launched compilation of statistical data by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), in a report entitled “Keeping Track of our Changing Environment: From Rio to Rio+20”. The report was produced as part of UNEP’s Global Environment Outlook-5 (GEO -5) series.

UN Under-Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner, said, “The indicator report gets us all back to basics, underlining the rapid buildup of greenhouse gases to the erosion of biodiversity and the 40 per cent increase in the use of natural resources—faster than global population growth.”

“But the report also underlines how, when the world decides to act it can dramatically alter the trajectory of hazardous trends that threaten human well-being—action to phase-out ozone damaging chemicals being a spirited and powerful example,” he added.

Through data, graphics and satellite images, the UNEP report offers wide-ranging information on a number of key issues. The *Keeping Track of our changing environment* report can be found on the GEO-5 website:

http://www.unep.org/geo/GEO5_Products.asp

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