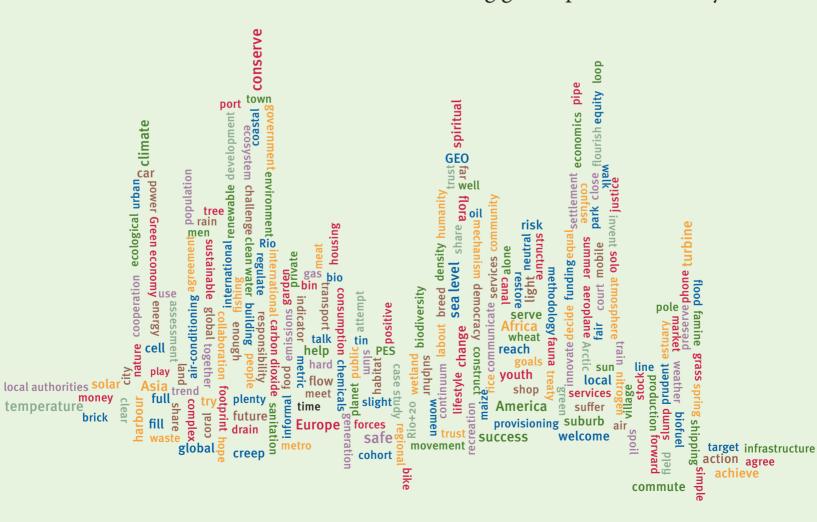






for local government solving global problems locally

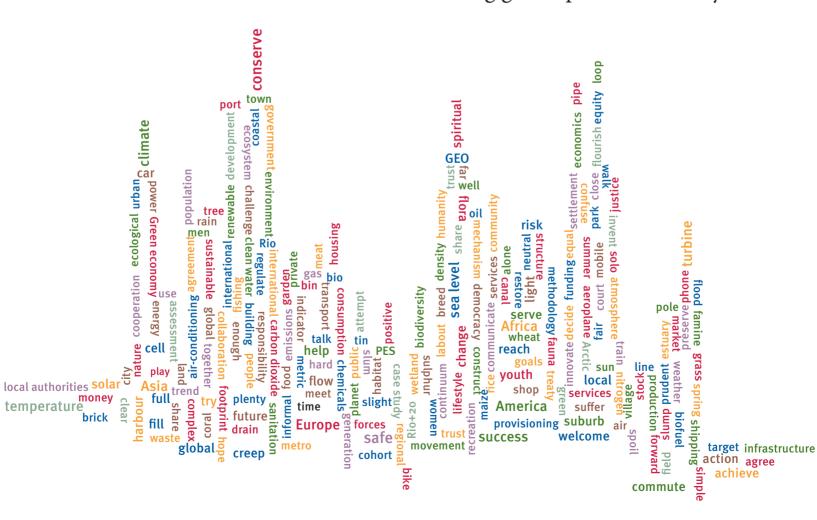








for local government solving global problems locally



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FOREWORD

The planet and its people are accelerating towards a sobering and largely unsustainable future; a conclusion reached by the fifth *Global Environment Outlook* (*GEO-5*) — an international assessment coordinated by UNEP. A sharp and decisive turn towards a Green Economy has to occur.

Of 90 key goals set by the international community over the past decades and assessed in *GEO-5*, only in four of them can significant progress be shown, for example the phase-out of lead in petrol. No progress has been made towards achieving 24 of the goals, including adequately addressing dwindling fish stocks and the intensification of droughts.

If global and regional environmental trends continue, they will have significant adverse implications for human well-being. Local governments already experience many environmental strains at the local level, along with pressures from local communities and businesses. In the absence of strong international action, their responses represent beacons of hope – and many of their efforts are decades old. For example, climate change was a focal point for local action even before the introduction of international climate mechanisms.

This *GEO-5* companion report for local authorities, prepared by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability in collaboration with UNEP, highlights that the world is rich in local policies, initiatives and projects. These are rapidly evolving and becoming ever more sophisticated and integrated. Local initiatives offer possible pathways for tackling environmental challenges and reaching international targets.

This joint ICLEI and UNEP report underlines that many of these initiatives have been envisioned and enacted by local authorities in the world's cities and towns, where today over half the global population resides. Their actions represent a body of accomplishments that can illuminate the path to "the future we want".

The findings and case studies also offer signposts towards a set of possible sustainable development goals post-2015. The action of local authorities for a sustainable 21st century

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Konrad Otto-Zimmermann Secretary General ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability

already unites developed and developing countries in terms of sharing and evolving experiences through global networks such as ICLEI. Take the city of Windhoek in Namibia, for example, where policies and strategies are under way to better manage water supplies to meet the needs of a growing population, or Cape Town, where biodiversity assets are protected by innovative mapping and planning.

A public-private partnership in Pangkalpinang, Indonesia, has transformed an old tin-mining area into a botanical garden with important new ecological services including water supplies to local communities.

Tokyo – the world's largest metropolitan area – has developed a Cap and Trade system in addition to a Green Buildings programme to reduce carbon emissions by a quarter by 2020 compared to 2000 levels. Among many actions, the German city of Bonn promotes the purchase of sustainable goods and services, thereby acting as a catalyst for the greening of supply chains far beyond the city limits.

Bogota in Colombia has pioneered creative and integrated land-use planning and is internationally known for its bus rapid transit system. It has also placed the city within the regional ecosystem of surrounding landscapes and settlements.

If a fresh and innovative future is to be charted, then we need all hands on deck, including governments, multilateral institutions, companies and citizens. Without sustainable cities, only a partial transition can be possible.

Local authorities, including regional and provincial governments, are already demonstrating that paradigm shifts and radical changes are both possible and beneficial. World leaders can build upon these examples and achievements at the Rio+20 Summit to replicate them and scale them up towards more ambitious action and targets. The opportunity for world leaders at Rio+20 is to accelerate action and turn sustainable development from patchy implementation into a reality for 7 billion people, rising to more than 9 billion by 2050.

Jelin Steins

Achim Steiner United Nations Under-Secretary-General UNEP Executive Director

INTRODUCTION TO GEO-5

Global Environment Outlook (GEO) is UNEP's consultative, participatory assessment process reporting on the state, trends and outlook of the global environment, and drawing on the expertise of close to 300 scientific and policy experts. The process has two other important functions: to provide policy options to inform environmental decision making, thus facilitating the interaction between science and policy, and to build capacity for conducting integrated environmental assessments amongst a wide variety of regional and national organizations and individuals around the world.

GEO uses the DPSIR framework – drivers, pressures, states, impacts, responses – for assessing the state and trends of the environment and seeks to answer the following questions:

- What is happening to the environment and why (pressure and state)?
- What are the consequences of a changed environment (*impact*)?
- What can be done at regional and national levels and how can internationally agreed goals and targets be achieved (*response*)?

GEO-5, the latest in the GEO series, released in June 2012, provides an assessment of the state and trends of the global environment in relation to internationally agreed goals; evaluates the gaps and barriers in their implementation; and provides policy options that have the potential to speed-up realization of these goals.



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PURPOSE OF GEO-5 for Local Authorities

The *GEO-5* for Local Authorities report has been developed by ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability in collaboration with UNEP, and draws on the findings of *GEO-5*. The report shows that pressures on the global environment affect the local level. Conversely, local decisions and responses can not only improve local conditions, but also significantly contribute to improving the state of the global environment. By placing global and regional environmental challenges in the context of local policy making, the report aims to make the findings of *GEO-5* more relevant for local governance. The report highlights the role that local authorities can play in meeting internationally agreed goals and targets and in addressing local, regional and global environmental challenges.

THE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

The challenges

Unprecedented changes are affecting human well-being

GEO-5 shows that currently observed alterations in the Earth System are unprecedented. While efforts to slow the rate and extent of change – including measures to enhance resource efficiency and mitigate the effects of climate change – have been moderately successful, they have not managed to halt or reverse adverse environmental shifts. With human pressures on the Earth System accelerating, humanity has either exceeded or is approaching several global, regional and local environmental thresholds. Once these have been passed, abrupt and possibly irreversible changes in the life-support functions of the planet are likely to occur, with significant adverse implications for human well-being. For instance:

- The escalating frequency and severity of climate events, such as floods and droughts, affects both natural assets and human security.
- Accelerating temperature change and sea level rise are affecting the social cohesion of many communities including indigenous and local ones, with sea level rise posing a threat to natural assets and food security in some places.
- Substantial biodiversity loss and the on-going extinction of species, including the collapse of a number of fisheries and the loss of species used for medicinal purposes, are affecting the provision of ecosystem services.
- Multiple and interacting factors, such as droughts combined with socio-economic pressures, are affecting human security.

Internationally agreed goals have only partly been met

A large number of internationally agreed goals are in place to address environmental challenges. Despite this, *GEO-5* says that the international community has made uneven progress in achieving these goals and improving the state of the environment. Indeed the trends of environmental deterioration identified in *GEO-5* demonstrate that much still needs to be done with respect to internationally agreed goals.

The current policy focus

GEO-5 observes that policy is largely focused on addressing the pressures or symptoms of change rather than the underlying drivers or root causes. Population growth and economic development are seen as the drivers of global environmental change, with particular facets exerting pressure: energy, transport, urbanization and globalization.

Understanding the growth of these drivers and the connections between them will go a long way to addressing their collective

impact on the Earth System and in finding possible solutions, thereby preserving the environmental benefits on which all human societies and economies depend.

Options for action

Scaling up promising policies - regional and local examples

GEO-5's regional analysis identifies promising policy responses and instruments, based on best practice, that have been adopted successfully in one or more regions and that have the potential to speed up achievement of internationally agreed goals. These were found to be successful, in part, due to their enabling environment or local context. Table 1 on the following pages provides examples from *GEO-5*, which ICLEI then builds on, highlighting related case studies of innovative local government action.



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| GEO-5 area of focus | Policy responses/instruments identified in <i>GEO-5</i> | Featured local government policy examples |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Environmental governance | Multi-level/multi-stakeholder participation. Increased introduction of the principle of subsidiarity. Governance at local levels. Policy synergy and removal of conflict. Strategic environmental assessment. Accounting systems that value natural capital and ecosystem services. Improved access to information, public participation and environmental justice. Capacity strengthening of all actors. Improved goal setting and monitoring systems. | • Rizhao, China: implementation of an eco- city building plan substantially reduces emissions. |
| Climate change | Removing perverse/environmentally harmful subsidies, especially on fossil fuels. Carbon taxes. Forestry incentives for carbon sequestration. Emission trading schemes. Climate insurance. Capacity building and finance. Climate change preparedness and adaptation such as climate proofing infrastructure. | EThekwini (Durban), South Africa: integrating adaptation planning into a general planning and development framework, cemented by institutional programming. Sofala Province, Mozambique: a pilot project in the voluntary carbon market. Tokyo, Japan: Green Building and Cap and Trade programmes to reduce carbon emissions and enhance energy efficiency in buildings. Veracruz State, Mexico: the Veracruz Programme on Climate Change and the State Law on Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change Effects promote action |

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