



Third Regional Meeting

GEO for Youth in Latin America and the Caribbean

29 November to 1st December 2007
Panama City, Panama

Regional Plan of Action 2008-2010

1. Assessment

At this Third Regional Meeting, the representatives of GEO for Youth agreed that making integrated environment assessments has been, and continues to be, the core of our work as a network. We observed that, by preparing the GEO for Youth reports, well-founded and diverse processes were begun that later served as a basis to implement environmental actions that originated in the interest and the concerns expressed by young people.

That is the reason why we decided that the Plan of Action 2008-2010 should concentrate its efforts on making more and better GEO for Youth Integrated Environment Assessments by following three complementary lines of action: preparing the reports themselves; designing and implementing impact strategies; and building capacities.

1.1. Preparing the Reports

Assessing the Plan of Action 2005-2007 showed that there are very significant delays in the periods agreed upon to conclude the GEO for Youth reports (more than a year in all cases). Therefore, the first objective for the period now beginning is to conclude the processes already begun, that is to say: Caribbean, Chile, Colombia, Panama and Ecuador **[Objective 1]**. This must be considered to be of the highest priority in countries that, for different motives, are more behind in their timetables (Colombia, Caribbean and Chile). We also consider it necessary to determine the causes of such delays in a way that will allow these experiences to serve as a basis for future planning.

Bearing in mind that viable proposals have been presented to UNEP, and since these have been opportunely assessed and approved, the second objective of this Plan of Action 2008-2010 is to prepare two new reports of the GEO for Youth family (Paraguay and Mercosur) **[Objective 2]**.

Finally, considering that various countries have shown interest in starting new processes (Guatemala, Bolivia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Suriname, Andes, Latin America and the Caribbean), the third objective established is that those interested should prepare and present their proposals to UNEP during 2008 so that, starting in 2009, at least two of them are implemented **[Objective 3]**.

1.2. Impact Strategies

The fourth objective of this Plan of Action will be to design impact strategies for all the GEO for Youth reports that are either about to begin or are in the process of being prepared **[Objective 4]**. Once we do a better job of planning how to influence the principal users, the reports can be better disseminated and better use made of them. For that reason, starting with the design, and throughout the whole GEO for Youth process, the impact strategies should be incorporated as a central element.

Also, based on positive experiences in the 2005-2007 period, it is proposed to explore ways of using the reports as environmental education tools, as well as an input when developing new projects; to follow up on the contributions of greatest interest and impact; and to prepare GEO for Youth case studies.



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1. 3. GEO for Youth Methodology Training

There are numerous capacities that we understand must be strengthened among our network members, including specific environmental themes (climate change, sustainable consumption, etc.) as well as others more related to management (designing projects, managing networks, influencing policies, managing volunteers and fund raising).

However, having reached a consensus that the core of GEO for Youth work must continue to be assessment, and understanding that other means may be used to solve some training needs, we agreed that the Plan of Action 2008-2010 will give priority to building network capacities to develop Integrated Environment Assessments that use the GEO for Youth Methodology.

In this respect, as a first step we propose to make new efforts to finalize the GEO for Youth LAC Methodology document **[Objective 5]**. We believe that some of the already developed contents need additional work, and others should be included that over the past year have emerged as being relevant. Similarly, we propose to devote renewed energies to replace and synthesize the experiences of countries that did not work directly on preparing the report.

During the GEO for Youth Methodology Meeting, held on 2 December 2007, it was decided that in February 2008 the representatives will send the first agreed-upon changes, after which a new draft will be sent to all those involved in drafting. After an extended period of consultations and a new revision by UNEP, it was hoped the report could be concluded and printed in March of that year.

Once the GEO for Youth Methodology is complete, it is proposed to prepare a series of complements (presentations and exercises) to allow training activities to be carried out in countries that are about to begin their national processes **[Objective 6]**. There are still not enough funds available for this last-mentioned objective, so that UNEP has to agree whether it is necessary and advisable.

2. Networking

We understand that before, during and after preparing a report, networking is essential if GEO for Youth is to be successful. In this respect, to create, maintain and consolidate a broad and diverse network of people and institutions becomes the second core element of our work. The Plan of Action 2008-2010 contemplates including complementary objectives in two very important areas: communications and partnerships.

2.1. Communications

The objective of restructuring, redesigning, and updating the GEO for Youth LAC web site to make it more dynamic has emerged as a clear need and first priority. On this point we have agreed that the web site could become an irreplaceable communications support in all our countries but, for this to happen, numerous changes will have to be made. The new site must: be simple, accessible

and aesthetically attractive; have a high load capacity and contain all available reports; interconnect with all the GEO for Youth processes in the region and be linked to other relevant organizations; include basic environmental information; have an up-to-date agenda of activities; allow database management; and, above all else, be dynamic and easily updated **[Objective 7]**.



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To do so it is worth while making use of the experiences of countries that already have GEO for Youth web sites that fit this description.

It was then agreed that an electronic GEO for Youth Bulletin needs to be prepared containing the most relevant news about ongoing processes, as well as about different opportunities and environmental information **[Objective 8]**. While seeking and summarizing information presents challenges, we believe that the bulletin's potential for making an impact will be significant, both for the network's internal exchanges and to communicate with other young people and institutions.

Objectives 7 and 8 will help to redouble dissemination efforts about how to participate, individually and institutionally, in GEO for Youth, which is seen as a permanent necessity on which systematic work is required **[Objective 9]**.

Finally, to optimize the use of information and communication technologies (ICT), we propose to prepare a Manual of recommendations about how to make the best use of available tools (webs, blogs, e-groups, etc.) **[Objective 10]**.

2.2. Partnerships and links

The GEO for Youth processes that have achieved the most impacts are those where the coordinating organizations establish partnerships with other institutions. That is why we agreed on the objective of working within a framework of inter-institutional cooperation, concentrating our articulation efforts on creating, maintaining and/or consolidating links with six strategic partners, one of which should be a government body **[Objective 11]**.

To achieve this objective we have decided it is necessary to prepare a set of PowerPoint presentations on GEO for Youth to serve as a basis for it to be adapted in each country **[Objective 12]**.



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Summary of the Regional GEO for Youth Plan of Action 2008-2010

Core Themes		Objectives	Responsables	Plazos
Assessment	Preparing Reports	[Objective 1] Conclude GEO for Youth Caribbean	CYEN-CCA	2008
		[Objective 1] Conclude GEO for Youth Colombia	OJA	2008
		[Objective 1] Conclude GEO for Youth Chile	SUR	2008
		[Objective 1] Conclude GEO for Youth Panama	Panama Verde	2008
		[Objective 1] Conclude GEO for Youth Ecuador	FEPA	2008
		[Objective 2] Prepare GEO for Youth Paraguay	SEAM	2008-2009
		[Objective 2] Prepare GEO for Youth MERCOSUR	ACRA	2008-2010
		[Objective 3] Prepare and present proposals for GEO for Youth processes	Interested countries	2008
		[Objective 3] Analyze and assess feasibility of proposals presented	UNEP	2008
		[Objective 3] Begin new GEO for Youth processes	Still to be defined	2009
Assessment	Impact Strategies	[Objective 4] Design impact strategies for all the GEO for Youth reports	All the above	2008
		[Objective 5] Conclude GEO for Youth LAC Methodology	GEO for Youth network - UNEP	
		[Objective 6] Prepare training complements	Still to be defined	2009
Networking	Communications	[Objective 7] Improve the GEO for Youth LAC web site and make it more dynamic	UNEP	2008
		[Objective 8] Develop an electronic GEO for Youth LAC Bulletin	GEO for Youth network - UNEP	
		[Objective 9] Disseminate information on GEO for Youth and how to participate	GEO for Youth network - UNEP	
		[Objective 10] Prepare a manual with recommendations on the best use of ICT	Still to be defined	2009
	Partnerships	[Objective 11] Create, maintain and/or consolidate cooperation links with other organizations	GEO for Youth network	2008-2010
		[Objective 12] Prepare a set of PowerPoint presentations on GEO for Youth	UNEP	2008