

Proposed Terms of Reference for an Urban Resilience Subgroup

This document is submitted by Greece to the Programme Board for decision.

1 INTRODUCTION

Urban resilience has conventionally been defined as the "measurable ability of any urban system, with its inhabitants, to maintain continuity through all shocks and stresses, while positively adapting and transforming towards sustainability"

*Mariani, Luisana. "Urban Resilience Hub".
urbanresiliencehub.org. Retrieved from Wikipedia.*

At the GEO-XIII Plenary Session (St. Petersburg, 2016), ‘resilient cities and human settlements’ was put forth as a proposed GEO engagement priority, in addition to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. While the latter three engagement priorities were endorsed by the GEO Executive Committee, the proposal of urban resilience, as well as ecosystem accounting were welcomed but postponed for a later official decision.

During 2017 and 2018, the GEO Secretariat participated in several international meetings on urban resilience, including the World Urban Forum in Malaysia. On 5 June 2019, Mr. Robert Ndugwa (Chief, Global Urban Observatory, UN-Habitat) requested support from the GEO Secretariat on specific urban SDG indicators and the New Urban Agenda, for which GEO can engage with the UN system and national statistical offices in the context of supporting Member States’ commitments in the achievement of the SDGs. During the special UN-Habitat session organized by the GEO Programme Board (3 September 2019), Dennis Mwaniki (Spatial Data Expert, Global Urban Observatory, UN-Habitat) explained that the UN-Habitat requirements go beyond SDGs as they address the New Urban Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, as well as the broader urban sustainability.

Following a special session of the GEO Programme Board held in conjunction with its 16th meeting, the Programme Board created the Urban Resilience Task Force (URTF), which has begun efforts to take stock of relevant GEO activities and initiatives that can also contribute to this request and urban resilience more broadly.

Given that there is a continuing need for engagement with GEO Work Programme activities relevant to urban issues and to lead Programme Board efforts in this area, it is proposed that the URTF be reformed as the Urban Resilience subgroup (URSG). This subgroup is intended to (i) coordinate and exploit synergies within the existing GEO WP urban initiatives taking place within GEO by aligning efforts, (ii) gather disparate and fragmented information on EO in

service of urban resilience originating from both within and outside of the GEO framework, (iii) begin to link outside activities with GEO initiatives where feasible and beneficial, and (iv) assist in the GEO Secretariat's response to the UN-Habitat request. Therefore, the scope of the UR subgroup is to monitor and coordinate the urban GEO activities, enhancing their visibility and harmonizing efforts, and to deliver a comprehensive and useful response to UN-Habitat building bridges between the GEO community and the UN framework.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Programme Board approve the terms of reference (Annex A).

It is requested that Programme Board members indicate their interest in being members of the subgroup.

ANNEX A

PROPOSED TERMS REFERENCE FOR A GEO PROGRAMME BOARD

URBAN RESILIENCE SUBGROUP

1 PURPOSE

The subgroup interacts with and provides coordination for GEO urban teams to support the ongoing implementation of the GEO WP in line with GEO engagement priorities, as well as responding to the UN-Habitat invitation to collaborate.

Specifically, the subgroup:

- Works to promote coordination between urban activities of the WP and ensures alignment with GEO engagement priorities, to the extent possible;
- Enriches the urban resilience focus of the WP through aligning with existing urban efforts, potentially via seeding of new activities for the WP from an urban resilience perspective;
- Identifies collaboration opportunities between GEO Flagships and Initiatives (incl. Community Activities when relevant) and outside efforts to achieve the common target of realizing the GEO engagement priorities, in the frame of enhancing urban resilience.

2 DUTIES

- Together with relevant urban GEO Initiatives, identify areas and opportunities for coordination and collaboration focusing on potential overlaps or gaps, as well as fostering interaction with indirectly relevant GEO Flagships or Initiatives (i.e. EO4Health), including Regional GEOs Initiatives;
- Trigger discussions, or physical meetings where possible, between the subgroup, EO4SDG, the Human Planet Initiative (HPI) and the Global Urban Observation & Information Initiative (GUOI) or others;
- Liaise with internal and external experts/organizations of interest, to support and enable cross-cutting collaboration (e.g. the GEO Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group) and facilitate awareness and amplification of urban GEO activities (e.g. resilience focused city networks and non-governmental organizations);
- Together with EO4SDG, foster the identification of use cases and examples of EO in service of SDG 11 indicators, along with other pertinent SDG indicators, such as those within SDG 3, SDG 12, etc.;
- Support an inventory of EO tools for urban SDG indicators, and aid in the knowledge transfer, implementation and propagation of best practices;
- Initiate discussion with Regional GEOs to maximize support of urban resilience and related SDG indicator reporting at the national level, in a harmonized manner;
- Support UN-Habitat and their overarching policy relating to the New Urban Agenda;
- Consult with the GEO Secretariat on their formal response to the UN-Habitat request by providing recommendations and additional assistance.

3 EXPECTED OUTPUTS / DELIVERABLES

- Identify areas and opportunities for coordination and collaboration with relevant parties, internal and external to GEO, to pave the way for the preparation of a GEO roadmap on urban resilience;
- Coordinate the successful convening's between the subgroup and relevant urban GEO Initiatives;
- Interface with EO4SDG and others to bring successful EO use cases for SDGs to the attention of the PB, as well as, raise awareness on non-GEO related activities;
- Raise the issue of urban resilience to the Regional GEOs, and identify synergies within their existing agendas;
- Identify areas of contribution for GEO to play a strong role in the New Urban Agenda, in collaboration with the GEO Secretariat;
- Contribute concretely to the GEO Secretariat's strategy for responding to the UN-Habitat request and to the establishment of long-term collaboration.

4 MEMBERSHIP

Participation in the Urban Resilience SG is open to all Programme Board member representatives, as well as to other individuals nominated by GEO Members or Participating Organizations.