

Foreword

The sixth *Global Environment Outlook* is an essential check-up for our planet. Like any good medical examination, there is a clear prognosis of what will happen if we continue with business as usual and a set of recommended actions to put things right. *GEO-6* provides both a statement of the problems and a how-to guide to advance us on the path set out in the 2030 Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The theme, “Healthy Planet, Healthy People”, highlights the inextricable link between the environment and our survival and progress. The challenges outlined are multiple. From climate change to the extinction of species, economies too dependent on the wasteful use of resources and unprecedented pressure on terrestrial and marine ecosystems, we are at a decisive moment in our role as custodians of the planet.

It is not all bad news. Many indicators point to progress on issues such as global hunger, access to clean water, sanitation and clean energy. We can also see some signs of the decoupling of environmental degradation and unsustainable resource use from economic growth, as well as unprecedented technological innovation.

The overall message, however, is that we need a significant shift in trajectory – indeed, the kind of transformational change prescribed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in its recent report on limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees.

GEO-6 details both the perils of delaying action and the opportunities that exist to make sustainable development a reality. We have the necessary policy guidance and the science that underpins it. The only missing ingredient for success is our collective resolve.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'António Guterres'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations

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