



Thirteenth session, UNHQ New York, 31 July to 4 August 2023

Heatproofing our cities

Monday, 31 July, 2023

15:00pm-18:00pm

Conference Room 5 (Gen. Assembly bldg.)
United Nations Headquarters, New York

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Death and illness caused by extreme heat can be prevented with strategies that are tailored to specific cities. Investing in green spaces in vulnerable areas, for example, can help provide respite from extreme heat. However most cities don't have comprehensive strategies in place. A key reason for this is that they don't have the resources to gather local knowledge and assess risk. Some cities have local climate/heat vulnerability maps and services to inform early warning systems. But these are often one-off, costly exercises. Even in advanced economies, it's challenging for cities to collect and analyze data on the full range of variables - weather, climate, urban heat islands, health, the economy and coping capacities - then turn that data into intelligence that can inform strategies and other actions.

The Global Heat Resilience Service aims to fill these gaps. The service will provide a trusted, free and open-access decision-support tool for all cities around the world. The service will support cities in both preparing for emergencies and through longer-term planning to prevent heat-related risks. It will allow them to collect, analyse and integrate global, regional and local data and knowledge, on weather, health, demographics, the built environment, infrastructure and the social factors to be able to better understand the health-risks from extreme heat. Input data will come from Earth Observations (satellites and in-situ), existing statistical and geospatial data, and local surveys and field measurements. Citizen-science and data collection initiatives will offer the opportunity to empower communities, including youth and young people, to contribute to information on heat vulnerability in their cities.

GEO is seeking partners to collaborate on the project. In the current design stage, we are looking for active city-level partners to test and refine approaches to mapping and understanding health-related risk from heat. Collaboration will also be sought throughout design and implementation phases with those who can provide the following support: scientific/technical (earth observation methods tools, data management); policy & advocacy; stakeholder & community/ youth engagement; capacity building; funding and investment. The key stages of the project will be project design (to be completed by early 2024), data collection and processing, interface development, piloting and scale-up. The Service will be a key input for the delivery of the UN's Early Warning System for

This is an open event, and all delegates and observers are invited





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All to be developed by 2027 as part of a commitment by the UN Secretary General.

Objectives and expected outcomes

The proposed event will contribute to a collective understanding of the Global Heat Resilience Service, its potential impact on urban resilience to heat, and the necessary steps for its successful implementation. Although various formats for this event are proposed below, each has the same intended outcomes:

1. Raise awareness of the need and urgency for a Global Heat Resilience Service – particularly amongst statistical and mapping agencies, and more broadly with the UN-system.
2. Explore potential partnerships and collaborations among international organizations, practitioners, academia, civil society and the private-sector to support the implementation of the service. This would also include strengthened partnerships and collaborations among participants for future initiatives and projects.
3. Identification of key challenges and opportunities for developing and deploying the Global Heat Resilience Service globally. This to include generating recommendations for integrating the Global Heat Resilience Service into policy frameworks, strategies, and decision-making processes at national and local levels; and, to identify suitable resources to design, implement and maintain the service.
4. To agree on next steps to realise the Global Heat Resilience Service – agree with participants what steps need to be taken in order to advance the project concept, agree appropriate partnerships, and identify relevant resources.

Provisional agenda

1. Opening Remarks
2. Keynote Addresses why should we be worried about heat & health in our cities?
3. Presentations & discussion on the need for a Global Heat Resilience Service
- ***Coffee break***
4. Mapping existing initiatives, resources, and partnerships - Moderated discussion
5. Summary and Next Steps

Note: this is a double-session from 15:00 – 18:00

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