

MINUTES - GEC Steering Group, Wednesday 27th January 2021



Attendees: Clara Axblad, Steve Bass, Aline Brandstatter, Oliver Greenfield, Kamal Gueye, Peter Poschen, Juha Siikamaki, Najma Mohamed, Zeenat Niazi, Mike Wilson, Andy Norton,

Apologies: Steven Stone, Asad Naqvi, Holger Schmid.

Agenda 27th January 2021:

1. November 2020 minutes for approval.
2. Inequality – SG statement, discussion and next steps
3. 2020 Reporting and 2021 DRAFT plan and priorities
4. AOB

1. Draft – November Minutes – attached

- **SG Approved. Action - The minutes to be posted on our GEC website.**

2. Inequality – Discussion of GEC-SG message on Inequality (Najma Mohamed, policy director, joined)

Background: *Inequality has emerged as a mission-critical GEC issue:* At the SG meeting of 11-11-20 on our rapidly changing context, we agreed to work more on inequality in 2021.

Elements of an inequality message: SB drafted a note, *Inequality – the next frontier for Green Economy Coalition leadership (v1 doc is attached)*, which scoped a message from the SG

SG feedback received before our meeting, prompted by draft SG statement. Top points included:

- *Urgency* – there are many ‘live’ inequitable stimulus/recovery efforts out there which we could tackle; and ‘live’ opportunities to push for equity in GE reforms. Best entry points?
- *Focus within a wide scope?*
 - *There are many dimensions of inequality* – we need to be clear on what’s mission-critical
 - *Root causes – inequity* is an underlying cause of inequality (and of brown economy), with solutions focused on justice. How far can we address this deep-seated problem?
 - *An intersectional lens could help* – to see how GE barriers, incentives and opportunities are distributed across different (social) groups
 - *So also could a Leave No-one Behind lens* – to ensure marginal groups are at the forefront of policy considerations
- *Engaging in the North* – Europe, USA, etc, have most to do in tackling inequality globally (and have domestic challenges). Is inequality the ticket, and now the time, for GEC to get more involved in the North?
- *Social contract idea* – could we make good use of ‘social contract’ ideas emerging from many quarters? GEC is well-positioned to engage stakeholders towards consensus contract
- *GEC expanded mandate* – Some GEC members are handling inequality and have clear USPs here, but many are not. How to evolve GEC work programme and membership to suit, reaching out to the ‘inequality community’?

SG Inequality discussion:

- *Purpose of the message:* Quick tour-de-table from each SG member ‘why and how I would use an SG message on inequality – internally and externally’; then discussion
- *Content:* Discussion of (a) our shared *ambition* and (b) elements of a *work plan*. NB discussion of a & b, plus the SG feedback, will inform the final, practical SG message.
- *Target audiences, timing and technology:* who, when and how to deliver the message?

- *Writing the SG message: who, when and how (including review process)?*

SG summarised notes from discussion:

Urgency of the inequality problem and opportunities – e.g. in recovery packages plus public concern for inequality – suggest we must act on inequality in 2021. It looks like several steps beyond our comfort zone but we have no choice. Benefits of doing together through GEC, mobilising more than our usual ‘green’ members.

Need coherence between message and our actions – but we don’t yet have our action plan on inequality so any *external message* can declare our direction and intent.

Where next? Drawing from the discussion the plan could be:

Step 1: Message from SG to GEC members and interested organisations– highlighting:

- After ten years of action and learning, we conclude that addressing equality is an essential foundation without which our two goals of inclusion and internalising nature are stuck – blocked by inequalities from local to global level
- While very deep reforms are needed, beyond the current remit of GEC, we can feed usefully into lasting reforms from a credible base of GEC’s IGE knowledge
- To do this we are now reaching out to all members, especially Oxfam etc with inequality focus. In the process we also want to grow the GEC network to ‘inequality actors’
- Here is a big-picture problem statement (not shirking from root causes like inequity, kleptocracy, corruption)
- Here is our a big-picture vision (sharing the planet... for youth and future generations... [eco]social contract...)
- We are seeking feedback from members on the problem statement and vision, especially to help us focus and then shape GEC priority activities
- Will invite contributions to co-create a shared programme

Step 2: Scope the GEC inequality programme

- Map what members are doing on inequality already e.g. IIED’s cross-cutting all programmes
- Form working group with interested active GEC members and inequality experts to shape programme that comprises pooled current activities/initiatives plus new pooled and GEC coordination/comms activities

Step 3: External messaging

- Big bold problems statement
- Focused ask in area of ‘green’ action to address inequalities
- GEC and members’ shared commitment – with action programme to pursue it
- Invitation to engage – as expert, as activist, as funder, etc

Actions:

- **OG NM SB sketch the SG message based on rough draft message, emailed feedbacks, and discussion today;**
- **NM and OG to reach out and form a GEC Inequality Project team**

3. GEC reporting – 2020 REPORTING SUMMARY – and 2021 DRAFT PLAN and PRIORITIES (attachment)

In line with the GEC annual calendar, the first GEC SG of the year should focus on a draft GEC annual plan. We have combined this agenda item with a more comprehensive review of 2020. The full report is in attachment.

Here is a summary and suggestions for the **2021 GEC priorities**.

2020 overview. It was a successful year for the GEC. Highlights include, chronologically: an excellent Global meeting in India – which helped consolidate DA as government GE civil society advisor and won buy-in from our hubs for GEC’s distributed delivery development, launching the long awaited GEC flagship product - the GE Tracker in WEF, developing 10 COVID recovery steps with our GE institutional partners, moving our African Green economy forum online and overall improving attention to nature (and natural capital) within the GE community, receiving positive EC dialogues programme assessment and winning the follow on, consolidating GEC as champions and experts on Inclusive process for GE societal demand, launching our GEC Amazon hub, and finally keeping our team safe and sane through the COVID working demands. Some of our activities were delayed due to COVID and contracting – most notably work on social movements and developing our network.

3 Key lessons from 2020:

1. Digital working is the new normal. Its acceptance and proliferation can offer improved access for our stakeholders to debates and communities (but we need to be aware of digital divides).
2. The Green Recovery has emerged as one of the solutions to the global COVID crisis. We need to capitalise on this and ensure we accelerate our GE policy, inclusive processes, influence and networks into Green recovery.
3. COVID-19 has exposed stark levels of inequality and people are hitting the streets to tackle issues of systemic racism and inequality through movements such as Black Lives Matter. GEC needs to address this reality directly.

5 DRAFT PRIORTIES for 2021:

1. Capitalise on Green recovery – GE policy, inclusion and nature, Tracker expansion and use – into recovery government plans and major annual events (COP, WEF, G20 etc).
2. Build a GEC inequality approach.
3. Deliver diversified funding.
4. Develop SME approach – building from the EC funded finance for SMEs. (particularly as a counter balance to Inequality approaches)
5. Accelerate Distributed delivery and coalition building.

SG discussion on 2020 report, lessons and 2021 draft plan and priorities

SG decision – Priorities are good. Standout priority for GEC for 2021 is Green recovery.

Other performance target – to increase audiences using our materials.

4. AOB

NEXT GEC Steering group MEETING: Wednesday, 31st March 2021, 12.30pm-2pm, UK.

Appendix: GEC Forward calendarⁱ that maps above agenda items to a year of SG activity:

December: Annual review of strategy and partnership. - Global meeting agenda

February: Annual plan – calendar of events – priorities and targets for the year

April: Building the coalition – including funding

June: Big programme reviews and sign-off

August: Influencing, Tracker, E4N review, other policy areas

October: Telling the story and Barometer - context

December: global meeting strategy, partnership, annual plan review

Each meeting could have 5-minute standing agenda item on ‘horizon scanning’ – to identify big strategic issues

Individual SG members could volunteer to take the lead for particular items in the calendar. The advantage of a forward calendar is this should enable members’ forward planning.

ⁱ Forward calendar for SG meetings approved in December 2019