

**Report**  
**35th Executive Committee Meeting**  
**Mexico City, Mexico, 10 November 2015**  
(As accepted at the 36th Executive Committee Meeting)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Chair: Rudolf Strohmeier, European Commission**

**1 GENERAL BUSINESS**

The Agenda was approved with modifications by Australia and the European Commission.

The Report of the 33rd Executive Committee Meeting was approved.

The Report of the 34th Executive Committee Meeting was approved. The Committee requested that, in the future, the Secretariat circulate proposed revisions to the Draft Report in track-changes.

All actions from previous meetings were closed.

The Secretariat Director provided an update on Secretariat activities, including Kenya's accession as GEO's 100th Member, and GEO's increasing leadership and engagement in global initiatives, including with the G7 Science Ministers, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD), Eye on Earth Summit and the 2030 Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

**2 REPORT FROM GEOGLAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Tony McDougall, Canadian Department of Agriculture, presented a summary of the first meeting of the GEO Global Agricultural Monitoring Initiative (GEOGLAM) Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee concluded that GEOGLAM is making an important global contribution, and could benefit from adding more crop-producing countries and expanding its remit to include broader food security issues. The Committee urged that GEOGLAM secure renewed commitments from the G20 countries in 2016.

**3 REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS FOR THE GEO PROGRAMME BOARD AND RECOMMENDATION TO PLENARY**

The Executive Committee reviewed the nominations received to date and requested the Secretariat: 1) to develop a matrix of technical expertise and geographical distribution from among nominees to identify any specific needs the Board might ask the GEO community to fill on an as-needed basis; and 2) to extend the nomination period until 30 November 2015.

**4 PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS AND OBSERVERS**

The Executive Committee approved revised criteria for Participating Organizations (POs) and Observers, which will now include not-for-profit associations of commercial entities. As suggested by

Australia, the Committee and Secretariat will reach out to specific Participating Organizations in the future to encourage their reengagement, as needed. The Committee agreed to recommend to Plenary that the moratorium on new POs be lifted, pending agreement on the revised criteria. The applications for Observer status were recommended for approval. The applicants for PO status (including those Observers that indicated an interest in becoming POs) were recommended for approval, pending lifting of the moratorium. The Committee agreed to request that Plenary grant authority, in the future, to the Executive Committee to approve applications for POs and Observers.

## **5 COMMERCIAL SECTOR ENGAGEMENT IN GEO**

The United States presented a concept paper calling for the creation of a category of engagement with GEO called “Corporate Partner”, which would focus on private companies that desire to become engaged in GEO. The paper will be presented to Plenary and is open for comment and input. The US will present a revised draft to the 36th Session of the Executive Committee.

## **6 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOREWORD TO THE GEO STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Committee approved the Foreword to the Strategic Plan.

## **7 SECRETARIAT STAFFING PLAN**

The Secretariat Staffing Plan and proposed 2016 Budget were presented in tandem by the Budget Working Group (BWG) as the documents are linked and based on the Secretariat’s roles, responsibilities and requirements as articulated in the GEO Strategic Plan (2016-2025). The Committee was assured by the BWG that the Secretariat will continue its conservative and careful approach to staffing and expenditures. The Committee agreed to the BWG’s request that its Terms of Reference be reinstated in the Rules of Procedure so it can continue to assist the Executive Committee on budgetary matters.

## **8 SECRETARIAT OPERATIONS REPORT**

The Committee approved the report.

## **9 REVIEW OF PLENARY DOCUMENTS**

The Committee approved all of the documents prepared for Plenary, including a modification to the Ministerial Declaration proposed by Mexico, and revisions to the updated Rules of Procedures proposed by the European Commission, Germany and Italy. The Committee agreed to discuss the preparation and approval process for Plenary documents during its 36th Session.

## **10 GEO-XIII PLENARY**

The Russian Federation will host the GEO-XIII Plenary on 9-10 November 2016 in St. Petersburg.

## **11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Dates of future Executive Committee meetings are: 8-9 March 2016; 6-7 July 2016; and 8 November 2016.

## **Report**

### **35th Executive Committee Meeting**

### **Mexico City, Mexico, 10 November 2015**

#### **Full Report**

**Chair: Rudolf Strohmeier, European Commission**

#### **1 GENERAL BUSINESS**

The Chair welcomed the Committee members.

Xingfa Gu, acting on behalf of Vice Minister Jianlin Cao, China Co-Chair, wished everyone a successful meeting.

Kathryn Sullivan, United States Co-Chair, thanked Mexico and noted the Committee had much to do during an exciting week to launch GEO on a vibrant second decade.

Philemon Mjwara, South Africa Co-Chair, thanked Mexico and thanked the Secretariat for preparations for the GEO Week meetings. He also complimented the Ministerial Working Group (MWG) and Implementation Plan Working Group (IPWG) on their hard work, and the Executive Co-Chairs for all of their commitment to preparing for the meeting.

Rudolf Strohmeier, European Commission Co-Chair, noted that the full transition of GEO structures will be achieved in 2016; in this critical, but short, time frame the GEO community needs to be actively engaged; every effort must be made to ensure momentum is maintained; and individuals and organizations involved in GEO should remain engaged and committed to the common vision of GEO to 2025.

##### **1.1 Adoption of Agenda**

Stuart Minchin, Australia, proposed, on behalf of the Budget Working Group (BWG), to consider the Secretariat Staffing Plan (Agenda Item 7) together with the proposed 2016 Budget (Agenda Item 9.18) and the remaining Financial Documents - 2014 Financial Statements and Report of the External Auditor and the Interim Report on Income and Expenditure (Agenda Items 9.20 and 9.21, respectively).

The European Commission proposed that discussions on the 2016 Transitional Work Programme (Agenda Item 9.17), and Updates to the Rules of Procedure (Agenda Item 9.19) occur earlier in the day.

**Outcome: Both proposals were accepted and the Agenda was approved.**

##### **1.2 Report of the 33rd Executive Committee Meeting**

The final report was presented following changes proposed by Italy.

**Outcome: Report of the 33rd Session of the Executive Committee was approved.**

**Action 35.1 Secretariat to circulate proposed revisions to Draft Reports in track changes, in the future, to facilitate review by Members.****1.3 Draft Report of the 34th Executive Committee Meeting**

The Chair requested that, in the future, any changes to the Draft Reports of the Executive Committee requested by its members be recorded and shared with the Executive Committee to ensure transparency. The Secretariat Director agreed.

**Outcome: Report of the 34th Session of the Executive Committee as approved.**

**1.4 Review of Actions from Previous Meetings**

The Secretariat Director reviewed those Action Items proposed for closure (34.4, 34.5, 34.8, 34.13), and indicated that several open Action Items will be addressed at later points in the Agenda. On the subject of Action Item 34.5, ("Secretariat to incorporate language modifications in Engagement Strategy regarding development of partnerships with commercial entities. Completed 8 July") it was agreed that, while the overall action is ongoing, the specific action had been completed

**1.5 Update on Secretariat Activities**

The Secretariat Director provided an update on Secretariat activities, noting priorities for 2015. GEO has added five new Members in 2015 (Ecuador, Kenya, Somalia, Vietnam and Zimbabwe), raising the total to 100 Members. Gaps still exist in South/Latin America, but there has been good progress in Africa. There continues to be a need to increase participation of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Asia-Oceania Caucus, especially given the anticipated impacts on those countries of climate change and rising sea levels.

Regarding global environmental governance mechanisms, GEO, through the work of the Secretariat, in collaboration with selected Members and UN-GGIM, secured reference to Earth observations and geospatial information in the final outcome document for the Sustainable Development Goals. GEO is now an Anchor Partner in the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD), an outgrowth of the UN Sustainable Development Summit; an analysis of the benefits and financial implications of joining the group indicated the importance of GEO involvement to bring its experience and expertise on broad open data sharing, data management principles and infrastructure. The Secretariat Director and several Members of the GEO Community will represent GEO on the following Committees and Working Groups: Architectures and Platforms, Data Principles and Protocols (co-facilitator), Global Collaboratives, and Interim Steering Committee.

The G7 countries succeeded in securing specific language referencing GEO in the final communique of the Science Ministers, which will serve as the basis for deeper engagement with the G7 process in 2016 when the meetings will be chaired by Japan, with a possible focus on oceans issues. GEO has become a Partner in the Eye on Earth (EoE) Alliance which hosted a Summit in Abu Dhabi in October. The GEO Secretariat will work to ensure coordination and collaboration between the GCI community and the EoE Global Network of Networks (GNON). The UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP-21) will occur in Paris in December. GEO participated in several Side Events during the Climate Change Science Conference in Paris in July and has been invited to participate in several Side Events during the COP. The GEO Secretariat has recently engaged with the UNFCCC Secretariat on how GEO can contribute to the COP process in the future.

The GEO Secretariat and UNOOSA (United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs) have developed a partnership, with encouragement by Switzerland and Germany, whereby a senior representative from UNOOSA will spend approximately one week per month in the GEO Secretariat, thereby creating stronger links across capacity building, the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and the International Charter: Space and Major Disasters.

Committee discussion focused on the need for more advance consultation to understand the benefits of participating in Eye on Earth and the Global Partnership on Sustainable Development Data, given that they appear to have very similar missions to GEO. How can activities within Member countries be better coordinated? A question was also raised as to whether GEO's engagement with the G7 would be better focused on Ministers of Environment and Ministers of Industry, rather than Science Ministers. Additional comments pointed to the issue of how best to communicate information about emerging events to make best advantage of raising GEO's profile, recognizing that responsibility is shared between the GEO Secretariat and Executive Committee to communicate and absorb information. The African Leadership Conference for Space to be held from 1–4 December 2015, in Egypt, follows the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Education, Science and Technology, which endorsed the STISA 2016-2025 Plan and African Space Policy and Strategy. The STISA and Space Policy and Strategy will be considered for approval by the African Heads of State in January 2016 and was noted as an emerging opportunity to highlight the alignment of the GEO Strategic Plan and regional strategies. An update on progress with WMO/GFCS was requested. China noted the importance of data sharing and GEO's efforts in this area, and the need to enhance the Secretariat's technical capabilities in this area.

The Secretariat Director noted that information about previous and upcoming activities is communicated to the Executive Committee and broader GEO community through multiple channels including GEO News, the GEO Website and the Secretariat Operations Reports. Progress is being made on GFCS, albeit slowly. GEO, represented by the Secretariat, was not accepted as a Member of the Partnership Advisory Committee (PAC), but is an Observer and is reviewing and commenting on all documents. She noted China's support of data sharing and the fact that it will release a substantial amount of data into the GCI over the next few months.

## **2 REPORT FROM GEOGLAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Tony McDougall, Deputy Director, Grains and Oilseeds Division, Market and Industry Services Branch, Department of Agriculture Canada – on behalf of Chairman Ann Bartuska, thanked all members of the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee examined organization, staffing, priorities, work plan, resources and partnerships needed to accomplish the GEOGLAM agenda. The Committee agreed that GEOGLAM is providing a valuable contribution to AMIS, and adding additional countries and broadening its remit to include food security could be beneficial, especially in light of the new Sustainable Development Goals. The Committee noted the importance of seeking re-endorsement of GEOGLAM by individual countries at the 2016 G20 meeting in China. There is a need for a comprehensive partnership plan, including developing champions within strategic organizations including governments, multinational organizations philanthropic organizations and the private sector. GEOGLAM needs a more demand-driven process, based on a clear value proposition for various partners. Integrated strategic communications is an important priority. The next Advisory Committee meeting will be scheduled to align with the AMIS meeting in June 2016.

The Committee thanked Mr. McDougall and the Advisory Committee for advancing the work of GEOGLAM. The Secretariat Director pointed out the importance of creating an Advisory Committee comprised of Departments of Agriculture, and the importance of getting the Committee's findings out to the Executive Committee and broader GEO community.

## **3 REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS FOR THE GEO PROGRAMME BOARD AND RECOMMENDATION TO PLENARY**

Douglas Cripe, GEO Secretariat, reported that the call for nominations to the Programme Board was issued 30 September with an initial deadline of 21 October. Some Members/Participating Organizations have submitted primary and alternate nominations. The Terms of Reference call for a total of 16-32 members, comprised of a minimum of 40% Members and 40% Participating

Organizations. To date, a total of 24 nominations have been received; 62.5% Members and 37.5 % Participating Organizations.

Following a request made by the European Caucus, Committee discussion focused on whether the Executive Committee should be granted access to candidate CVs to satisfy itself that the necessary competencies are included on the Board. Concern was raised whether sharing CVs would give the impression that the Executive Committee was second-guessing a Member's or Participating Organization's nomination. An alternate approach was suggested of developing a matrix to identify potential gaps in competencies which could be addressed through the Board requesting assistance from technical experts or regional representatives in the GEO community on an as-needed basis. An additional issue was whether only the primary candidate be considered, or also the alternates – or whether the alternates are named to help share the workload within a specific country or organization.

**Outcome: Executive Committee will recommend the slate of nominees for acceptance by Plenary, highlighting any specific regional or technical gaps, and that the nomination period will be extended until 30 November 2015.**

## **4 PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS AND OBSERVERS**

### **4.1 Revised Criteria for Observers, Participating Organizations, and Moratorium**

The Chairman noted the history of the moratorium on new Participating Organizations (POs), noting the Executive Committee discussion by teleconference on 9 September and Co-Chairs teleconference on 24 September, inclusion of commercial entities was not accepted. The Chair noted two small changes to document 6 by Germany, Italy and the European Commission made to the new revised criteria. South Africa suggested an additional modification to the revised criteria.

Discussions revolved around “associations” of commercial sector entities being eligible for PO status which the Executive Committee had agreed to in the 9 September teleconference. With encouragement from Australia, it was determined that not-for-profit associations of commercial sector entities would be proposed to Plenary for acceptance.

Additional discussion concerned the “rolling review” of PO status. What would be the outcome of a review indicating not fulfilling its obligation by a particular PO? What is the intention of the review? Is it meant to be punitive? Is this the best use of the Secretariat's time? GEO needs to focus on carrots, not sticks in its relation to POs. However, there should be a way to diplomatically remind POs that they have made a commitment to GEO as a way to ensure those commitments. This question gets to the essence of whether GEO is an inclusive or exclusive organization, and taking this action would be a fundamental departure from GEO's historical approach. POs are provided an incentive to contribute through potential participation on the Programme Board and Executive Committee. There is no process to evaluate Member contributions.

**Outcome: Australia was requested to develop suitable language to address the review of PO contributions.**

Australia proposed removing Section 5 of the document, but include language that would encourage the Executive Committee to engage with POs that could contribute more to the GEO agenda. Discussion concluded that a “rolling review” process was not necessary and that efforts would be made to re-engage Participating Organizations, as necessary.

**Outcome: The Executive Committee adopted the document as modified.**

### **4.2 Review of Pending Applications for Observers and Participating Organizations**

The Chair turned to the pending applications, noting that Plenary will need to decide whether to lift the moratorium on POs. The Secretariat Director noted that there are three types of organizations under

consideration: organizations that have applied for Observer status; organizations that applied for Observer status but actually want to be a PO; and organizations that applied for POs status. The GEO Secretariat Director assured the Executive Committee that the organizations seeking PO status are aware of, fulfil and agree with the new criteria, and, therefore, pending Plenary approval, would be awarded such status immediately.

**Outcome:** **The Executive Committee will recommend to Plenary approval of the Observer applications. The organizations seeking Participating Organization status are recommended for PO status (including applicable organizations recommended for approval as Observers by the 34th Session of the Executive Committee), pending Plenary action to remove the moratorium.**

#### **4.3 Delegation to Executive Committee of Authority to Approve Applications for Participating Organizations and Observers**

The Secretariat Director explained the proposal to have Plenary delegate to the Executive Committee approval authority for Observer and PO applications.

The Committee discussed the proposal, suggesting the proposal be modified to indicate the recommendation to approve the pending PO applications, and that the Executive Committee would report on its actions to Plenary. Some Committee Members expressed concern that this action could be perceived as the Executive Committee undermining Plenary's decision-making role. Others felt the decision should be put forward to Plenary, in an effort to streamline GEO processes and could be modified based on Plenary action. The narrative around the recommended action must be presented clearly and simply to Plenary.

**Outcome:** **The Executive Committee will recommend to Plenary that it delegate to the Executive Committee Authority to Approve Applications for Participating Organizations and Observers**

## **5 COMMERCIAL SECTOR ENGAGEMENT IN GEO**

The Chairman reminded the Executive Committee of the long-standing discussion on the issue of commercial sector engagement. The Secretariat Director presented an overview of the GEOSS environment segmented into three tiers – GEOSS providers (primarily governments that may or may not have engagement with the private sector); GEOSS Common Infrastructure operations (possible private sector engagement, if GEO so decides); GEOSS application developers (small and medium-sized enterprises, companies, universities, governments and others).

Kathryn Sullivan, United States Co-Chair, presented a high-level concept paper, following on its commitment at the 34th Session of the Executive Committee, outlining commercial sector engagement in GEO. The US sought input from the Executive Committee and would take the action to collect comments and issue another draft for further consideration electronically.

Tier One Providers – GEOSS Data and Information - are mainly provided by GEO Member nations as their own contributions to GEO. Tier One private sector engagement is a governmental choice to contract for services, thereby not a decision for GEO. Tier Two is primarily the GEOSS information systems that make the Broker, Portal and other technological aspects possible. These elements are currently developed by specific Members or POs (e.g., Italy/CNR; European Space Agency) and serve as in kind contribution to GEO. Tier Three is the most potentially valuable and complicated segment. The creativity, innovation, scale, speed to market of the private sector in the applications domain is huge and not something that GEO can easily replicate, but could be of great value in GEO's efforts to achieve its goals. GEO's purposes could be reached more quickly if the resources of the private sector were contributed to GEO in the proper way. How can we tap into this resource in a way acceptable to GEO?

The US introduced its concept paper on Commercial Sector engagement in GEO which contains a proposal to create a category of “Corporate Partner” to serve as an entry point into GEO for Commercial entities. This is commonly used in non-profit institutions in the United States that wish to have the benefit of private sector expertise, equipment or funds, but without relinquishing control of their institutions or agendas. Membership would be a two-way negotiation. The value proposition to the company is that GEO is a consortium worth being a part of, there is value to a company to get to know the agendas of other nations, and there is a reputational benefit to the company to serve a public purpose. Details of how companies of different sizes could make different levels of contributions (cash to the GEO Trust Fund, hardware, training and capacity building, etc.). Each country would continue to make its own decisions on access to its data by private companies.

Committee members thanked the United States for the paper and ideas contained within. Many felt the proposal had merit and recognized the importance of finding ways to engage with the private sector, so long as the private sector plays by the rules of GEO. Concerns were raised about private sector engagement in the GCI, whether GEO could collect royalties on data that is not its own, what kinds of engagements GEO would allow and how they would be controlled, what is the best way to present the concept to Plenary, the relationship between GEO’s legal status and collecting fees or contributions, how to treat differences between SMEs and global corporations, how the research sector can have access to data that is created via GEO but then made available through a private entity, and how to anticipate concerns from developing countries regarding compensation for their contributions to GEO. The message should be to find a way for the public and private sector to constructively and in a mutually beneficial way work together.

The United States suggested the approach to Plenary should be to note the critical, yet complex, nature of the issue, demonstrate progress has been made given that the topic has been under discussion by the Executive Committee for some time, acknowledge that Tier Three is where the opportunities and challenges lie, and encourage comments and suggestions from Plenary.

**Outcome: Concept paper on Commercial Sector Engagement will be brought forward to Plenary, and the discussion continued at the 36<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee**

## **6 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOREWORD TO THE GEO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Giovanni Rum, GEO Secretariat, noted the request by the Executive Committee to create a reflection on the GEO’s first decade.

**Outcome: The Committee approved the document.**

## **7 BUDGET WORKING GROUP/SECRETARIAT STAFFING PLAN**

John Matuszak, United States, presented the current 2015 financial situation of the Secretariat on behalf of the Budget Working Group (BWG), and included an overview of expenditure against approved budget over the past three years. He noted that the Secretariat has proceeded in a very fiscally conservative and responsible way, staying significantly below the authorized budget. He stated that the Working Capital Fund (WCF) continues to grow, and that GEO should continue to endeavor to reach the advised level of reserves. He further noted that GEO had received a clean audit report for the Financial Statements of 2014. He expressed appreciation to both the WMO internal auditors and the Swiss external auditors.

He indicated that the proposed 2016 Budget is based on a mapping of the Foundational Tasks as delineated in the 2016 Transitional Work Programme, which results in an increase in the budget. However, the Secretariat will, as in past years, take a fiscally conservative approach to expenditures and the Executive Committee should be confident the Secretariat will live within its means going forward. The BWG proposed that the Executive Committee recommend to the Plenary approval of the



proposed 2016 Budget. He also proposed the Executive Committee recommend that the BWG be continued under new Terms of Reference in order to continue to serve the Executive Committee.

The Secretariat Director presented the proposed staffing plan based on the medium and long-term view and on the requirements laid out in the 2016 Transitional Work Programme – as defined by the Strategic Plan and reflecting the priorities identified by the GEO community and Executive Committee. Staff positions will be covered by secondment agreements (scientific and technical experts) and through contracts (staff positions). Fixed, staff positions will be filled as resources are made available.

Germany requested clarification on the difference between directly supporting individual developing country participants for GEO meetings and the support provided to GEO-Related Events and Meetings through Letters of Agreement (LoAs). The Secretariat noted that the criteria for the LoAs for funding of GEO-related events, including the support for travel for participants from developing countries, are posted on the GEO website. The BWG has thoroughly examined these issues and is comfortable how they are addressed, but indicated it would add an explanatory note to the Budget document.

**Outcome: The Committee agreed to recommend Plenary approve the proposed 2016 budget.**

## **8 SECRETARIAT OPERATIONS REPORT**

The Secretariat Director presented the report, noting her earlier presentation was a synthesis of the document. She noted Kenya's accession as GEO's 100th Member and specific engagements/contributions to the GEO agenda by Technical and Scientific staff. Staffing presentations indicate different types of appointments (fixed term, secondees, short term appointments, and Junior Professional Officer (JPO)). Travel tables, as in the past, include dates and deliverables, and indicate which missions are sponsored by outside organizations. Special Services Agreements (SSAs) over 30,000 CHF are advertised on the GEO website. She also noted the LoAs that fund travel for individuals from the developing world to attend events.

**Outcome: The Committee approved the document.**

## **9 REVIEW OF PLENARY DOCUMENTS (LISTED IN ORDER OF PLENARY AGENDA)**

The Chairman noted that Plenary Documents 15 (2016 Transitional Work Programme) and 17 (Update to the Rules of Procedure) will be considered first.

### **9.1 2016 Transitional Work Programme (Plenary Document 15)**

Giovanni Rum, GEO Secretariat, presented the document, noting the extensive consultation with the GEO community beginning in March 2015. The Work Programme is a transparent exercise to translate the requirements expressed in the Strategic Plan into practice in 2016. The Work Programme is structured to address the Core Functions contained in the Strategic Plan and incorporates the modifications in the organizational arrangements of GEO, including the roles and responsibilities of the various components of the GEO community. The Work Programme contains three types of activities (Community Activities, Candidate Initiatives and Foundational Tasks). Candidate Initiatives will be assessed by the Programme Board to confirm their inclusion in the Work Programme as GEO Initiatives or GEO Flagships. The Foundational Tasks are those activities where primary responsibility for coordination/support and/or implementation falls to the Secretariat.

Discussion focused on issues concerning identification of the most critical Foundational Tasks. Should the Secretariat role be referred to as "support" rather than "coordination"? Coordination has sometimes been missing and is an important function of the Secretariat. It is unclear how responsibility for operation of the GCI could be assumed by the Secretariat. Should the requested

resources not be made available, prioritization would be necessary and would rely on the recommendations from the Monitoring and Evaluation process, and on the assessment of the Programme Board. The 2016 Transitional Work Programme should be forwarded to Plenary with a provisional recommendation for approval, pending additional considerations raised by Plenary. The Programme Board needs to move forward on planning for future years, so should not spend too much time on the 2016 Transitional Work Programme.

**Outcome:** Executive Committee agreed to forward the document as written, with the expectation that issues would be further discussed by Plenary and the Programme Board.

## 9.2 Updates to Rules of Procedure (Plenary Document 17)

The Chairman introduced the document, noting that a joint proposal had been made by Germany, Italy and the European Commission incorporating the updates put forward by the GEO Secretariat, but clarifying other areas. The proposed changes relate to clarifying the respective roles of the Programme Board and Executive Committee; membership of the Programme Board; and the role of the GEO Secretariat. Regarding the Executive Committee/Programme Board roles, the Executive Committee provides strategic leadership while the Programme Board is a technical body that supports the implementation of the Strategic Plan by monitoring the Work Programme. Membership of the Programme Board will be representatives of Member governments or Participating Organizations. The GEO Secretariat role should be strengthened beyond organizing meetings, namely to facilitate overall cooperation and liaise with the GEO community, mobilize resources for GEO activities, and identify staffing resources necessary to support GEO activities.

Discussion included a request to re-incorporate the Budget Working Group (BWG) in the Rules of Procedure, and that the new criteria for Participating Organizations needs to be reflected in the Rules of Procedure before consideration by Plenary.

**Outcome:** Executive Committee agreed to forward the document with the proposed modifications by the European Commission, Germany and Italy, and including the retention of the Budget Working Group and revised criteria for Participating Organizations.

## 9.3 Draft Agenda (Plenary Document 1 – for decision)

Discussion centered on whether the “Value of Data Sharing” document should be tabled as an official document at Plenary. The document had been produced by a Participating Organization in cooperation with the Secretariat. Comments included the importance of GEO demonstrating deeper reflection on the value of data sharing and a strong commitment to data sharing, as evidenced by the large participation in the Data Sharing Side Event held earlier in the week. The Data Sharing Working Group has noted the paper and has asked the GEO community for additional case studies demonstrating the value of data sharing. The Committee then discussed issues regarding the process of preparing documents for Plenary. The Committee agreed in the Rules of Procedure that papers originating outside the Secretariat needed to be distributed seven weeks before Plenary was recalled.

Additional issues concerned agenda Item 8, “GEO Engagement with Stakeholders” and preparation of the Report of the Executive Committee. Regarding the latter, a summary of the 33rd and 34th Sessions of the Executive Committee have been compiled and is awaiting the 35th Session. It should be more than just a summary of sessions, it should also include strategic actions by the Executive Committee. The Engagement presentation will focus on engaging the commercial sector and the international development banks.

A request was made for written reports to be made at Future Plenaries on programmatic components, e.g., global initiatives including GFOI and GEOGLAM.

**Action 35.2**    **The Executive Committee will consider the process for forwarding documents to Plenary during its 36<sup>th</sup> Session.**

**Outcome:**    **The Committee agreed to the Plenary Agenda.**

**9.4 Recognition of New Members (Plenary Document 2 – for information)**

It was confirmed that Ecuador and Zimbabwe would make formal Statements. The Chair requested the Secretariat to provide information on expected additional speakers during Plenary.

**Outcome:**    **The Committee agreed to the Plenary Agenda.**

**9.5 Proposed 2016 Budget and Report of the Budget Working Group (Plenary Document 16 – for decision)**

**Outcome:**    **The Committee discussed the document earlier and agreed to the Agenda item.**

**9.6 Review of Applications for Observer Status (Plenary Document 3 – for decision)**

**Outcome:**    **The Committee agreed to the Agenda item.**

**9.7 Approval of the Draft GEO-XI Report (Plenary Document 4 – for decision)**

**Outcome:**    **The Committee agreed to the Agenda item.**

**9.8 Mexico City Draft Declaration (Ministerial Document 3 – for discussion)**

The Chair suggested this item be introduced by the Chair of the relevant Ministerial session. The Chair will need to be prepared for requests for changes. The Mexico Co-Chair of the Ministerial Working Group indicated the possibility of a request for a slight change to the Declaration regarding the International Open Data Charter, which has been signed by 17 signatories, indicating that the Charter has now been adopted. Discussion focused on the best procedure to incorporate the changes.

**Outcome:**    **The Committee agreed to incorporate the proposed modification into the Declaration and to recommend this to Plenary.**

**9.9 Mexico City Ministerial Summit Programme (Ministerial Document 1 – for decision)**

The Chairman requested an update on Session 4 of the Ministerial regarding which Ministers will participate in the session (Chile, the European Commission, Mexico, and United States).

**Outcome:**    **The Committee agreed to the Agenda item.**

**9.10 Mexico City Ministerial Summit Draft Agenda (Ministerial Document 2 – for decision)**

**Outcome:**    **The Committee agreed to the Agenda item.**

**9.11 Summary Assessment of Progress – Targets and Tasks (Plenary Document 5 – for decision), Ivan DeLoatch, United States, will make the presentation.**

**Outcome:**    **The Committee agreed to the Agenda item.**

**9.12 Report of the Sixth and Summative Evaluation of GEOSS Implementation (Plenary Document 6 – for information), John Adamec, United States, will make the presentation, followed by discussion.**

The Secretariat Director noted that the new Strategic Plan is the organizational response to the Evaluation.

**Outcome:**    **The Committee agreed to the Agenda item.**

**9.13 Lessons Learned from GEO's First Decade:**

- Monitoring and Evaluation (Plenary Document 7 – for information), John Adamec, United States, will make the presentation followed by discussion;
- Implementation Boards' Considerations (Plenary Document 8 – for information), Massimo Craglia, European Commission, will make the presentation followed by discussion.

**Outcome:** The Committee agreed to the Agenda item.

**9.14 The Value of Open Data Sharing (Plenary Document 9 – for information), Simon Hodson, Executive Director, COSPAR, will make the presentation, followed by discussion.**

Document was discussed previously.

**Outcome:** The Committee agreed to the Agenda item.

**9.15 Data Management Principles Implementation Guidelines (Plenary Document 10 – for information), David Halpern, COSPAR, will make the presentation.**

The Chairman noted there will be a brief presentation without discussion.

**Outcome:** The Committee agreed to the Agenda item.

**9.16 GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2015: Implementing GEOSS (Ministerial Document 4 – for decision and Plenary Document 11 – for decision), Jörn Hoffmann, Germany and IPWG co-chair, will make the presentation, followed by discussion.**

The Chairman recommended that the Reference Document be presented at the same time. Discussion focused on the presentation and whether the Reference Document also should be “for decision” by the Ministers.

**Outcome:** The Committee agreed to the Agenda item and noted that the Reference Document also will be for decision by Ministers.

**9.17 Transition 2015 to 2016 (Plenary Document 12 – for information)**

The Chairman noted the need to reinforce the importance of Plenary remaining engaged and energized during the transition period.

**Outcome:** The Committee agreed to the Agenda item.

**9.18 Appointment of the Programme Board (Plenary Document 13 – for decision)**

Discussion focused on clarifying that Programme Board participants serving as Observers to the Executive Committee are representing the Participating Organizations, not attending as individuals. This clarification will be presented up front to conform to the revised Rules of Procedure.

**Outcome:** The Committee agreed to the Agenda item.

**9.19 Revised Criteria for Observers and Participating Organizations, and Moratorium (Plenary Document 14 – for decision)**

**Outcome:** The Committee agreed to the Agenda item.

**9.20 Updates to Rules of Procedure (Plenary Document 17 – for decision)**

Highlights of the major changes to the Rules of Procedure will be provided to Plenary along with a “clean” version of the document.

**Outcome:** The Committee agreed to the Agenda item.

**9.21 2015 Report of the Executive Committee (Plenary Document 18 – for decision)**

**Outcome:** The Committee agreed to the Agenda item, to be presented by the South Africa Co-Chair, with a focus on high-level issues.

**9.22 2014 Financial Statements and Report of the External Auditor (Plenary Document 19 – for decision)**

**Outcome:** The Committee agreed to the Agenda item, to be presented by the BWG.

**9.23 Interim Report on Income and Expenditure (Plenary Document 20 – for information)**

**Outcome:** The Committee agreed to the Agenda item and that all financial documents would be presented together with the 2016 Budget earlier in the agenda. Switzerland's confirmed contribution will be noted during the presentation.

## **10 GEO-XIII**

The Russian Federation confirmed its invitation to host the GEO-XIII Plenary on 9-10 November 2016 in St. Petersburg.

## **11 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **11.1 Dates of Future Executive Committee Meetings**

- 8-9 March 2016;
- 6-7 July 2016;
- 8 November 2016.

**Outcome:** The Committee agreed to the dates of the 2016 Executive Committee meetings.

#### Future Action Items:

All Plenary documents approved with agreed modifications, as noted.

**Action 35.1** Secretariat to circulate proposed revisions to Draft Minutes in track changes, in the future.

**Action 35.2** Secretariat to call for comments on the draft Corporate Engagement concept paper; US will produce revision for 36<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee.

**Action 35.3** The Executive Committee will consider the process for forwarding documents to Plenary during its 36th Session.

*Adjourned at 5:30 pm.*

## 35th GEO Executive Committee

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