



**AARSE STATEMENT PRESENTED AT GEO-X PLENARY, GENEVA,
SWITZERLAND 15-16 JANUARY 2014**

**By
Professor Jide Kufoniyi
President of AARSE**

Dear Delegates and Colleagues,

The African Association of Remote Sensing of the Environment (AARSE) would like to start by congratulating the GEO Secretariat, the Executive Committee and the Government of Switzerland for the excellent preparations for this meeting. It is worthy of note that AARSE is the first participating organisation of GEO to be registered in 2005. We are happy to note the commitment of GEO to the continuation of GEOSS programme beyond 2015, a programme that has visibly benefitted the African continent. We want to use this opportunity to express our appreciation to the GEO Secretariat and the Executive Committee for the unflinching support for the biennial conferences of AARSE; as one of our regular sponsors, GEO, through SA-GEO, was a Gold sponsor of AARSE 2012 in Morocco.

AARSE, a non-political scientific organization, though founded in 1992, was incorporated in 2008 as an international NGO under Section 21 of the South African Companies Act (Act 61 of 1973). Its primary objective is to increase the awareness of African governments and their institutions, the private sector and society at large, about the empowering and enhancing benefits of developing, applying and responsibly utilizing the products and services of Earth Observation Systems and Geo-information Technology. The biennial conferences of AARSE provide a forum to highlight and promote EO activities and achievements particularly in Africa.

The following representative examples illustrate some of the AARSE's GEO-related activities in the last few years:

- AARSE experts are participating in GEO and other EO activities at global, regional and national levels e.g., participation in some Working Groups e.g. GEO Working Groups on Architecture and Capacity building;
- pre-AfricaGIS conference workshop on: "The User and the GEOSS Architecture II - - Applications for Africa" in Tshwane (Pretoria), South Africa, 2005
- pre-AfricaGIS conference workshop on: "GEOSS Interoperability, Health & Water" in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in 2007;
- pre-AARSE conference workshop on: "GEOSS: Water Security and Governance" in Accra, Ghana, 2008;

- GEOSS Workshop XXX on: “Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance for the Global Earth Observation System of Systems”, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, October 2009;
- 2nd GEOSS African Water Cycle Symposium in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, February 2011;
- member of the Consortium for the implementation of the GMES and African Regional Network for Information Exchange and Training in Emergencies (GARNET-E), May 2010 to 2012;
- participation in the “GEOSS Coastal Zone Community of Practice Workshop” in Cotonou, Benin, February, 2009;
- coordination of the University Network for Disaster Risk Reduction in Africa (UNEDRA);
- contribution to the on-going development of African Space Policy and Strategy;
- promotion of the development of the African Resources Management Satellite Constellation and national space strategies;
- member of AfricaSat-1 Core Team towards a dedicated Earth Observing Satellite for Africa, and initiative of GEO/GMES;
- participation in the African Preparatory Meeting on the Global Geospatial Information Management (GGIM) Initiative, UNECA Addis Ababa , Ethiopia in August 2011 to prepare Africa’s position paper to GGIM;
- participation in the UNESCO-AU Expert meeting on Space Science and Technology in Paris, 2007;
- participation in the EU-AU GMES & Africa meeting in Lisbon, Portugal, 2007;

Among its priorities for 2014, AARSE will hold its 10th international conference jointly with SA-GEO at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa from 27th to 31st October 2014 with the South African National Space Agency (SANSA) and the University of Johannesburg as co-hosts. The main theme of the conference: “Space Technologies for Societal Benefits in Africa”, has been carefully chosen to put emphasis on the promotion of GEOSS implementation in Africa. The major sub-themes of the conference are: Natural Resource Management; Societal Benefits; Policy and Economy; Education and Outreach; Technology and Systems; and Continental Data Sets. The major supporting organisations and pan-African programmes include: National Earth Observation and Space Secretariat, AfriGEOSS, GMES Africa, and African Space Policy and Strategy. Another highlight of the AARSE 2014 is a proposed pre-AARSE workshop for African Parliamentarians to raise awareness of the Parliamentarians on the benefits of Earth observation and geospatial information in sustainable national development.

In conclusion, we want to use this opportunity to renew the deep commitment of AARSE to GEO and GEOSS implementation beyond 2015 especially the AfriGEOSS programme.

Thank you all for your attention.