

Canada's Statement to GEO-XI Plenary:

Canada is a vast country with a relatively small population base. We experience variable climates, are rich in natural resources, and are surrounded by oceans. Given this context, Earth observations play a critical role in ensuring sound decision making, and in supporting our Government priorities, including economic growth, responsible resource development and development of the North.

We are proud to highlight and reiterate our support and engagement in the development and implementation of GEO and GEOSS. I would like to underscore some specifics:

Open Data:

Canada's Open Government initiative fully supports the ongoing unrestricted release of geomatic and earth observation data and information. These efforts will increase interoperability of data and information across the country and around the world, promoting knowledge sharing and spurring innovation. A supporting infrastructure to this, the Federal Geospatial Platform, is being implemented in Canada. It has as its goal to provide Accurate, Authoritative and Accessible geospatial data to support decision-making by government and citizens, and to stimulate downstream applications and economic development.

Agriculture:

The sustainability and stability of the global food supply is of critical importance, and Canada actively supports the Global Agricultural Monitoring initiative (GEOGLAM)'s work as member of the implementation team and through its leadership of the Joint Experiments for Crop Assessment and Monitoring (JECAM). Canada also supports the development of the GEOGLAM monthly global crop condition outlooks that are published as party of the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) monthly market outlook.

Forest and Forest Fires:

Canadian forestry experts provide support to GEO and other nations through GOFC/GOLD (Global Observation of Forest Cover/Land Cover Dynamics) in the areas of Global Early Warning Fire Systems, and contributing to forest observation and land cover research, to integrate remote sensing and ground based observations in support of forest carbon tracking.

Ocean and Fresh Water:

Canada has a long history of monitoring its oceans and continues to collect observational data from all three oceans and makes it freely available in support

of GEO. We would also like to note that Blue Planet, which Canada has supported from its beginning, has published the proceedings from its inaugural Symposium. This book provides an important overview of the scope of the Blue Planet initiative and is a reminder of the importance of including oceans and coastal waters in GEO's observation and information efforts.

Biodiversity:

Canada would like to highlight the new leadership of GEO BON and their accomplishments, including the implementation of a 3 year Strategic Plan and continued progress in developing the Essential Biodiversity Variables. Canada would also like to highlight GEO BON's focus and interest in assisting national governments in the design and implementation of national Biodiversity Observing Networks. Currently, GEO BON is collaborating with Colombia's Humboldt Institute to develop BON in a Box – a capacity-building toolkit for improved national biodiversity observations. Canada sees this as a showcase project for the GEO Americas Caucus and supports its development.

Space Observations:

The Canadian Space Agency is contributing significant resources to the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS), a key Participating Organization in GEO. CEOS Member and Associate Agencies coordinate their assets and provide invaluable resources in support of GEO-related initiatives. Canada also provides unique datasets from its earth observation satellites to support GEO flagship projects in agriculture, forest, disaster risk reduction and polar-related initiatives.

Polar Issues:

GEO's Cold Regions Initiative is of particular interest to Canada. Canada is well underway in establishing the Canadian High Arctic Research Station with construction of the station begun this past summer and announcement of a substantial ongoing budget for science and technology programs. This investment is leveraging both domestic and international partners to significantly improve observations in the Canadian Arctic to serve user needs at the local, national and international scale. Under Canada's Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, and through other international fora, including the World Meteorological Organization, Canada is working with the international community to advance initiatives aimed at improved data sharing and enhanced observational coverage of this vast and harsh region.

Canada also continues to play an active role in the Arctic Council's Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program and has just recently confirmed the appointment of a Canadian Co-Chair for the Coastal Expert Monitoring Group. This group will

be developing and implementing a pan-Arctic coastal biodiversity monitoring plan.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Canada would like to reaffirm its strong support for the GEO and GEOSS and is pleased to hear of the progress made under the various initiatives.

Over the past couple of days we have had the opportunity to review and discuss the draft *GEO Strategic Plan 2015-2025: Implementing GEOSS* which will shape GEO over the next decade. This Plan builds on the solid foundation and principles of GEO and proposes new and innovative ideas to frame the role and function of GEO. Canada is proud to continue to be a strong contributor to this initiative, and is encouraged to see the enthusiasm of the Community as it moves forward.

Thank you.