



**Formal Statement to the
Twelfth Plenary Session of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO-XII)
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Chair, Distinguished Guests, on behalf of the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS), it is my pleasure to provide you with the formal statement of CEOS engagement and contributions to GEO. It is an honour for me to give this statement, coming as it does at the closing of one decade of the important CEOS-GEO relationship, and the dawning of an exciting new one.

CEOS, through the major sustained investments made by its fifty-nine Member and Associate Agencies, continues to develop the space segment of the GEOSS and coordinates the availability of space-based Earth observations to GEO.

As of November 2015, CEOS Agencies had over 130 Earth observation satellites in orbit. Through CEOS, these Agencies work together to ensure sustained international coordination of these assets and the comprehensive data they produce, with the aim of delivering as much societal benefit as possible.

Through these activities, CEOS provides significant support to GEO at all levels. CEOS implements the space segment of the GEOSS and is the most prolific data provider. CEOS has been a major player in successful 'Flagship' initiatives like Blue Planet, GFOI and GEOGLAM. In 2015, CEOS led and contributed to almost 50% of the Tasks and Components of the 2012-2015 GEO Work Plan. Our contribution to the new Work Programme is also going to be significant with direct participation in 60% of the candidate initiatives likely to form the first tranche of flagships, 30% of other candidate initiatives, and community activities across diverse topics.

But as much as we often like to talk about the significant contribution we make to GEO activity, we also want to clearly express our appreciation of GEO.

CEOS relies on close partnerships with international user bodies, service providers, government and international agencies, and others, to ensure its efforts are linked with important international agendas and critical user needs. We therefore support strongly and value the convening power of GEO, providing an opportunity for efficient and effective interactions between data providers, such as space agencies, and decision makers in a single forum.

It is with pleasure that I can state that at the 29th CEOS Plenary held last week in Kyoto, the space agencies and associate members assembled expressed their strong support for the text of the *GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025*.

CEOS Plenary highlighted two areas in the new Strategic Plan for specific mention.

Firstly, CEOS Plenary noted the emphasis now placed on the important and unique role that GEO plays in connecting and convening players along the Earth observation value chain. CEOS will be looking to GEO to significantly increase efforts in this area, and sees the coming months as key in more clearly defining and communicating the value proposition GEO offers these groups in order to foster a greater interest in partnerships.

Secondly, CEOS Plenary warmly welcomed the major emphasis GEO will place on the definition of authoritative and clearly prioritized user requirements. This will greatly support CEOS's efforts to work systematically to implement a space segment that provides sustained and comprehensive observations of all aspects of the Earth system.

CEOS Plenary further expressed CEOS's commitment to build on its significant existing contribution to the work of GEO at a practical level, and CEOS's desire to expand it over time. CEOS will take leadership on the dedicated foundational 'space task' that features in the new GEO Work Programme, and will continue to contribute on activities to promote integration of space and in-situ data. CEOS will also play a key role in the new GEO-DARMA disaster risk reduction initiative, which responds to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030; work with GEO to support implementation of monitoring frameworks for the Global Goals for Sustainable Development; and implement the CEOS strategic response to the GEO Water Strategy which was unanimously endorsed last week in Kyoto.

CEOS Plenary also affirmed CEOS's desire to embrace new opportunities to contribute to the leadership and governance of GEO. CEOS Plenary noted that the continued success of GEO in the 2016-2025 period is best served by maintaining the close coordination between CEOS and GEO demonstrated since 2005, and expressed the strong view this is best achieved through representation of CEOS on the GEO Programme Board and as an observer on the GEO Executive Committee. CEOS Plenary agreed that CEOS should formally seek to be an Observer on the Executive Committee when the time arises.

CEOS Agencies strongly believe that the next decade of GEO will build upon the significant accomplishments of GEO's last decade; and that the *GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025* lays a strong foundation for future success. We encourage all existing, and potential, GEO participants and partners to work together to implement that Strategic Plan and make that success a reality.

We, as CEOS, as the 'space arm' of GEO, will do our part. Thank you.