

**GEO-XII Plenary and Ministerial Summit**  
**Intervention by the Partnership for Observation of the Global Oceans (POGO)**

The ocean plays a crucial role in our planet's life-support system and in regulating our climate. We rely on the ocean for food, energy, transport and recreation. However, the oceans are subject to a diversity of threats, including pollution, ocean warming, loss of ice cover, reduction of biodiversity, overfishing and ocean acidification.

We urgently need to monitor, understand and predict the changes that are occurring in the ocean, both naturally and as a result of human activity. We need to be able to predict and mitigate against disasters, such as earthquakes, tsunamis, storm surges and flooding. For that, we need a globally-distributed, sustained network of observing systems that can transmit data in real-time to inform knowledge.

Oceans and Society: Blue Planet was created, under the leadership of the Partnership for Observation of the Global Oceans (POGO), to address these issues, through collaboration between the main organisations conducting and coordinating ocean observations within GEO –namely CEOS, CZCP, GODAE OceanView, GOOS and POGO. Blue Planet was created as a Task in GEO's previous Work Plan, and it is now entering a new phase as an Initiative within GEO's new Work Programme.

Some major progress has been made this year, as a result of the Blue Planet Symposium hosted by CSIRO in Australia. Sponsorship commitments have been made by both CSIRO and NOAA (USA) that will enable Secretariat and infrastructure support for Blue Planet's coordination and outreach activities. Blue Planet's mission has been re-focussed on providing products and information that are tailored to user's needs, will inform policy, and ultimately result in societal benefits. Plans are also underway for a third Symposium to be held in the United States in 2017.

Blue Planet has also been working to link more closely with other elements of the new GEO Work Programme, such as GEOBON. Blue Planet recognizes the success of the GEO BON marine ecosystems Working Group 5 in leading marine biodiversity within GEO and delivering a suite of global products this year. Blue Planet and WG5 have thus agreed to communicate regularly and coordinate their activities. GEOBON, as the first phase of its global Marine Biodiversity Observation network (MBON), has just announced a new activity called "Pole to Pole MBON in the Americas". Its vision is to consolidate a network that will connect existing observing programs along the coasts of the Americas, integrate surveys on species distribution, movement, habitat, and genetic material from multiple sources, foster an atmosphere of collaboration on science planning, capacity building, data management, help share infrastructure, and help build the framework for a global MBON. The proposed "Pole to Pole" MBON is an example of the GEO cross-cutting concept that links Blue Planet and GEO BON. It provides a framework for organizing existing observing programs sponsored by different countries into integrated marine biodiversity observation transects that help address local problems and national needs.

Blue Planet's Vision is "An informed society that recognises the oceans' crucial role in Earth's life-support system and is committed to stewardship of the oceans for a healthy, safe and prosperous future for all."

Blue Planet's Mission is "To advance and exploit synergies among the many observational programmes devoted to ocean, coastal and inland waters; to improve engagement with a variety of users for enhancing the timeliness, quality and range of services delivered; and to raise awareness of the societal benefits of ocean observations at the public and policy levels."

Working together, GEO Member States and Participating Organisations will strive to achieve this Vision. We call on all of you to contribute to this important Initiative for the benefit of society and of the blue planet on which we live.