

Joint ICSU and WDS Statement for the GEO XII Plenary and Ministerial Summit

Mexico City, Mexico, 12 November 2015

Honorable Ministers, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to address the GEO XII Plenary and Ministerial Summit on behalf of the World Data System (WDS) and the International Council for Science (ICSU) to give you an update on our relevant activities in support of GEO.

WDS promotes the documentation, long-term archiving and curation of observations for science. These datasets are diverse, spanning the physical, chemical, biological, economic and social sciences. The data sources range from remotely-sensed records to in-situ measurements, and cover timespans from the recent decades, the post-industrial historic record to palaeo-environmental archives. The diversity of observations needed to monitor and understand climate changes for example already pose a significant challenge; the need to integrate these observations with modelling perhaps an even greater challenge. The key to improving our ability to make reliable climate projections, well-informed estimates of climate impacts and, most importantly, information to inform management for sustainability, is integration: integration across scientific disciplines, integration across different approaches, and integration across temporal and spatial scales. A step-change in the range of services provided by data archives and data-service organizations is needed. A dialogue between practitioners, scientists and the data service providers is required to ensure optimal use of precious data resources. WDS is committed to promoting such a step-change and to supporting the data repositories and data service organizations whose existence is vital to scientific research.

Likewise, ensuring reliability and trustworthiness of data resources shared through GEOSS is an essential step to enable the use of Earth Observations for sound decision making. For this reason, the development of Implementation Guidelines is critical to transform GEO Data Management Principles into reality. We are pleased to see the Data Management Principles featured prominently in the GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025 and that GEO will encourage their implementation as a priority mission. Excellent progress was made in developing the GEO Data Management Principles Implementation Guidelines and a first version is submitted to the 12th GEO Plenary for information. WDS was glad to

contribute directly to the development of these Implementation Guidelines and it will continue to support this important activity next year as the document will be refined and updated.

On this occasion, WDS reiterates the offer to contribute its international and operational network of trusted data repositories and data services to GEOSS, and in particular the underlying foundational certification framework. WDS certification—currently being merged with the Data Seal of Approval (DSA)—will soon be endorsed by the Research Data Alliance as an RDA recommendation and it is increasingly recognised as the universal standard for basic certification of trusted digital repositories. GEOSS could realize a significant step in the implementation of the Data Management Principles by also embracing the WDS-DSA certification framework.

The International Council for Science and WDS would like to express appreciation and sincere gratitude to the GEO Secretariat for the support and contributions to activities related to the international science conference, Our Common Future under Climate Change—a major scientific conference leading to COP-21 in Paris, France.

Finally, I would like to thank Mexico—also the host country of the ICSU Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean—for hosting the GEO XII Plenary and Ministerial Summit.

Statement made by Mustapha Mokrane (Head of WDS and ICSU Delegations)

Further information on ICSU at www.ICSU.org

Further information on WDS at www.ICSU-WDS.org