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Address on China's Participation in the GEO at the GEO Beijing Ministerial Summit

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(Draft)

Honorable Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

I would like to review China's participation in the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and describe priority areas in the next phase.

I. Review of China's participation in the GEO

China is a founding member and co-chair of GEO. Many departments of the Chinese government have taken part in a wide range of GEO activities since the establishment of this organization.

1. Substantive contribution to the development of the GEOSS framework

As a major component of GEONETCast, China's FENGYUNCast is responsible for distributing earth observation data of its home region and transferring American and European data to the Asia-Pacific region. FENGYUNCast now covers most of the countries and regions in the Asia-Pacific which is about 1/3 the space of the whole planet.

China has donated FENGYUNCast satellite data receiving equipment to 17 developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region. The donation, along with equipment installation, testing and training, has promoted the sharing and application of FENGYUN data in

this region.

Chinese experts have also taken an active part in the testing and evaluation of the operability of the GEOSS framework.

2. Vigorous efforts in sharing and applying Chinese earth observation data

China has played an active role in the sharing of earth observation data. During the Cape Town Ministerial Summit in 2007, China announced the decision to share the remote sensing data of the CBERS—02B satellite with African countries free of charge. In 2008, China built ground stations through aid for South Africa and made free-of-charge data receiving and distribution available to South Africa, its 12 neighboring countries and surrounding waters. These contributions have enhanced Africa's capability in land utilization, and the monitoring of natural disaster and the eco-environment.

In April 2008, the China Meteorological Administration and the European Organization for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT) signed an agreement on the exchange and two-way distribution of broadcasting data of the FENGYUN meteorological satellites, which marks another major contribution to the sharing of GEOSS data.

3. Taking part in and being responsive to the amendment of objectives in the GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan

The Chinese government compiled and implemented its own Ten-Year Plan on Earth Observations to support the GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan. This will give a strong boost to the development of GEOSS in China, and expedite the development of GEOSS globally.

Chinese scientists have also taken part in the monitoring and evaluation of the execution of the GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan, and played active roles in meeting the strategic goals.

4. Taking on various GEO tasks

China has implemented or jointly implemented 10 projects in the 2009-2011 GEO working plan in areas most relevant to the GEOSS application. In particular, China has conducted a successful demonstration program on the weather of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. As for GEONETCast, China's FENGYUNCast, now up and running, has played an important role in weather, agricultural, environmental and disaster monitoring.

China also delivered GEO tasks by hosting the third international workshop on agriculture, the just concluded 20th Executive Committee Meeting, the 7th Plenary Session, the international exhibition and this Ministerial Summit.

II. Priority areas for China in the next phase

In order to achieve the goals of the GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan, the Chinese government will, through the implementation of its own Ten-Year Plan on Earth Observations, focus on the following three priorities:

1. Improve data sharing and service capacity of FENGYUN satellites in the global system for earth observation data transmission

CMACast, the successor to FENGYUNCast, is a new-generation, broad-band satellite data broadcast system. When put into operation in late 2010 as planned, CMACast will be responsible for the distribution of the World Meteorological Organization's RTH Beijing data, and continue to broadcast FENGYUN data to the Asia-Pacific as one of the three GEONETCast systems. With the launch of additional meteorological satellites, China will be able to provide more differentiated data products and services, improve the performance of ground stations, develop greater capability and better technologies for data transmission, and thereby make even greater contribution to the sharing of global GEOSS data in the Asia Pacific.

2. Promote international cooperation in sharing and applying Chinese earth observation data

Data sharing and service is a core element of GEOSS development. China will, within

the GOESS framework, do its utmost to help developing countries enhance sustainability by improving their capabilities of applying earth observation technologies. First, China will continue to promote the data receiving and application of Chinese resource and meteorological satellites by developing countries in Africa and the Asia-Pacific region. Second, in line with the nine societal benefit areas identified by GEOSS, China will carry out joint research and capacity building programs with a focus on China's earth observation data, and software products and technologies related to remote sensing data processing systems and geographic information systems.

3. Facilitate the development of virtual satellite constellations

The building of virtual satellite constellations is a major step for the materialization of the GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan. China strongly supports the building of virtual constellations for managing global climate change, preventing and reducing disasters, monitoring the eco-environment, etc. The country stands willing and ready to provide relevant resources such as meteorological satellites, disaster reduction satellites, resource satellites, Beijing 1 micro-satellite, and the scientific experiment satellite that will soon be launched for global CO₂ monitoring.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Chinese government will, as always, support the work of GEO, and encourage different domestic departments to take active parts in GEO activities. China will work with the international community to advance GEOSS and pursue the goals outlined in the GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan. In the meantime, China calls on developed countries to do what they should by making more concrete contribution to GEO so as to improve our understanding about the earth system and promote sustainable socio-economic developments across the globe.

Thank you.