

## **The Group on Earth Observations (GEO) Geneva Declaration**

### *Integrating Observations to Sustain our Planet*

We, the Ministers and Participants assembled at the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) Ministerial Summit in Geneva, Switzerland, on 17 January 2014:

*Recognizing* that GEO, established to achieve comprehensive, coordinated and sustained observations of the Earth, has advanced the availability of long-term, global data and information as a basis for sound decision-making for improving human welfare; encouraging innovation and growth, alleviating human suffering, including eradicating poverty; protecting the global environment; and advancing sustainable development;

*Recalling* the outcomes of the Earth Observation Summits in Washington (2003), Tokyo (2004), Brussels (2005), and the GEO Ministerial Summits in Cape Town (2007) and Beijing (2010) where GEO was created, endorsed and implemented;

*Recalling* that the endorsement by GEO Ministers in 2005 of a 10-Year Implementation Plan for building a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) represented an essential step forward to improve monitoring of the Earth, increase understanding of Earth processes and enhance prediction of the behaviour of the Earth system;

*Recalling* that GEO is a legally non-binding partnership relying on voluntary contributions to support its activities;

*Recalling* that the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development recognized the importance of space-based and *in situ* observations for providing reliable geospatial information for sustainable development policymaking, programming and project operations; and noted the efforts in developing global environmental observing systems through GEOSS;

*Noting* the additional opportunities and potential provided by technological innovation that increases the utility and importance of Earth observation data to allow for better decision-making at all levels;

*Recalling* the mandate of the Beijing Ministerial Summit, whose declaration stated: “..... to review the progress of implementation against the GEOSS Strategic Targets and the recommendations for the governance, role and future work of GEO beyond 2015 and to take the necessary decisions;”

1. *Note* that GEO has proven its capability to respond positively to calls for action from the international community of States and to address the challenges for which it was established;
2. *Note* with satisfaction the progress towards GEOSS Strategic Targets for 2015 as assessed by the GEO Plenary, as well as the numerous achievements in addressing societal challenges, infrastructure and standards, capacity building and improved access to data, information and services, as illustrated in the Progress Report and at this Summit from Members and Participants;
3. *Resolve* to continue the critical work to achieve the objectives of the 2005-2015 Implementation Plan, in particular to expand further the availability of consistent and complete datasets with full and open access, to streamline the current GEOSS Common Infrastructure taking into account the latest technological developments and commit to its maintenance, to consolidate observing networks, to improve global coverage and availability of data, to further develop GEO global initiatives and to continue to foster the engagement of GEO users, data providers and citizens so that they can benefit from the high potential of GEO's achievements;
4. *Renew* the mandate of GEO through 2025, retaining the current nature of the partnership, the general governance structure and the resourcing mechanism based on voluntary contributions, while exploring modifications; and *agree* to develop the work of GEO through 2025 in line with the recommendations put forward by the GEO-X Plenary as the foundation for shaping GEO through 2025.
5. *Reconfirm* that GEO's guiding principles of collaboration in leveraging national, regional and global investments, in developing and coordinating strategies to achieve full and open access to Earth observations data and information to support timely and knowledge-based decision-making – are all catalysts for improving the quality of life of people around the world, advancing global sustainability, and preserving the planet and its biodiversity;
6. *Resolve* to improve the effectiveness of GEO's actions, to broaden engagement and collaboration of stakeholders including decision-makers, and to sustain resources for GEOSS' continuous development and functioning;
7. *Acknowledge and value* the contributions of GEO Members and invite all Member States of the United Nations to join GEO; *encourage* all Members to strengthen national GEO arrangements; *highlight* the unique contributions of Participating Organizations, and welcome additional participants, in particular UN Organizations and Programmes, to join GEO and seek to build stronger relations;

8. *Resolve* to strengthen engagement with developing countries, as well as foster regional cooperation;
9. *Resolve* to broaden and strengthen engagement with non-governmental organizations; non-profit organizations, such as multi-lateral development banks; foundations; and the private sector;
10. *Establish* a process to facilitate a seamless transition for GEO through 2025, and *request* that a new Implementation Plan through 2025 be prepared for endorsement at the next GEO Ministerial Summit, currently planned for the time window November 2015-January 2016, in accordance with the agreed-upon principles and strategic objectives, taking into account commitments to the United Nations Sustainable Development themes;
11. *Resolve* to develop a specific and strengthened framework for sustained resource commitments, in support of the new Implementation Plan;
12. *Extend* deep appreciation to the Swiss Confederation for graciously hosting the 2014 GEO Ministerial Summit; and gratitude to the many GEO Participants from around the world for dedicating time, talent and resources to the development and implementation of GEOSS.