

**CEOS Formal Statement to the
GEO Mexico City Ministerial Summit
by Dr. Alex Held, 2015 CEOS Chair Representative
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)**

Mister Chairman, Distinguished Guests, on behalf of the Chair of the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS), 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.

Earth observations from space provide the only comprehensive, global, long-term understanding of the Earth system and how it changes that we have. Satellite data significantly augments the accuracy and quality of information derived from other sources of Earth Observation data, leading to improved scientific understanding, better informed decision-making, costs savings and greater societal benefits, and for that reason it is a foundation for all GEO activity.

Through the major sustained investments made by its 55 Agencies that include the largest space agencies in the world and major stakeholder users of satellite data, CEOS coordinates the availability of satellite data to GEO. As of November 2015, CEOS Agencies have over 130 Earth observation satellites in orbit, and CEOS was by far the largest provider of data to GEO.

The coordination role that CEOS plays benefits GEO in many ways: it makes satellite observation of the Earth more cost effective for individual governments; enables more comprehensive observation of the Earth system; enables more data to be made available for more users, a significant portion of it at no cost; and ensures important data gaps are closed. By working together through CEOS, we are able to bring the potential benefits of satellite data to all nations, space-faring or not.

GEO's ability to convene and connect all players, across the complete value chain is its core strength. It is the means by which the comprehensive satellite data we provide is translated into products that deliver impact in the hands of those tackling big issues like sustainable development, disaster risk reduction and climate change.

CEOS fully supports the *GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025*. In our view, this plan lays a very strong foundation and promises a bright future for the next decade of GEO.

We welcome the important commitments in the proposed Ministerial Declaration. Specifically, we note our strong support for the emphasis placed on: the convening power of GEO; the need to increase data sharing; and the importance of engaging proactively and strategically with United Nations institutions and programmes, development banks and philanthropic organizations.

CEOS is committed to contributing to the future success of GEO.