

STATEMENT TO BE MADE AT THE 4th GROUP ON EARTH OBSERVATION (GEO) MINISTERIAL SUMMIT ON NOVEMBER 13, 2015 IN MEXICO CITY

Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Honourable Ministers & Representatives, GEO Co-chairs, Heads of Delegations and Distinguished participants of the 4th GEO Ministerial Summit,

1. On behalf of Chairman, Space Commission of Government of India and specifically the Indian user community, I am honoured to convey our warm greetings to each one of you. In particular, we would like to thank the Government of Mexico for hosting this GEO Ministerial Summit in this important city & generous hospitality. We take this opportunity to acknowledge the significant work carried out by GEO, GEO Secretariat and its Director.
2. India has been an active member of GEO since its inception. India has an operational Remote Sensing Programme built over the past 26 years and many of satellites are contributing to the global observations and providing free data in order to achieve the GEO objectives. The country is also having a unique mechanism of institutionalization known as National Natural Resources Management System (NNRMS) whose nine themes are similar to GEOSS nine Societal Benefit Areas.
3. Space-based observations have provided critical inputs in planning, execution and monitoring of major national initiatives for sustainable development. A few of such applications include identification of potable ground water sources and sites suitable for constructing recharge structures for the entire country, Biennial forest cover mapping, Forecast of Crop Production for 6 major crops, Wetland inventory, Irrigation Infrastructure mapping and monitoring, Identification of cultivable wastelands and their development, Space Based Information Support for Decentralized Planning and Disaster Management, comprehensive Water Resource Information System, Potential Fishery Zone forecasting, Inventory of the glacial lakes and water bodies in the Himalayan River basins, create comprehensive Urban Spatial Information System.

4. At the national front, our Prime Minister called upon all the government players to deliberate on maximizing the use of space technology based tools in governance and development and stressed to remove the space between space technology and the common man. I am happy to announce here that currently ISRO is working with about 60 ministries and pursuing 160 projects as part of this initiative. We consider that this is an important step in strengthening Indian GEO.
5. The government of the India has taken note of the GEOSS Vision and Strategy for 2016-2025. Besides the various contributions from ISRO in many global earth observations missions, in the recent past, India has focused on certain key areas in realizing unique missions towards ocean, atmosphere, meteorology, and weather related studies. Ocean wind vector and Ocean colour products, derived from Oceansat-2 data are made available, free of cost to global community. Similarly, the joint mission for global altimetry system for precise and accurate observations of ocean topography, joint mission for studying the tropical convective system are open to users across the globe. India is also committed to contribute to continuity of EO data, through the thematic series of satellites, with improvements en-route, to meet contemporary as well as future needs. ISRO's portals viz., Bhuvan, NNRMS Data Base and MOSDAC are providing the satellite data, geophysical and biophysical products as well as thematic information derived using EO data to the global users free of charge.
6. India is also supporting many regional initiative, such as setting up of ground station in Viet Nam to provide the Indian satellite data to ASEAN countries to support a large number of societal applications disaster management; providing technical support to Sri Lanka on agricultural drought monitoring under UNESCAP mechanism; supporting the global disaster management efforts through International Charter and Sentinel Asia; establishment of a network of weather stations in SAARC countries to support severe thunderstorm predictions; capacity building through the United Nations (UN) affiliated Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific (CSSTEAP) at Dehra Dun.
7. India supports the Mexico Ministerial Summit Declaration, and continue to actively participate and contribute in various activities of GEO.

Thank You,