

## **GEO-X Plenary**

### **Statement: AfriGEOSS and GEO Global Initiatives**

Geneva – 16 January 2013

We, the African members States and Participating Organizations attending the GEO-X Plenary meeting in Geneva, fully share and support the objectives of the AfriGEOSS initiative and strongly state our intention to actively contribute to its Implementation.

We are also aware that one of the key components for a successful AfriGEOSS is the commitment of African countries and organizations in a coordinated participation to GEO global initiatives.

For this to happen, while AfriGEOSS is developing and will provide a continent-level coordination framework, we would urge each global initiative to undergo a quick review to ensure that African needs and contributions are fully included and that coordination and exchange mechanisms are put in place for development and implementation.

Through the AfriGEOSS WG, we are prepared to support this review and to activate this coordination. The AfriGEOSS Working Group has confirmed its availability to work on this coordination with GEO Global Initiatives, by developing, for each of the first group of them, a summary document underlining African needs, requirements and proposed actions to be taken into account.

Africa, through AfriGEOSS recognizes the value of the GEO global initiatives and has identified a first group of seven initiatives (AfWCI-African Water Cycle Initiative, Blue Planet, GEOSS Common Infrastructure-GCI, GEO Biodiversity Observation Network-GEO BON, GEO Global Agriculture Monitoring-GEOGLAM, Global Forest Observations Initiative-GFOI, and Global Landcover), for which the continent will welcome early linkages with AfriGEOSS.

#### **AfWCI**

Africa is one of the regions where water is a matter of life and death; the continent still faces significant challenges to ensure an effective use and efficient management of water resources. One of the key issues to be critically addressed is the need for spatially-enabled data, information, and knowledge, that are still not adequate for water resources management in Africa. We see here that Earth Observation has a critical role to play. There is a great opportunity, as already envisioned by the African Water Cycle Initiative, to advance global dialogue on the establishment of an inclusive partnership and collaborative linkages with Earth Observations institutions, initiatives and programmes at international, continental and national level in the area of water resources management. AfriGEOSS wish to engage with GEO-AWCCI further discussion on the modalities to champion the development of indigenous African capabilities in Earth Observations adoption and applications for water resources management in the continent.

#### **Blue Planet**

The ocean domain is a world common heritage and AfriGEOSS would like to value the partnership within Blue planet so as ensure synergies and linkages in terms of monitoring, predictions and forecasts of ocean-related risks and phenomena.

AfriGEOSS would welcome further discussion with Blue Planet on how to downscale the benefits associated with this Global Initiative at subregional national level.

## **GCI**

The availability of advanced infrastructure capable of dealing with the demands of Earth Observation data, and processing remains a problem in many African countries. However infrastructure innovations made available through GEO, like the GEOSS Portal, GEONETCast and other aspects of the GCI are enabling local developers and users to overcome some of these problems. AfriGEOSS wish to start interaction with the GCI development team in order to:

- ensure that GEOSS infrastructure design, development and operational approach is fully taken into account in the further development of the required infrastructure at regional level, which AfriGEOSS will stimulate and promote
- provide to the GCI team specific African needs and requirements

## **GEO BON**

Monitoring Biodiversity is essential for decision making in many areas, from ensuring well-being of the people who depend on it, to meeting national and international biodiversity reporting requirements. GEO BON can facilitate the development or enhancement of national and/or regional Biodiversity Observation Networks (BONs) by providing expertise, guidance, and capacity building as required. GEO BON has already identified Africa as one of its regional foci for the next three years. AfriGEOSS can assist by facilitating the involvement of end users, existing projects and relevant national structures as well as supporting the facilitation and capacity building activities of GEO BON in Africa.

## **GEOGLAM**

Agriculture remains a major contributor to GDP in most African countries yet productivity remains sub optimal confining many rural populations to lives of poverty and deprivation. Food security remains an important issue on the continent Earth observations and derived information is also still under utilised in agricultural monitoring and decision-making. The importance of GEOGLAM is fully recognized and there is a clear need to promote and facilitate the involvement of African countries African Participating Organisations and existing African-based projects in this initiative. Of particular value are the capacity building and institutional strengthening activities envisaged in support of sound agricultural monitoring in (stressed) countries on the continent.

## **GFOI**

GFOI has the potential to address a number of issues connected with National Forest Monitoring. All the GFOI components are considered of great relevance for AfriGEOSS, in particular the coordination of satellite data acquisition and distribution to Countries, which may constitute a model for other initiatives, and the GFOI-provided technical and operational guidance, with the associated capacity building. A sub-regional approach is deemed the best suited to strengthen the coordination and availability of ground measurements.

## **Global Land Cover**

The main near-term objective for Africa is constituted by the development of a 30 meter resolution Land Cover dataset for the African Continent. Coordination with AfriGEOSS is deemed essential.

The Global initiative would provide a clear support in building capacity within national and regional organizations to collect and use the data and in developing standardization and validation processes for the Global Land Cover product for Africa.

AfriGEOSS will constitute the best suited framework to Establish an Africa-focused Community of Practice for Land Use and Land Cover (thus also facilitating networking among scientists and technicians), raise awareness among decision makers concerning the value of Land Cover data, advocate for their needs for Land Cover data and transfer knowledge and products at national level.