

Report
33rd Executive Committee Meeting
Geneva, 19-20 March 2015

As approved intersessionally following the 34th Session and noted at the 35th Executive Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 GENERAL BUSINESS

The meeting was chaired by Dr Liao Xiaohan, the GEO Co-Chair representing the People's Republic of China.

- The Chair agreed to South Africa's proposal to interchange Agenda Items 3 and 4 so the interim 6th Monitoring and Evaluation Report could be considered prior to Committee consideration of the draft Strategic Plan;
- The Chair agreed to the Secretariat Director's proposal to add Agenda Item 8.4 to correct previous Committee documents;
- The Meeting Agenda (Document 1) was Approved as amended;
- The Draft Report of the 32nd Executive Committee Meeting (Document 2) was Approved;
- It was agreed that responsibility for Action Item 32.1, further exploration of the Executive Committee's roles and responsibilities would be assumed by the Implementation Plan Working Group (IPWG), with inputs drafted for Executive Committee consideration at its July meeting;
- Action Items 32.2 and 32.3, refining the 360 Degree Performance Assessment and developing Annual Performance Metrics, respectively, would be closed at the end of discussion of Agenda Item 9;
- At the beginning of Day 2, a video was broadcast of delivery of the GEO Statement at the UN 3rd World Congress on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) held in Sendai, Japan. The Statement was delivered by Francesco Gaetani of the GEO Secretariat; and
- Also at the beginning of Day 2, the Chair indicated that Agenda Items 7 and 8 would be interchanged and that there would be a closed session to discuss a point raised by the Italian delegation.

2 ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY UPDATE (DOCUMENT 4 - FOR CONSULTATION)

The Secretariat Director presented the update, noting the many discussions in previous Committee meetings on this topic and expressed the hope the presentation was an accurate assessment of those discussions. The presentation focused on three strategic priorities: Advancing Communication/Outreach to Stakeholders; Re-engaging Core Members/POs – Filling Gaps with New Members; and refining GEO's Participation in Global Environmental Governance Mechanisms. She outlined a number of specific initiatives and accomplishments in these priority areas.

Committee discussion focused on the need to re-engage Ministers from Member countries, some of which have never designated a Principal to represent their government. The Committee noted that GEO must be relevant to the needs of Ministers. The strategy should focus on engaging Members at the right level, technically or politically, to ensure they are interested. Further discussion noted that in addition to governments, markets and other sectors make decisions in the global context in which GEO operates. Focusing only on political decisions would be short-sighted. The example of GFOI – being formed and then transitioning to an operational home (FAO) – provides some lessons of the strengths and weaknesses from which to learn.

Committee Members noted that one value of GEO is that few similar organizations exist and that GEO is unique in its ability to create a system of systems. In addition, GEO plays a unique role in convening dialogues and fostering strategic partnerships, thus allowing it to design specific responses to challenges and identify policy needs. The Committee proposed that a sub-group, modelled after the Budget Working Group (BWG), be established to address issues of who we are as GEO; what products do we want to sell; and to whom do we want to sell those products. This group would closely coordinate its activities with the IPWG.

Action 33.1: Secretariat to prepare a document outlining the lessons learned from the Global Forest Observations Initiative (GFOI).

Action 33.2: Secretariat to form an Engagement Strategy sub-group, working closely with the IPWG.

3 INTERIM REPORT ON THE 6TH GEOSS EVALUATION (*DOCUMENT 6 - FOR CONSULTATION*)

Gilles Ollier, European Commission, gave a presentation on the interim findings of the 6th GEOSS Evaluation. Committee discussion noted that: the findings are valuable for Member governments attempting to build national GEOs; capacity building is perhaps best organized locally in developing countries; some regions would like more regional feedback to the survey; the lack of resources needs to be addressed; the role of individual Member governments in advancing the GEO agenda in the next decade needs to be articulated; there is a balancing needed between a possible change in GEO's legal status and maintaining its inherent flexibility; and the need to address the apparent mismatch between GEO's activities and how GEO engages with Member governments.

Comments and suggestions will be transmitted to the 6th GEOSS Evaluation Working Group.

4 UPDATE FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN WORKING GROUP (IPWG) (*DOCUMENT 5 - FOR CONSULTATION*)

Joern Hoffman, Co-Chair of Implementation Plan Working Group provided a status report on the draft *GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025: Implementing GEOSS*. He noted that the IPWG had worked hard to meet its timelines in order to provide useful information to the Executive Committee, from which it hoped to receive additional guidance.

The Committee provided general comments on the Strategic Plan and then proceeded to a section-by-section response. Primary feedback from the Executive Committee included the following:

General

- The Executive Committee strongly welcomed the work of the IPWG and recognized substantial progress; and
- The Executive Committee saw the need to improve in three main domains:
 1. Articulation of GEO value towards the political domain and other key communities;

2. Clarification of how we envision GEOSS to be implemented, including perhaps leveraging technical infrastructure through private sector; and
3. The relation to SDGs should be better developed.

Section 2/3

- The Executive Committee supported the areas of action (Advocate, Engage, Deliver);
- The “Advocate” function should be externally-focused, targeting the political, and socio-economic levels. Data Sharing Principles (DSPs) and Data Management Principles (DMPs) might be better captured within the context of Section 3;
- Application-oriented SBAs were supported. The Executive Committee suggested to frame the societal benefit of each in a more compelling way: Ministers need to understand how EOs are useful to solve specific societal problems;
- IPWG should find way to project the SBAs onto political priority topics (e.g. economy, security, migration, climate change mitigation, food security); and
- EO domains need more work, engage relevant communities, and show how scientific domains fit into the information chain.

Section 4

- Support for the Implementation mechanisms and Work Programme concept;
- Cast “Engagement and Communication” as a Foundational Task; and
- Mandate and function of the GEO Programme Board needs to be better developed.

Section 5

- Moderate expansion of the Executive Committee needs to be discussed further; three PO observers supported;
 1. Maintain balance between developing and developed countries for Co-Chair’s positions.
- Programme Board Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure need to be developed:
 1. Board should be large enough to offer broad participation from PO and Members;
 2. Define oversight responsibilities and implications;
 3. Ensure Member representation (not individual capacity); and
 4. Further discuss ways to ensure full participation from Board members.
- The Executive Committee will decide on way forward for legal status based on analysis paper from IPWG at next meeting.

Section 6

- The Executive Committee welcomed indicative scale of contribution and specifying commitments;
- Caution should be used when specifying cash contributions;
- Indicative scale should specify a minimum voluntary contribution (justify administrative overhead, increase visibility); and
- BWG’s output should be considered.

Action 33.3: Executive Committee assumes responsibility for further examination of GEO's independent legal status and requests IPWG to forward any analyses already undertaken and supporting documentation.

5 PREPARATIONS FOR GEO-XII AND MINISTERIAL SUMMIT (*DOCUMENT 7 - FOR CONSULTATION*)

5.1 Presentation by the Representative of Mexico

Rolando Ocampo of Mexico presented an overview of the GEO-XII Plenary and 2015 Ministerial Summit to be held in Mexico City November 9-13. He indicated the Plenary will be held on 11 November in the Hilton Reforma Hotel and at the Mexican Secretariat of Foreign Affairs on 12 November. There will be two additional events being held at the Hilton during the same period, the Latin America Geospatial Forum (LAGF) and the UN Initiative on Global Geographic Information Management (UN GGIM: Americas). The GEO Exhibition will be held in the Hilton on Tuesday, 10 November through Thursday, 12 November. The Committee thanked Mexico for hosting the meetings and for the presentation. Several questions were posed concerning meeting logistics. The Executive Committee presented Mexico with a letter of appreciation, signed by the four Co-Chairs, thanking Mexico for hosting the meeting.

5.2 Update from Ministerial Working Group (MWG)

5.3 GEO Week Communication Plan

Jane Shiel, European Commission, provided an update on the progress of the Ministerial Working Group and requested feedback from the Committee on the draft Ministerial Declaration, the document urging Ministers to attend the Ministerial, and the draft “expected outcomes” of the Summit.

Robert Samors, GEO Secretariat, presented the progress of the Communications sub-group and requested specific guidance on whether a retrospective publication should be prepared for the Summit. The Committee indicated that a retrospective print publication would not be necessary, and any representation of GEO's accomplishments to date should be oriented toward the future.

GEO Principals from Member countries have been requested to provide contact information for the Minister who will receive the invitation from the Government of Mexico. For those Members where there has been no recent engagement with GEO, the Secretariat has sent letters to the Permanent Missions in Geneva. The Mexican Ambassador in Member capitals will send a letter of invitation to the appropriate Minister in each country.

Discussion by the Committee focused on how to attract Ministers to the Summit and what their role would be during the meeting. Members indicated the focus should be on the political challenges facing Ministers and how GEO would add value to help to address them over the next decade. Members also discussed how to provide Ministers with opportunities for peer-to-peer engagement, and whether they would take an active role in deciding on elements of the Strategic Plan, or whether the focus should be on having the Ministers commit to something, such as a recommitment to data sharing and open data policies. It will be important to secure early commitments from Ministers to attend in order to encourage other Ministers to participate.

5.4 Engaging Ministers

John Matuszak, United States, presented the draft document that will be included in the invitation letter to Ministers. The focus of the document is to highlight the local relevance of global issues and indicate the Summit will be an opportunity for peer discussion on how to solve their common problems, how the programmes are going to be implemented to suit their national needs, and how

GEO can be useful. Discussion focused on whether the phrasing in the Strategic Plan – Advocate, Engage, Deliver – carries a political message for Ministers or whether it is an operational construct. The Committee and the GEO Caucus Chairs were urged to encourage their Caucus members to help work the Ministerial invitation through their government processes after the letter has been sent in May.

Action 33.4: GEO Principals to communicate with Ministerial offices to encourage participation in Mexico City Summit.

5.5 Preliminary elements of the Ministerial Declaration

Jane Shiel, European Commission, reviewed the preliminary draft of the Declaration. The Committee provided initial feedback and agreed that the deadline for comments from GEO Principals should be 1 June.

Ministerial discussion summary as requested by Chair.

- Note concern regarding moving between venues;
- No retrospective book and no keynote address;
- Plenary participants and Ministers must be provided enough time to visit the Exhibition in the hotel;
- Refocus the message to be more political in all documents/materials;
- MWG needs to distill the guidance from the Committee on what the Ministers will be asked to discuss, and decide and transmit to Executive Committee;
- Executive Committee will determine options regarding Minister engagement in Summit. The Secretariat is directed to ensure this is followed up in a teleconference among the Co-Chairs;
- Timeline for Principal comments on the draft Ministerial Declaration to be changed to June 2015; and
- Request to Caucus Chairs to work with Caucus members to encourage participation of Ministers from Member governments.

6 GEOSS IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

6.1 Status of GEOSS Implementation 2015 Report (*Presentation - for information*)

Giovanni Rum, GEO Secretariat presented a progress report on preparation of the GEOSS Implementation 2015 Report, indicating that the GEO Task and Component Leads were completing a questionnaire requesting information on: 1) accomplishments to date; 2) impact on decision-making; and 3) the activity's future role in the new Work Programme. He also indicated that planning for the Work Plan Symposium (WPS), scheduled for 5-7 May in Geneva, is proceeding on schedule, with a preliminary program to be released to the GEO community on Monday 23 March, following a teleconference with the joint Boards. The WPS is seen as an important step in the development of the next GEO Work Programme.

6.2 Report from the Infrastructure Board (*Document 8 - for consultation*)

Alessandro Annoni, Co-Chair of the Infrastructure Implementation Board (IIB), presented an update on the status of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), based on a recent meeting of the Board. He indicated the IIB had presented a revised description of GEOSS to the IPWG for inclusion in the Strategic Plan and that an Annex to the Plan describing and expanding on the vision of

GEOSS will be presented for the discussion at the WPS. He also stated that the IIB recommends, if the current Boards are dissolved, a new structure for governance of GEOSS should be constructed. The IIB believes that GEOSS could be the primary Flagship activity of GEO, the element that makes GEO unique. Mr Annoni presented three possible options for a future GEOSS, with different levels of ambition: Silver (GEOSS as primarily a catalogue of systems), Gold (focus on access to ready-to-use data and services), and Platinum (not just data but also reproducible information products and knowledge)

Although there was strong interest in the more advanced option offered (Platinum), the Committee Members noted that: 1) the proposed GEO Programme Board (GPB) has implications for GEO governance that require further consideration; 2) the evolution of GEOSS carries resource and organizational implications that must be discussed by the Committee; 3) the precise evolution of GEOSS will be determined by a combination of the IT infrastructure and the societal benefit areas being served.

Action 33.5: The Committee requested the IIB to elaborate on the proposed levels of service and provide more details at the July meeting.

6.3 Reports from Institution and Development and Societal Benefits Boards (*Presentations - for information*)

Rifat Hossain, World Health Organization (WHO) and Co-Chair of the Societal Benefits Board, stated that 2015 is a year of transitions for both the GEO community and the global development community. The transition to the SDGs presents an opportunity for GEO to bring the value of Earth observations in monitoring, measuring and achieving the SDGs into the sustainable development discussion, and provides GEO the means to move from proof of concept to implementation. The opportunity exists for GEO and the EO community to insert text on the importance of EO and geospatial data into the final SDG framework document, which will be approved by the Heads of State in September.

The Committee acknowledged the opportunities and noted the early steps toward that goal through GEO participation in two side events at UN Headquarters in New York (27 February (hosted by Switzerland) during the Statistical Commission Annual Meeting and 21 April (to be hosted by Denmark) during the April round of the Intergovernmental Negotiations on the SDG framework.

The Executive Committee met in closed session for one hour to discuss an issue raised by the Italian delegation.

7 SECRETARIAT OPERATIONS

7.1 Secretariat Operations Report (*Document 10 - for consultation*)

Barbara Ryan, GEO Secretariat Director, presented the Secretariat Operations Report. Committee Members inquired about current and future staffing needs, especially in support of the current Work Plan and future Work Programme. Members also suggested the Secretariat prepare an annual staffing plan indicating expected travel, including an indication of the function of individual engagements, in order to provide more advance knowledge of opportunities where national representatives of GEO could participate. Australia noted that the projected travel has been included in the revised Budget Annexes presented for adoption by Plenary in November 2014 for the 2015 calendar year.

The Secretariat Director noted that the staffing plan is a good suggestion and encouraged Members to review the Operations Report. As the Strategic Plan nears being finalized, it will become clearer what is entailed in the next decade and what qualifications are required in the Secretariat. A short-term contract for Communications Support is being advertised to assist in the preparations of the

Ministerial, per the request of the European Commission.

Action 33.6: Budget Working Group to incorporate Staffing Plan into Annual Budget.

Action 33.7: The Secretariat Operations Report to include forward plan and linkages with Work Programme.

7.2 Interim Financial Statements 2014 (*Document 11 - for information*)

7.3 Interim Report on Income and Expenditure (*Document 12 - for information*)

John Matuszak, United States and a member of the Budget Working Group (BWG), presented Documents 11 and 12 on behalf of the BWG. He noted with satisfaction that since the approved 2015 Budget, the Secretariat had prepared a re-forecast of expected expenditure that took into consideration the currency fluctuations which had recently affected the value of the Swiss Franc. This was presented in Document 12. He stated that the BWG was appreciative of the support provided by the Secretariat. The European Commission noted that the supplementary funds it provided were to support Communications and Information Technology staff positions. Any unexpended funds remaining from the funding of those positions should be credited to the Working Capital Fund.

The Secretariat Director noted that during GEO-XI Plenary, Principals were encouraged to announce their pledges for 2015. However, only one country announced its pledged contribution for 2015. She stated it is a challenge to balance an annual budget when countries do not make their pledges in due time for annual planning.

7.4 Corrigenda of the Report of the 28th Executive Committee and Report of the Executive Committee for 2013

Following an inquiry by Italy, who has pointed out some evident discrepancies since the Executive Committee Session of July 2014, the Secretariat Director confirmed and alerted the Executive Committee that several Executive Committee documents, presented by the Director and endorsed by the Executive Committee in October 2013, contained an error in the attribution of the work on the Communications Strategy and Private Sector Think Tank in 2013. The Executive Committee directed the Secretariat to make the necessary corrections and post the corrected documents with a notation of the changes.

Action 33.8: Secretariat to correct documents noting the changes.

8 PROPOSAL FOR A PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PROCESS FOR THE GEO SECRETARIAT DIRECTOR (*DOCUMENT 9 - FOR APPROVAL*)

8.1 Proposal for Annual Performance Evaluation process

8.2 Proposal for 360 degrees Evaluation process

The European Commission and the United States presented the documents. Committee Members supported the documents but cautioned against going too broadly on the 360 Degrees Evaluation; rather the coaching element is the most important aspect. It was noted that although the Performance Evaluation does not contain any consequence or reward, it can still serve as a useful management and developmental tool.

The Committee agreed the document provided a good starting point for an annual evaluation of the senior manager of the organization that could be improved based on user experience.

Document 9 was approved.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The United States offered to host the 2017 Plenary in Washington, DC. The Executive Committee expressed its appreciation and accepted the offer. The Secretariat Director called for an invitation for hosting the 2016 Plenary.

Friday, 19 March 2015

Meeting convened at 10:00

Chair: Dr Liao Xiaohan, China

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all participants. He stressed the importance of having a smooth, productive and fruitful meeting, and the need to stay on schedule. He welcomed the three Co-Chairs and other members of the Committee and noted the challenging and important items on the agenda, including preparations for the Ministerial Summit and discussion of the Strategic Plan. He expressed his belief that good discussion will ensue from the active participation of all Executive Committee members.

The European Commission Co-Chair agreed that this Executive Committee meeting will be strategic as it is focused on preparing the future of GEOSS and the engagement of GEO in key international initiatives. He noted that as governments within the European Union have changed and as a new Commission was now in place, the European Commission President has redefined its priorities, some of which have impacts for GEO, including establishing a connected digital single market, a resilient energy Union with forward-looking climate change policy and stronger global links for the EU, while supporting sustainable development.

The South Africa Co-Chair welcomed the Executive Committee, noting Germany re-joining the Committee. He stressed the importance of the Committee's work, noting the critical juncture to determine the strategic direction GEO should embark upon, reflecting that it is not an easy task, urging the Committee to focus on the vision for GEO, examine how much has been accomplished, and consider how to encourage continued implementation of GEOSS. He indicated his particular support of the efforts of the Implementation Plan Working Group (IPWG), Ministerial Working Group (MWG), Infrastructure Implementation Board (IIB) and Data Sharing Working Group (DSWG), expressing appreciation for the succinctness of the documents prepared for the Committee. He stated that the discussion of the new Strategic Plan should not proceed without first discussing the key findings of the Sixth Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) report and suggested beginning with the M&E Interim report prior to the IPWG discussion.

The United States Co-Chair, as this was her first meeting, began by introducing herself as Suzette Kimball, Acting Director of the United States Geological Survey, designated as the standing Principal Alternate for the United States. She indicated looking forward to participating in GEO and welcomed the new Committee Members Mexico and Egypt. She joined the other Co-Chairs in acknowledging that this meeting was an important turning point for GEO. GEO's first decade of global effort to harness Earth observations and develop applications provides an opportunity to examine what has been accomplished and identify directions for the next decade. She noted that as GEO approaches the Ministerial in November, we need to identify those parts of the agenda where Ministers can be most useful. Identifying GEO's strategy for the way forward and articulating steps to accomplish that strategy will be an important outcome for this meeting.

The Chair asked all Members of the Executive Committee and other participants in the meeting to introduce themselves.

Germany expressed its pleasure to re-join the Executive Committee, noting that it is one of the very active Members in GEO, contributing on many levels. Germany finds it valuable to be a Member of the Committee and hopes to make constructive contributions.

Italy noted it has participated in GEO for many years, as well as being a member of the UN Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management (UNGIGIM). He noted that as GEO faces a new decade it has to be transparent with a clear agenda. This is a voluntary organization to which countries contribute only if they feel it is a serious organization and seriously managed.

1 GENERAL BUSINESS

1.1 Adoption of Agenda (*Document 1 - for approval*)

South Africa noted that the interim draft of the 6th Monitoring and Evaluation Report contains valuable recommendations which should be reflected upon as the Committee considers the draft Strategic Plan. He proposed that Agenda Item 4 be swapped with Agenda Item 3.

Italy stated that under Agenda Item 7, Proposal for a Performance Evaluation Process for the GEO Secretariat Director, Document 9 should not be for approval. It should be discussed, but there has not been time to digest it due to its late arrival. He suggested discussing the document, but to delay approval until the next Executive Committee meeting. He also indicated that Agenda Item 8, Secretariat Operations, should be moved up in the agenda as there are financial issues which require discussion.

The Secretariat Director proposed adding Agenda Item 8.4 as a number of corrections to previous Committee documents need to be brought forward.

Japan stated its support of the proposal from South Africa and also indicated that the primary focus of the Committee is to discuss the work of the IPWG and give guidance. On the other hand, the financial reports are more routine, so they could be discussed on the first day if there is time, but otherwise suggested keeping the discussion on the second day of the meeting.

Italy emphasized that the discussion of the financial statements was not a routine discussion, especially in light of adding Agenda Item 8.4. He insisted on discussing the financial statements in detail after the main agenda items of the first day were covered, rather than late on the second day.

Australia noted that the Committee had to bear in mind that individuals had travelled to the Executive Committee meeting to make presentations and the Committee had an obligation to accommodate their schedules, resulting in the Committee having less flexibility on the first day than otherwise.

The Chair noted agreement in switching the order of Agenda Items 3 and 4, and keeping Agenda Item 8.4 on the second day. Otherwise, the agenda would remain as drafted.

Document 1 was Approved as amended.

1.2 Draft Report of the 32nd Executive Committee Meeting (*Document 2 - for approval*)

Document 2 was Approved with no discussion.

1.3 Review of Actions from Previous Meetings (*Document 3 - for approval*)

Regarding Action Item 32.1, the United States indicated that further conversation would depend on how GEO is positioned in the next decade, which, in turn, would govern the roles and responsibilities, and authorities of the Executive Committee. These discussions are currently taking place in the IPWG. Therefore, it is inadvisable that the Executive Committee develop a parallel process. Rather, the IPWG should be allowed to flesh out these issues, and the Executive Committee should consider them during its review of the draft Strategic Plan at the Committee meeting in July. The United States recommended that this Action Item be closed with responsibility for the issue being assumed by the IPWG, with inputs drafted for the Committee's consideration at its July meeting.

Regarding Action Item 32.2, the Secretariat Director indicated that the bulk of the work had been performed by Australia, the European Commission and the United States. When Document 9, Performance Evaluation Process for the GEO Secretariat Director, is discussed this Action Item will likely be closed.

2 ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY UPDATE

The Secretariat Director recalled the discussions in previous Committee meetings on this topic and expressed the hope that the presentation was an accurate assessment of those discussions. The presentation focused on three strategic priorities: Advancing Communication/Outreach to Stakeholders; Re-engaging Core Members/POs – Filling Gaps with New Members; and Refining GEO's Participation in Global Environmental Governance Mechanisms. She outlined a number of specific initiatives and accomplishments in these priority areas.

Committee discussion centered on the need to focus efforts and engage at the right level, and the need to re-engage Ministers from Member countries. The Committee noted that GEO must be relevant to the needs of Ministers, and while the presentation and accompanying document make clear there is a great deal of activity underway, the question arises as to what is the overarching strategy? What are the goals the strategy is trying to address? There has been a dis-engagement by Ministers over the years; what are the root causes? Perhaps responsibilities have changed and we are engaging with the wrong ministries. The strategy should focus on engaging Members at the right level, technically or politically, to ensure they are interested. GEO's objective is to allow better decision-making. Governments make these decisions; GEO needs to focus on the needs of politicians, on political questions, not just scientific issues. What are the concerns of governments? Have they changed over time? Is GEO still heading in the right direction? What are they looking for in having joined GEO? They do not need to leverage expertise, but have real needs. Is there enough water, oil, etc? These are political questions. In addition, it is important to understand what the specific initiatives deliver; that a strategy articulating a single set of objectives would allow Committee members to be proactive in supporting those objectives.

The Secretariat Director responded that according to interviews conducted a year ago found that GEO is often characterized as more of a movement than a formal organization, a structure with which some Ministers may not be familiar. In addition, in some cases Ministers have never designated a Principal to represent their government. Further, in general, the GEO community “pushes” out data, information and tools; only in a couple of instances, (GFOI, GEOGLAM, GEO BON, etc.) has GEO been able to take advantage of a “pull” or demand for its resources. To broaden engagement by decision makers, we need to encourage the use of GEO mechanisms. Stated more broadly, how does GEO fit into the larger global ecosystem?

Further discussion noted that in addition to governments, markets and other sectors make decisions in the global context in which GEO operates. Focusing only on political decisions may be short-sighted. The point was made, however, that while decisions may be taken by markets and companies, the political consequences are dealt with by governments. The example of GFOI – being formed and then transitioning to an operational home (FAO) – was cited as providing some lessons on the strengths and weaknesses from which to learn. Comments also focused on the benefits of GEO and accomplishments to date, including broader engagement within governments in some countries to promote data sharing, information exchange and task coordination; successful engagement with the United Nations, in particular regarding the Sustainable Development Goals and Disaster Risk Reduction; and engagement with the private sector.

Committee members noted that one value of GEO is that few similar organizations exist, that GEO is unique in its ability to create a system of systems. In addition, GEO plays a unique role in convening dialogues and fostering strategic partnerships, thus allowing it to design specific responses to challenges and identify policy needs.

The Committee proposed that a sub-group, be established to address issues of who we are as GEO; what products do we have; and to whom are we distributing those products. This group would closely coordinate its activities with the work of the IPWG.

Action 33.1: Secretariat to prepare a document outlining the lessons learned from the Global Forest Observations Initiative (GFOI).

Action 33.2: Form an Engagement Strategy sub-group, working closely with the IPWG.**3 INTERIM REPORT ON THE 6TH GEOSS EVALUATION (DOCUMENT 6 - FOR CONSULTATION)**

Gilles Ollier, European Commission, made a presentation on the interim findings of the 6th GEOSS Evaluation. The preliminary findings include:

1. GEO provides a common flexible framework for international collaboration in Earth observations;
2. Implementation of GEOSS Data Sharing Principles is a significant accomplishment of GEO;
3. Global initiatives are successful, but GEO has not have taken full advantage of key international initiatives for mutual benefit;
4. Delayed implementation of the GEO Work Plan has led to only moderate achievement of Strategic Targets;
5. The lack of in-situ Earth observations remains a significant gap in GEOSS;
6. GEO must significantly strengthen user engagement and relevance to decision-making to achieve success;
7. GEO's progress in capacity building is uncertain, but has established clear channels for considerable improvement in the future, especially in developing countries;
8. The GEOSS Common Infrastructure (GCI) has greatly advanced interoperability, despite the GEOSS Portal failing to meet user-needs; and
9. There is a recurrent lack of resources for the implementation of GEOSS and an uneven commitment from GEO members.

The Committee discussion noted that the findings are valuable for Member governments attempting to build GEO, as it represents a good diagnostic of the positive and negative aspects of GEO. The Committee recommended that the evaluation team should conduct more interviews of GEO national offices to complete the information base (especially in Asia). Capacity building activities from the Asia-Oceania Caucus should be taken into account. Some Committee members expect the current evaluation to provide a judgement on the current implementation mechanisms and recommendations on how to meet future GEOSS targets. Some Committee members expressed the view that there is a contradiction between the report welcoming the flexible framework of GEO while also stating that GEO suffers by the absence of a legal status

Comments and suggestions will be transmitted to the 6th GEOSS Evaluation Working Group.

4 UPDATE FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN WORKING GROUP (IPWG) (DOCUMENT 5 - FOR CONSULTATION)

Joern Hoffman, Co-Chair of IPWG provided a status report on the draft *GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025: Implementing GEOSS*. He noted that the IPWG has worked hard to meet its timelines in order to provide useful information to the Executive Committee, from which it hoped to receive additional guidance. He stated that:

- IPWG has learned not to be too specific on technical issues in the Strategic Plan, since things change on short timescales;
- Targets and indicators are meant to be comprehensive, in order to be responsive to Monitoring and Evaluation needs;

- Foundational tasks are those activities viewed as essential to GEO achieving its targets;
- Proposed Societal Benefit Areas (SBAs) are intended to be application-oriented;
- Operational Diagram speaks to the diversity of the GEO community – some contributors identify more on the left side (Earth system domains) than the right side (SBA, applications);
- Proposed GEO Programme Board is where committable resources are identified; and
- Recommends that the Executive Committee take up the legal status issue, based on the analysis already completed.

The Committee provided general comments on the Strategic Plan and then proceed to a section-by-section response.

Committee members recognized the significant investment of time and the resulting accomplishments of the IPWG to date. Comments made note of the apparent contradiction depicting the unique value of GEO in delivering observational foundations to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the need to talk to policy-makers. Governments can readily agree to the SDGs because they are distant from day-to-day operations, but GEO needs to identify more specific, national problems if we want governments to stay engaged. Too much focus on issues such as the SDGs could limit GEO's focus only to UN organizations and development banks. How can we address this? Is the Strategic Plan oriented toward the proper target; should it have more politically-relevant outcomes rather than scientific outcomes? Economy and Society is a topic of interest to politicians. Societal challenges should be clarified in the Strategic Plan.

Japan presented information about an International Symposium it will host in Tokyo in May 2015 to share its experiences and engage with stakeholders in examining the proposed SBAs and how such issues as the SDGs, Disaster Risk Reduction and climate change could be incorporated into the list. Committee members expressed support and appreciation for Japan's actions. It was noted that a one-day symposium may not be sufficient to develop firm conclusions on the final SBA definitions. Also, given the application orientation of the proposed SBAs, it will be important to ensure strong participation from end users in the Symposium.

In addition, Committee members noted the need to look forward to additional communities that will require Earth observations. The value proposition needs to be refined to clearly articulate a strategic vision. It is important that the roles and responsibilities of the Secretariat are clearly articulated, especially if creating new mechanisms, such as the GEO Programme Board. Further, there needs to be a discussion on how and whether GEO should leverage its technical infrastructure through the private sector. GEO needs to find ways to take advantage of existing technical possibilities, rather than serving as a middle-man. It was also suggested that during its next phase, GEO could improve its efforts in developing countries to implement Earth observing systems, for example, drought monitoring in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Committee requested that a summary of its recommendations to the IPWG be prepared by the Secretariat for review at the end of the meeting. In addition, the Committee welcomed further comments in writing.

Joern Hoffman responded that the messages were well-received, especially the request to identify where GEO adds value for individual Member governments. He noted a sense of nervousness with the Strategic Plan as a broad, framework document, but feels that many of the details the Committee is seeking will be found in Annexes which illustrates GEO as a mechanism to pursue specific objectives, without becoming too limiting.

Section-by-Section Discussion:

Section 1: Introduction

No comments.

Section 2: Scope and Strategic Objectives

Committee Members expressed mixed support for the content of the Advocate, Engage, Deliver construct, and cautioned that the Strategic Plan also needed to have a more focused, outward orientation, more clearly articulating the role of geospatial information in on-the-ground applications and decision-making. Section 2 – especially singular focus on Data Sharing and Data Management Principles - is too science-focused. Could the Advocate section be oriented more toward “how to attract governments”? Should Advocate be oriented around political, socio-economic and scientific foci?

The Operational Diagram (Figure 2) is useful, especially the right hand side (proposed SBAs). The left hand side (proposed Domains) has inconsistencies across the groupings (drivers, geography, societal issues). Climate should not be grouped with atmosphere; climate is related to oceans and water as well, as atmosphere. Could the right hand side be more direct in addressing priorities of governments, e.g., security, migration, food security, sustainable agriculture, economic development, and link these concepts to the SBAs? Population growth should be added, and the SDGs incorporated, as well. Ministers need to understand how Earth observations are useful for society. The diagram is not intended to reflect every science domain, but it needs to demonstrate to the scientific domains how they fit into the information chain, from observations to decision-making.

The question was also raised about what kind of GEOSS we want and what informs the data/information gaps that currently exist.

Joern Hoffman responded that the IPWG will re-examine how and where to best emphasize the importance of the Data Sharing and Data Management Principles. The diagram will also be re-examined recognizing that some of the assignments were somewhat arbitrary. An effort was made to address the future GEOSS question in the draft plan, but that will also be re-examined. He also noted that many POs are already performing gap analyses.

Section 3: Core Functions

Committee comments focused on whether the Core Functions are oriented toward the final end-use and how to reflect the full value chain of activities, as well as the overall political orientation of GEO. SDGs should be referenced in Section 2, although it is not in the same category as a SBA.

Section 4: Implementation mechanisms

Committee Members indicated that communication and engagement should be Foundational Tasks and the Strategic Plan should become a major communication tool. Support was expressed for development of the new Work Programme, based on input from the GEO community. Support for the GEO Programme Board (GPB), including involvement by Participating Organizations, was also noted. Having the Board meet in Geneva would demonstrate that participation is by governments/organizations, not by individuals. It is necessary to think through the functions of the GPB, especially given that GEO is a voluntary organization. What is the oversight authority of the GPB, and what are its limits if a project runs out of money, falls behind, etc.

Members acknowledged the need for stronger government support for implementation of GEOSS; effective communication channels must be created within governments so the efforts of their scientists to implement GEOSS are recognized and resources are provided for research.

Concern was expressed that the Strategic Plan appears to be only an outline for implementation; more work is needed to understand how this will function. For example, regarding Flagships – what is the first step, how does the process begin to identify them?

The next iteration of the Strategic Plan should include language concerning the merit of Flagships and who are the anticipated type of participants in each of them. The question was also raised as to whether GEO will only serve as an incubator for Flagships, or whether there will always be a core “flagship” activity that remains a central part of GEO.

Joern Hoffman responded that it is vital that a connection between the Work Plan and Ministers be identified and developed, especially if there is an expectation of resource commitments from Member governments. The function of the GPB will be studied more closely to avoid the mistakes made with the GEO Committees and Boards. The IPWG will review whether the Annex provides sufficient detail on the Implementation Mechanisms.

Section 5: Governance

Regarding the proposed changes to the composition of the Executive Committee, the European Commission, supported by Germany and Italy, stated it had been mandated by the Europe Caucus, at its recent meeting, to request a 4th seat on the Executive Committee for Europe, but not at the expense of another Caucus. The Europe Caucus could then agree to the further proposed increases, bringing the total to 16. In addition, the Commission voiced general support expressed by the European Caucus for the proposal to have three rotating Observers from the GPB. China voiced strong support for the proposal to increase representation of developing countries, but stated its desire to maintain the current formula in the Rules of Procedure for Co-Chair representation of two developed and two developing countries, which would encourage a higher level of participation of developing countries. South Africa supported maintaining the current two-plus-two balance and suggested another seat for Africa, if an additional European seat is added. Australia voiced strong support for allowing POs to sit on the Executive Committee as Observers, which would make the Committee’s decisions more robust and encourage greater PO engagement.

Regarding a change in GEO’s legal status, the Committee concluded there was no need for an immediate decision on this issue. Members expressed concern about the risks of the impact on Membership of seeking legal status in one country versus another, and the impact on GEO operations and governance of the mandatory legal requirements of any particular country. The observation was also made that GEO needs to improve its role on the international landscape, thus an independent identity is important to make the organization more robust and politically relevant. Further, that some type of mechanism will need to be put in place to allow for direct partnerships with the commercial sector.

Joern Hoffman requested clarification of the process regarding GEO’s legal status. The Committee confirmed that there should be no language in the Strategic Plan that a specific path toward legal status be chosen. The analysis already conducted by the IPWG would be received by the Committee, with appreciation, for further discussion and action at a later date. The Committee indicated it will need to form its own opinion before approaching Plenary for a mandate on the way forward. The Executive Committee agreed to disengage the IPWG from further work on this topic.

Action 33.3: Executive Committee assumes responsibility for further examination of GEO’s independent legal status and requests IPWG to forward any analyses already undertaken and supporting documentation.

Section 6: Resources through 2025

Committee members indicated that flexibility is required in how Members make contributions, specifically whether it is a cash commitment only. Regarding the Indicative Scale, there should be a minimum amount to make the contribution worth the internal administrative processing costs: a

suggestion was made of 5,000 CHF. A further suggestion was made to examine the Indicative Scale in light of expenditures, and whether the BWG could assist.

Friday, 20 March 2015

Meeting convened at 10:00

Chair: Dr Liao Xiaohan, China indicated Agenda Items 7 and 8 would be interchanged and that there would be a closed session to discuss an issue raised by the Italian delegation, immediately after lunch.

A video was broadcast of delivery of the GEO Statement at the UN 3rd World Congress on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) held in Sendai, Japan. The Statement was delivered by Francesco Gaetani of the GEO Secretariat reinforcing many of the points made during the Director's presentation on Day 1.

5 PREPARATIONS FOR GEO-XII AND MINISTERIAL SUMMIT (*DOCUMENT 7 - FOR CONSULTATION*)

5.1 Presentation by the Representative of Mexico

Rolando Ocampo of Mexico presented an overview of the GEO-XII Plenary and 2015 Ministerial Summit to be held in Mexico City November 9-13. He indicated the Plenary will be held on 11 November in the Hilton Reforma Hotel and in the Government of Mexico Foreign Ministry on 12 November. There will be two additional events being held at the Hilton during the same period, the Latin America Geospatial Forum (LAGF) and the UN Initiative on Global Geographic Information Management (UN GGIM: Americas). The GEO Exhibition will be held in the Hilton on Tuesday, 10 November through Thursday, 12 November.

The Committee thanked Mexico for hosting the meetings and for the presentation. Several questions were posed concerning meeting logistics. The Executive Committee presented Mexico with a letter, of appreciation, signed by the four Co-Chairs, thanking Mexico for hosting the meeting.

5.2 Update from Ministerial Working Group (MWG)

5.3 GEO Week Communication Plan

Jane Shiel, European Commission, provided an update on the progress of the MWG and requested feedback from the Committee on the draft Ministerial Declaration, the document urging Ministers to attend the Ministerial, and the draft "expected outcomes" of the Summit. The Ministerial Working Group held its first face-to-face meeting in January 2015. Discussions largely centred on communication and linkage of the event to other global processes. The group had begun to work on a 'why to come' message for Ministers, and on elements of the draft declaration. The Executive Committee was asked for specific guidance on the approach being taken regarding both of these documents and to the overall organisation of the Summit.

Robert Samors, GEO Secretariat, presented the progress of the Communications sub-group and requested specific guidance on whether a retrospective publication should be prepared for the Summit. The Committee indicated that a retrospective print publication would not be necessary, and any representation of GEO's accomplishments to date should be oriented toward the future.

The Secretariat Director indicated that GEO Principals from Member countries have been requested to provide contact information for the Minister who will receive the invitation from the Government of Mexico. For those Members where there has been no recent engagement with GEO, the Secretariat has sent letters to the Permanent Missions in Geneva.

Mexico indicated that the Mexican Ambassador in Member capitals will also be sending a letter of invitation to the appropriate Minister in that country.

Discussion by the Committee focused on how to attract Ministers to the Summit and what their role would be during the meeting. There was consensus that the focus should be on the political challenges facing Governments and how GEO would add value to address those issues over the next decade. Such issues include food security, migration, economic value and efficiencies of Earth observations, the direct impact of EO on everyday economic situations, etc.

Members also discussed how to provide Ministers with opportunities for peer-to-peer engagement, and whether they could take an active role in deciding on elements of the Strategic Plan, or whether the focus should be on having the Ministers commit to something, such as a recommitment to data sharing and open data policies. It will be important to secure early commitments from Ministers to attend in order to encourage other Ministers to participate.

5.4 Engaging Ministers

John Matuszak, United States, presented the draft document that will be included in the invitation letter to Ministers. The focus of the document is to highlight the local relevance of global issues and indicate the Summit will be an opportunity for peer discussion on how to solve their common problems, how the programmes are going to be implemented to suit their national needs, and how GEO can be useful. Science without borders may be a useful phrase. Discussion focused on whether the phrasing in the Strategic Plan – Advocate, Engage, Deliver – carries a political message for Ministers or whether it is one of an operational construct.

The Committee and the GEO Caucus Chairs were urged to encourage their Caucus members to help work the Ministerial invitations through their government processes after the letter has been sent in May.

Action 33.4: GEO Principals to communicate with Ministerial offices to encourage participation in Mexico City Summit.

5.5 Preliminary elements of the Ministerial Declaration

Jane Shiel, European Commission, reviewed the preliminary draft of the Declaration. The Committee provided initial feedback and agreed that the deadline for comment from GEO Principals should be 1 June.

Ministerial discussion summary as requested by Chair.

- Note of concern regarding moving between venues;
- No retrospective publication and no keynote address;
- Plenary participants and Ministers must be provided enough time to visit the Exhibition in the hotel;
- Refocus the message to be more political and less scientific in all documents/materials;
- MWG needs to distill the guidance from the Committee on what the Ministers will be asked to discuss and decide and transmit to Executive Committee;
- Executive Committee will determine options regarding Minister engagement in Summit. The Secretariat is directed to ensure this is followed up in a teleconference among the Co-Chairs;
- Timeline for Principal comments on the draft Ministerial Declaration to be changed to 1 June 2015; and
- Request to Caucus Chairs to work with Caucus members to encourage participation of Ministers from Member governments.

6 GEOSS IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

6.1 Status of GEOSS Implementation 2015 Report (*Presentation – for information*)

Giovanni Rum, GEO Secretariat, presented a progress report on preparation of the 2015 GEOSS Implementation Report, indicating that the GEO Task and Component Leads were completing a questionnaire requesting information on: 1) accomplishments to date; 2) impact on decision-making; and 3) the activity's future role in the new Work Programme. He also indicated that planning for the Work Plan Symposium (WPS), scheduled for 5-7 May in Geneva, is proceeding on schedule, with a preliminary program to be released to the GEO community on Monday 23 March, following a teleconference with the joint Boards. The WPS is seen as an important step in the development of the next GEO Work Programme.

6.2 Report from the Infrastructure Board (*Document 8 - for consultation*)

Alessandro Annoni, IIB, presented an update on the status of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), based on a recent meeting of the Board. He indicated the IIB had presented a revised description of GEOSS to the IPWG for inclusion in the Strategic Plan and that an Annex to the Plan describing and expanding on the vision of GEOSS will be presented for discussion at the WPS. In addition, infrastructure contributions to the transitional Work Programme will also be presented during the WPS.

He also stated that the IIB recommends, if the current Boards are dissolved, a new structure for governance of GEOSS should be constructed. This governance structure would have limited delegated power to support agreements that GEO has entered into regarding GEOSS implementation. The IIB believes that GEOSS could be the primary Flagship activity of GEO, the element that makes GEO unique. In order to make GEOSS a robust system, GEO must continue to promote data sharing, data management and architecture principles that promote interoperability; the continuity of operations and resources for the core GEOSS components must be assured; and further development of GEOSS must be supported.

Mr Annoni also presented three possible options for a future GEOSS with different levels of ambition: 1) a platform for international collaboration in EO, but with limited goals (e.g., primarily a catalogue of EO resources) (Silver level); 2) a platform that also contains an expanding number of complete and consistent open access data "Ready to Use" (Gold level); and 3) a platform that included models, workflows and context to enable processing of data into "reproducible" information products and knowledge (Platinum level).

Committee Members noted that: 1) the proposed GEO Programme Board has implications for GEO governance that require further consideration; 2) the evolution of GEOSS carries resource and organizational implications that must be discussed by the Committee; 3) the precise evolution of GEOSS will be determined by a combination of the IT infrastructure and the societal benefit areas being served. Currently the GCI is a library with a catalogue; how does the infrastructure move forward to reach decision makers, especially as the way people access information continues to evolve. Consideration must be given to what types of data and/or information are going to be provided through GEOSS.

Mr Annoni commented that more guidance is needed from the Committee as there are distinct differences between having an infrastructure that reaches decision makers and one that reaches citizens.

The Secretariat Director reinforced the need for a more robust governance mechanism for the GCI, and encouraged Members to think of operational governance mechanisms within their own organizations. The governing board for the Square Kilometer Array (SKA) could serve as one model.

Action 33.5: The Committee requested the IIB to elaborate on the proposed levels of service and provide more details at the July meeting.

6.3 Reports from Institution and Development and Societal Benefits Boards (*Presentation – for information*)

Rifat Hossain, World Health Organization (WHO) and Co-Chair of the Societal Benefits Board, stated that 2015 is a year of transition for the GEO community and the global development community. The transition to the SDGs presents an opportunity for GEO to bring the value of Earth observations in monitoring, measuring and achieving the SDGs into the sustainable development discussion, and provides GEO the means to move from proof of concept to implementation. Of particular importance is the role of the UN Statistical Commission in establishing the SDG indicators and monitoring process, and the apparent acceptance by the Commission of EO and geospatial data as monitoring tools. The opportunity exists for GEO and the EO community to insert text on the importance of EO and geospatial data into the final SDG framework document, which will be approved by the Heads of State in September.

The Committee acknowledged the opportunities and noted the early steps toward that goal through GEO participation in two side events at UN Headquarters in New York 27 February (hosted by Switzerland) during the Statistical Commission's Annual Meeting and 21 April (to be hosted by Denmark) during the April round of the Intergovernmental Negotiations on the SDG framework.

The Executive Committee met in closed session for one hour.

7 SECRETARIAT OPERATIONS

7.1 Secretariat Operations Report (*Document 10 - for consultation*)

Barbara Ryan, Secretariat Director, presented the Secretariat Operations Report. Committee Members inquired about current and future staffing needs, especially in support of the current Work Plan and future Work Programme. Members also suggested the Secretariat prepare an annual staffing plan indicating expected travel, including an indication of the function of individual engagements, in order to provide more advance knowledge of opportunities where national representatives of GEO could participate. Australia noted this had been done by the Secretariat for review by Plenary in November 2014 for the 2015 calendar year. Clarification was requested on the recently posted Communications Manager position.

The Secretariat Director noted that the staffing plan is a good suggestion and encouraged Members to review the Operations Report. As the Strategic Plan nears being finalized, it will become clearer what is entailed in the next decade and what qualifications are required in the Secretariat. A short term contract for Communications support is being advertised to assist in the preparations of the Ministerial, per the request of the European Commission.

Action 33.6: Budget Working Group to incorporate Staffing Plan into Annual Budget.

Action 33.7: The Secretariat Operations Report to include forward plan and linkages with Work Programme.

7.2 Interim Financial Statements 2014 (*Document 11 - for information*)

7.3 Interim Report on Income and Expenditure (*Document 12 - for information*)

John Matuszak, Budget Working Group (BWG), presented Documents 11 and 12 on behalf of the BWG. The Group had met once to review the documents and proposed additional explanatory notes that had been added as revisions. He noted with satisfaction that since approval of the 2015 Budget,

the Secretariat had prepared a re-forecast of expected expenditure that took into consideration the currency fluctuations which had recently affected the value of the Swiss Franc. This was presented in Document 12. He stated that the BWG was appreciative of the support provided by the Secretariat. The European Commission noted that the supplementary funds it provided were to support Communications and Information Technology staff positions. Any unexpended funds remaining from the funding of those positions should be credited to the Working Capital Fund.

The Secretariat Director noted that during GEO-XI Plenary, Principals were encouraged to announce their pledges for 2015. However, only one country (Switzerland) announced its pledged contribution for 2015. She stated it is a challenge to balance an annual budget when countries do not make their pledges in due time for annual planning.

7.4 Corrigenda of the Reports of the 28th Executive Committee, Report of the Executive Committee for 2013 and other documents

Following an inquiry by Italy, who has pointed out some evident discrepancies since the Executive Committee Session of July 2014, the Secretariat Director confirmed and alerted the Executive Committee that several Executive Committee documents, presented by the Director and endorsed by the Executive Committee in October 2013, contained an error in the attribution of the work on the Communications Strategy and Private Sector Think Tank in 2013. Specifically, the following sections of the Executive Committee reports and other documents incorrectly attribute the work on the Communications Strategy and Private Sector Think Tank to Space Bridges, Sarl, whereas in actuality the contracts had been awarded to consultants on an individual basis.

- Secretariat Operations Report: July 2013 – October 2013 (ExCom 29), Pages 18;
- Update on Communications Strategy (ExCom 29), Cover Page and Communications Strategy: Executive Summary; and
- Report of the 28th Executive Committee (ExCom 29), Pages 1, 10, 17 and 26.

The Executive Committee agreed that the documents must be corrected to properly credit the consultants' work and directed the Secretariat to correct and post the corrected documents with a notation of the change and a record of the agreement of the Executive Committee.

Action 33.8: Secretariat to correct documents, noting the changes.

8 PROPOSAL FOR A PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PROCESS FOR THE GEO SECRETARIAT DIRECTOR (*DOCUMENT 9 - FOR APPROVAL*)

8.1 Proposal for Annual Performance Evaluation process

8.2 Proposal for 360 degree Evaluation process

The European Commission and United States presented the documents. Committee members supported the documents but cautioned against expanding the 360 degree evaluation too broadly; rather, the coaching element is the most important aspect. It was noted that although the Performance Evaluation does not contain any consequence or reward, it can still serve as a useful management and developmental tool. Several suggested improvements related to financial management and overall planning.

The Committee agreed the document provided a strong foundation for an annual evaluation of the senior manager of the organization and could be improved based on user experience.

Action: Document 9 was approved.

9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The United States offered to host the 2017 Plenary in Washington, DC. The Executive Committee expressed its appreciation and accepted the offer. The Secretariat Director called for an invitation for hosting the 2016 Plenary.

10 SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

Actions from previous meeting are closed with Roles and Responsibilities of the Secretariat being tasked to the IPWG.

The Secretariat Director presented the following summary of the IPWG's reflection of the Committee's input on the draft Strategic Plan:

General

- The Executive Committee strongly welcomed the work of the IPWG and recognized substantial progress;
- The Executive Committee saw the need to improve in three main domains:
 1. Articulation of GEO value towards the political domain and other key communities;
 2. Clarification of how we envision GEOSS to be implemented, including perhaps leveraging technical infrastructure through private sector; and
 3. The relation to SDGs should be better developed.

Section 2/3

- The Executive Committee supported the areas of action (Advocate, Engage, Deliver);
- The “Advocate” function should be externally-focused, targeting the political, and socio-economic levels. Data Sharing Principles (DSPs) and Data Management Principles (DMPs) might be better captured within the context of Section 3;
- Application-oriented SBAs were supported. The Executive Committee suggested to frame the societal benefit of each in a more compelling way: Ministers need to understand how EOs are useful to solve specific societal problems;
- IPWG should find way to project the SBAs onto political priority topics (e.g. economy, security, migration, climate change mitigation, food security); and
- EO domains need more work, engage relevant communities, and show how scientific domains fit into the information chain.

Section 4

- Support for the Implementation mechanisms and Work Programme concept;
- Cast “Engagement and Communication” as Foundational Task; and
- Mandate and function of the GEO Programme Board needs to be better developed.

Section 5

- Moderate expansion of the Executive Committee needs to be discussed further; three PO observers supported;

1. Maintain balance between developing and developed countries for Co-Chair's positions.
- Programme Board Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure need to be developed:
 1. Board should be large enough to offer broad participation from PO and Members;
 2. Define oversight responsibilities and implications;
 3. Ensure Member representation (not individual capacity); and
 4. Further discuss ways to ensure full participation from Board members
 - The Executive Committee will decide on way forward for legal status based on analysis paper from IPWG at next meeting.

Section 6

- The Executive Committee welcomed indicative scale of contribution and specifying commitments;
- Caution should be used when specifying cash contributions;
- Indicative scale should specify a minimum voluntary contribution (justify administrative overhead, increase visibility); and
- BWG's output should be considered.

Action Items

- Action 33.1: Secretariat to prepare a document outlining the lessons learned from the Global Forest Observations Initiative (GFOI);
- Action 33.2: Secretariat to form an Engagement Strategy sub-group, working closely with the IPWG;
- Action 33.3: Executive Committee assumes responsibility for further examination of GEO's independent legal status and requests IPWG to forward any analyses already undertaken and supporting documentation;
- Action 33.4: GEO Principals to communicate with Ministerial offices to encourage participation in Mexico City Summit;
- Action 33.5: The Committee requested the IIB to elaborate on the proposed levels of service and provide more details at the July meeting;
- Action 33.6: Budget Working Group to incorporate Staffing Plan into Annual Budget;
- Action 33.7: The Secretariat Operations Report to include forward plan and linkages with Work Programme; and
- Action 33.8: Secretariat to correct documents, noting the changes.

33rd GEO Executive Committee

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