National Statement by the United States delivered at GEO-X Plenary

January 16, 2014, Geneva, Switzerland

Delivered by U.S. Delegate Michael Freilich on behalf of the United States government

Thank you, Madam Chair.

As we prepare to renew GEO for another decade, there is much for this community to be proud of.

The core tenet of GEO is supply open and timely access to Earth observations for better decision making. In the most literal sense, we have delivered; millions of datasets are now freely accessible. The Landsat data archive continues to be a shining example of this and having recently launched Landsat 8, we continue to provide the world's longest continuously acquired satellite land imagery.

The force-multiplying power of GEO really occurs when we partner to add global remote sensing data, in-situ observations and information from other observing systems to our understanding of natural processes, so that we can respond, mitigate and reduce world hunger, respond to environmental cataclysms, while encouraging better, sustainable practices globally, regionally and locally.

GEO is an engine of collaborations. Its Communities of Practice provide a forum where experts from around the world work collectively to tackle common issues. Today, we can confidently credit these communities with one of the hallmarks of GEO – the cultivation of societally-relevant initiatives, such as the Global Forest Observation Initiative, Global Agriculture Monitoring Initiative, Global Cholera Early Warning System.

This week, we sponsored the first ever Side Event on Food Security, aimed at bringing advances from the GEO community toward public private partnerships toward improved dynamic visualization of the world's food systems. Building together with GEOGLAM, this initiative brings together government, academic, corporate and private sector partners to demonstrate existing and planned data/model integration products, processes, services and technologies to address the challenges of managing food systems within larger landscapes.

The United States joined France and other partners as lead supporters of GEOGLAM since its conception. Today, we are pleased to announce that the United States, through our Department of Agriculture's Research, Education and Economics mission area will

work in close collaboration with our international partners to lead GEOGLAM's global R&D efforts. The R&D plan will bring together multiple parts of our Department of Agriculture, NASA, USGS and their counterparts in other countries and in the public sector to further develop GEOGLAM products. Meanwhile, USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, with its partners at NASA, University of Maryland and GEO, will continue to lead the ongoing operational GEOGLAM systems.

We are delighted to have this opportunity to introduce Dr. Debra Peters, Senior Advisor on Sustainable Agriculture in the Department of Agriculture to be the primary point of contact for GEOGLAM R&D effort.

The United States is deeply committed to GEO and its core data sharing principles. We support GEO going forward, and in going forward we should actively look to stronger engagement with communities beyond our traditional circles – from professional societies to non-profit organizations and foundations, from commercial sector to donor communities. Together we can accomplish more than we could ever imagine acting alone.

Thank you.