FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

2011 GEOSS in the Americas Symposium

*Exploring How the Americas Benefit From and Contribute To Development of GEOSS (Global Earth Observation System of Systems)*

5-7 October 2011

Santiago, Chile

[www.geossamericas2011.cl](http://www.geossamericas2011.cl)

Our world, including all countries in the Americas region, is experiencing a changing climate, increasing numbers and severity of natural and human-induced hazards, challenges with food production and security, and scarcer water resources. Coordinated, comprehensive and sustained Earth observations are essential to better understand these phenomena and to develop mechanisms to mitigate the effects on society and the environment.

The 2011 GEOSS in the Americas Symposium will build on the outcomes and priorities identified in previous symposiums held in Brazil (2007) and Panama (2008), plus a number of focused regional Group on Earth Observations (GEO) workshops held in 2007 through 2011.

The 2011 Symposium will focus on the role of Earth observations in four thematic areas of high importance in the Americas:

- Agricultural Monitoring
- Geological Hazards, including earthquakes, volcanoes and landslides
- Hydrometeorological Hazards, including droughts, floods, and hurricanes
- Water Resource Management

In addition to the technical speakers and discussion sessions, there will be poster sessions for each of the thematic areas. An exhibits area will provide opportunities for participants to view demonstrations of Earth observations data, tools, and applications. An afternoon of relevant field trips for participants will also be organized for each of the symposium themes.
Symposium Objectives:

The 2011 Symposium will explore the important role of GEOSS in helping to better understand and address the key issues of importance to most countries in the Americas region. The four interdependent thematic areas affect society and economies at all levels. These themes are particularly relevant given the impacts on agriculture and water resources from natural hazard events which are taking place with increased frequency and severity.

GEOSS is being developed as the global source for Earth observation data and information to make informed decisions for societal benefit. While GEOSS is still in an early stage of development and implementation, there are opportunities for the Americas region to take a lead role in contributing to and benefiting from strong engagement in GEOSS. To help realize these opportunities, specific objectives of the 2011 Symposium are to:

- Further increase an understanding of the importance of GEO and GEOSS to technical experts, researchers and decision makers;
- Increase awareness and build capacity to better use the data, tools and applications available through GEOSS to improve analysis and fact-based decision making;
- Increase collaboration on existing GEO and GEOSS initiatives, including full and open access to data, in the Americas region to realize societal benefits;
- Encourage strong regional engagement in the development of GEOSS through concrete actions that will result in contributions of expertise, data, tools and applications.

Participation:

The 2011 Symposium is targeted to technical experts, researchers, and decision makers who can contribute to the discussion and planning for the implementation of GEOSS in their countries, throughout the Americas, and ultimately as contributors to the international GEOSS initiative. In addition, those who could benefit from improved awareness of data sources, tools, applications and processes that are available to decision makers in the region are encouraged to attend.

Organization and Contacts:

The Chilean Group on Earth Observation (CLGEO) is hosting the 2011 GEOSS in the Americas Symposium which will be held on the campus of the Federico Santa Maria University (USM) in beautiful Santiago, Chile.

In addition to the partner organizations in Chile, the Symposium Organizing Committee includes representatives of GEO organizations in Brazil, Canada, and the United States. Leading experts from throughout the Americas region will participate in the planning and development of the technical sessions in each of the four thematic areas.

Further information will be available on the Symposium website at www.geossamericas2011.cl