

Statement of the Geological Surveys of Europe (EuroGeoSurveys)
at the Beijing Ministerial Summit of the Group on Earth Observations
(in the frame of the Seventh Plenary Meeting of the Group on Earth Observations – GEO-VII)
Beijing, China, 4th November 2010

Mister Chair,
Honourable Minister Wan Gang,
Honourable Ministers,
Members of the GEO Executive Committee,
Mr Director of the GEO Secretariat,
Distinguished delegates,

EuroGeoSurveys, on behalf of 32 national geological surveys in Europe, would like to thank the Government of the People Republic of China for hosting us.

The Geological Surveys of Europe operate in various fields relevant to the development of the GEOSS 10-year Implementation Plan and directly address issues of concern to society such as those of the GEO Societal Benefit Areas. These include natural disasters, health, energy, water and climate.

In order to achieve the above we also carry out several practical, effective actions that we fund jointly with the European Union through the 7th Framework Programme. These include the African-European Geo-resources Observing System (AEGOS), a GEO sub-task which continues to develop and is making a positive contribution to GEO's capacity building activities in Africa. The project has just commenced a trial broadcast of geological data to two African countries using GeoNetCast. I would also like to mention EO-MINERS, a new project developing earth observation as part of a technology platform for mineral resources, a growing area of societal need for GEO. And, as well as direct contributions through GEO projects like these, we make indirect contributions through the Global Monitoring for

Environment and Security Programme, GMES. For example, the geological surveys of Europe are key in developing and implementing PanGeo, which will address the issues caused by natural hazards of geological origin, such as earthquakes, landslides, volcanism or floods, in European urban areas.

Honourable delegates,

We are proud to acknowledge the enormous progress GEOSS is making and to contribute to it. However, results have also confirmed that targets can be achieved only if GEOSS will be able to establish the successful integration of space-based and airborne Earth Observation data with information that cannot be detected with the aid of remote sensing techniques, the so-called in-situ data.

Otherwise GEOSS will fail to accomplish its mission.

The geosciences community is one of the world's largest in-situ data providers. The huge data sets held by the geological surveys include several hundred thousands of records in areas like landslides mapping, groundwater, soil geochemistry or mineral resources. OneGeology, the world's largest project in the field of Earth Sciences with 116 participating nations and a leading component of the Global Datasets Task in GEO, is one example of the tremendous contribution our community is bringing to GEOSS.

We are also aware that not all geosciences based in-situ data are immediately ready to be served to GEOSS in the same way of OneGeology. Recognising that a considerable effort is needed and that it will bring long-term beneficial effects for society, we very much look forward to working jointly with the GEO community to overcome these challenges and continue to increase the geosciences contribution.

And to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to GEO, I am pleased and honoured to inform you that the European contribution to OneGeology, the OneGeology-Europe web service and metadata catalogue, whose development has been co-financed by the European Commission, is now fully maintained by EuroGeoSurveys guaranteeing its sustainability. OneGeology-Europe brings a huge progress on data sharing, making geological map data freely available on the internet, thanks to a ground-breaking one click licensing agreement

by all participating European nations. Moreover, here in Beijing EuroGeoSurveys has signed an agreement with the European Environment Agency to exploit the OneGeology-Europe database for environmental protection purposes.

We are confident this will have significant impacts on the progress not only of GEO but also of GMES.

Thank you for your attention.