

Statement of the Philippines
by H.E. Ambassador Cecilia B. Rebong
Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations and other
International Organizations
GEO Ministerial Summit
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Excellencies, Ministers and distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen:

First of all, I would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to the countries and organizations represented here for all your assistance to my country when typhoon Haiyan hit central Philippines.

The Philippines is identified as one of the megadiverse countries, possessing a large number of the Earth's species. At the same time, our country, located along the typhoon belt, is visited by an average of 20 typhoons every year. The serious devastation brought by super typhoon Haiyan, regarded as the strongest typhoon ever to make landfall, to central Philippines is known to all. Our country is among the most vulnerable in the world to climate change. The Philippines also sits on the "Pacific Ring of Fire," which makes our country vulnerable to frequent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

Considering these characteristics of our country, the Philippines recognizes the value of Earth observations in addressing such challenges as climate change adaptation, resilience to natural hazards, as well as food security, energy security and water security.

As recognized in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development or Rio + 20, called "the Future We Want," we acknowledge

the importance of space-based and in situ observations for providing reliable geospatial information for sustainable development policy making, programming and project operations.

Indeed, access to timely, integrated and actionable data and information about the Earth system is vital in order to respond to our societal needs and challenges.

We therefore recognize the importance of the partnership among governments and organizations that the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) brings together. We affirm the importance of international collaboration for the effective use of Earth observations.

We further acknowledge the important work being carried out through the implementation of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS). We therefore support the renewal of GEO's mandate through 2025. We also welcome the recent launch of the new GEO Portal.

Over the period of GEO's renewed mandate, we look forward to closer collaboration with all members and participating organizations. We welcome the inclusion of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) among the participating organizations of GEO. We further welcome GEO's resolve to further strengthen its engagement with developing countries in using Earth observations efficiently. We are pleased to note GEO's intent to assist developing countries in raising our capacities to acquire, share, store, maintain and utilize space-based, air-borne and *in situ* Earth observation data that is available on a full and open basis. We look forward

to better access to timely and reliable data, the building of our capacity in this sphere, as well as the development of our information infrastructure.

Among others, the Philippines will continue to play its role in biodiversity monitoring, through the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity which we host, and through the Asia-Pacific Biodiversity Observation Network. Being a member of the Asian Water Cycle Initiative (AWCI), the Philippines will also continue to work with the other members of the GEOSS/AWCI and participate in its various activities including its capacity-building programs.

Thank you.