

Summary Report

11th Meeting of the Executive Committee Cape Town, 27 November 2007

As approved by the Executive Committee at its 12th Meeting in March 2008

1 GENERAL BUSINESS

GEO Co-Chair Philemon Mjwara (South Africa) served as Chair for the meeting. He welcomed the participants and described the importance of the GEO-IV Plenary and the Cape Town Ministerial Summit. The Co-Chair from the EC thanked the host government for the excellent organization of the conference. The US Co-Chair called the Summit an important milestone in the GEO process. The Co-Chair from China emphasized the Summit's contribution to the objectives of GEO.

1.1 Adoption of Agenda (*Document 1*)

The Chair presented the agenda and noted that David Grimes of Canada would present the Report on Progress to the Committee at 2 pm. The agenda was adopted.

1.2 Approval of Summary Report of the 10th Executive Committee Meeting (*Document 2*)

The EC Co-Chair asked that Mr. Gilles Ollier be added to the list of participants and noted his intention to provide further comments later in the meeting. China corrected the spelling of the CBERS-2B satellite. The Secretariat Director summarized the state-of-play concerning inactive Tasks, the GEOPortal process and other issues. The Report was approved as amended.

1.3 Review of Actions from Previous Meetings (*Documents 3 and 4*)

The Chair described the status of work on performance indicators, the finance Task team proposal and the template for applications to become a Participating Organization. The Director stated that a template has been prepared and can be amended if more detailed information is desired. The issue of the appointment of the Secretariat Director was raised, and it was agreed to place this item on the agenda of the Committee's 12th meeting.

The EC asked that future Summary Reports include a list of actions pending from all previous meetings, and not just the immediately preceding one. He also proposed that criteria be put in place so that the next Executive Committee meeting could make a decision on the development of the GEOPortal. The Director explained that the GEOPortal process had been briefly set aside to avoid complicating the work of the Plenary and Summit and was a priority activity for the first quarter of 2008.

Action 11.1 – Secretariat to advance the GEOPortal process and place on agenda for the 12th meeting of the Executive Committee.

2 SECRETARIAT OPERATIONS (*Document 5*)

The Director presented the Secretariat Operations Report for July – November 2007. He explained that the Secretariat has reinforced its capacity in the water and health SBAs and has hired contractors for biodiversity and disasters for 2008. He highlighted various Secretariat activities, in particular those pertaining to the preparation of future activities and the mobilization of the Earth observation community, Iridium, carbon sequestration, IGOS-P, new GEO Members, and WHO's growing collaboration with GEO and its presence at GEO-IV.

Brazil drew attention to paragraph 5 in the section on GEO for the Americas concerning Chile's proposal for a regional space programme. The Director clarified that Chile, and not the Secretariat, may raise this issue in the Plenary. China requested that the same paragraph be rewritten to reflect the Secretariat's strong role in the Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop in Beijing and provided its requested changes in writing.

The EC said that the Operations Report confirmed the excellent work being carried out by the Secretariat. The EC will work with Italy on the development of Secretariat performance indicators. He indicated that there is still room for improving the Secretariat's support to the Committees. The Chair suggested that a working document on performance indicators could be discussed at the 12th meeting of the Executive Committee.

Brazil endorsed the vote of confidence in the Secretariat's work as well as the need for stronger support to Committees. He announced that Brazil will second an expert to the Secretariat.

The Director noted that the Secretariat spends more than 50% of its time on supporting Committees and pledged to try to improve performance in this area. He said that a staff of 20 was probably the right balance and described the status of the various secondments. He urged that the proper staffing and budget levels for GEO be agreed more formally. The US highlighted the dual responsibility of Members and the Secretariat for maintaining a sufficient level of secondments. The Chair stated that the Secretariat should provide updates of secondments and their terms well in advance as a reminder to Members.

During a discussion of the Iridium project, the US stressed the need to establish a process for engaging the commercial sector. Germany suggested that the Secretariat be tasked to work on this issue, noting that GEO does not have the legal status required for making legal commitments. Brazil highlighted the need for Members to have the opportunity to discuss the options for engaging with industry. Noting the emergence of private-sector issues such as Iridium and of projects requiring established instruments such as the GEOPortal, the Chair proposed that the Secretariat be given a mandate to explore how to develop effective processes for such activities.

Action 11.2 – Secretariat to explore options for making commitments with the private sector, including the best practices of other relevant organizations

Action 11.3 – Secretariat to prepare regular reminders on the status of, and need for, secondments

3 THE WEEK AT A GLANCE

The Director presented the Week at a Glance and proposed presenting it to delegates during the Plenary. The US announced that it is sponsoring a couple of side events in order to expand participation (including from NGOs and industry) in the GEO process. Brazil asked the Secretariat to include Wednesday's launch of "CBERS for Africa" in the Week at a Glance.

4 REVIEW OF SUMMIT DOCUMENTS

4.1. Agenda (*Document 31*)

The Chair informed the Committee that, due to a major meeting in South Africa, President Mbeki would not open the Summit and would instead be represented by Minister Mangena.

The Chair presented the Summit agenda. A discussion ensued on how the statements from Ministers and Heads of Delegation should be handled. The draft Declaration, the Summit press conference and an announcement of the Exhibition were also discussed.

4.2 Declaration (*Documents 5 and 5 rev. 1*)

The Committee agreed to present both the earlier and the revised versions of the draft Declaration to the Plenary. A debate would be opened in the Plenary session, and the finalization of the Declaration would be assigned to an open-ended task team that would meet in parallel with.

4.3/4.4 Report on Progress (*Document 29 Final*) and Early Achievements (*Document 30 Final*)

David Grimes of Canada was invited to introduce the Report on Progress to the Committee. He also described the Annex to the Report, which featured 100 Early Achievements presented as two-page spreads. He outlined his 10-slide presentation for Ministers.

A discussion followed. It was emphasized that the presentation would come from the entire GEO community, should be linked to the Declaration, and should offer a balance between past accomplishments and future directions. It was agreed that Mr. Grimes would present the Report and the process for creating it to the Plenary. The Report and presentation were applauded by the Committee, and it was noted that GEO has clearly achieved a great deal over the past two years.

Brazil highlighted the importance of ensuring that all future achievements be required to respect the data-sharing principles and the agreed interoperability standards for global information dissemination.

The Director mentioned that the Government of Spain had arranged for the Report and Annex, as well as the current version of the draft Cape Town Declaration, to be translated into Spanish.

5 REVIEW OF GEO IV (AGENDA AND DOCUMENTS)

(See list of documents attached)

The Chair then reviewed the agenda of the Plenary meeting. It was agreed to allot sufficient time for the presentations from Committees. It was announced that there would be no report from the Tsunami Working Group.

The Committee agreed to allow the WCRP “Weather, Climate and Earth-System Prediction Project for the 21st Century” and the Iridium project to be presented to the Plenary. The EC and the US emphasized the importance of allowing adequate time during the Plenary for national and regional organizations to report.

The issue of the nomination of new Executive Committee members by the regional caucuses was discussed. Brazil announced its desire to remain as a Co-Chair of the CBC. The Secretariat was asked

to arrange an “off-line” discussion before the 12th meeting of the Executive Committee to ensure the four Committees’ representation on the Executive Committee.

Several other issues were discussed, including the possibility that an offer to host GEO-V would be announced, the proposal on the finance task team, the Secretariat budget, the IGOS-P transition, the list of new GEO Members and the GEO-III report. The EC pointed out that a sentence was missing in Section 7 of this report, and the Director confirmed that this would be read out in Plenary when the report was presented.

The rules for accepting new Participating Organizations were discussed. The Executive Committee agreed on a transparent procedure for presenting the Committee’s recommendations to the Plenary for its decision. The Committee reviewed the individual applications from organizations and agreed on its recommendations.

The EC observed that there is an ambiguity in the rules of procedure that has to be clarified. This should be addressed at the Executive Committee’s next meeting.

Action 11.4 – Secretariat to ensure representation of all Committees on the Executive Committee.

6 SECRETARIAT REPORT TO PLENARY

The Committee agreed that its report to the Plenary will be delivered orally and will refer to the existing reports on Secretariat Operations. The Chair will request a mandate from the Plenary for the Executive Committee to deal with Secretariat arrangements.

7 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

China and Japan proposed that the number of Executive Committee members from the Asia/Oceania regional caucus be increased due to the region’s large area and population. Germany and Brazil suggested that increasing the number of Committee members from a regional caucus might require amending the GEO rules of procedure. They said that an increase would have an impact on the balance amongst other regions. In conclusion, the Executive Committee requested the Asia/Oceania regional caucus to make efforts to settle this issue without changing the number of current Executive Committee members.

There being no other business the meeting adjourned at 17h45.

Draft Agenda

11th Executive Committee Meeting Cape Town, 27 November 2007

Tuesday, 27 October 2007

Convene at 09:00

8 General Business

- 1.1 Adoption of Agenda (Document 1)
- 1.2 Approval of Summary Report of the 10th Executive Committee Meeting (Document 2)
- 1.3 Review of Actions from 10th Meeting (Documents 3)

9 Secretariat Operations

Coffee at 10:30, Reconvene at 10:45

10 The Week at a Glance

11 Review of Summit Documents

- 11.1. Agenda (Document 31)
- 11.2. Declaration (Document 5)
- 11.3. Report on Progress (Document 29 (Final))
- 11.4. Early Achievements (Document 30 (Final))

12:30 Lunch, Reconvene at 14:00

12 Review of Fourth Plenary (Agenda and Documents) (GEO IV)

(See list of documents attached)

16:00 Coffee, Reconvene at 16:30

13 Executive Committee Report to Plenary

14 Any other business

18:30 Adjourn

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