

Statement of the Geological Surveys of Europe (EuroGeoSurveys)
at the Eleventh Plenary Meeting of the Group on Earth Observations
GEO-XI

Geneva, Switzerland, 13th-14th November 2014

Mister Chair,
Members of the GEO Executive Committee,
Madam Director of the GEO Secretariat,
Distinguished delegates,

I am pleased to inform you that EuroGeoSurveys, which operates through the support - and on behalf of - 32 national Geological Surveys in Europe, is continuing to progress in the attempt to link its major actions to GEOSS.

Last January, during the Ministerial Summit, we informed you that a detailed scoping study, co-financed by the European Commission and assessing the functional, legal and technical requirements needed to develop a European Geological Data Infrastructure, where geological data sets and derived information services developed under the EuroGeoSurveys umbrella will be integrated, was close to completion. I can now confirm that, also in consultation with the GEO Secretariat, this effort has been successfully carried out. One of the main findings is that between 400 and 700 million euro were invested by the European Union over the past years to support EuroGeoSurveys actions. Nevertheless, after – on average – three years from the various projects completion, most of the results and associated data sets and databases went lost because it had not been foreseen a strategy or a financial allocation to maintain them.

EuroGeoSurveys has started addressing this issue a few years ago, and the various data bases that we serve to GEOSS, such as OneGeology-Europe or PanGeo are now fully maintained by us.

The European Geological Data Infrastructure has already started its preparatory implementation phase, which is fully financed by EuroGeoSurveys. Building on OneGeology-Europe, it will bring together a huge amount of federated European geological data on marine geology, geohazards, geochemistry, mineral resources, geo-energy and groundwater, which will be served under one single portal. All this in-situ information will be harmonised and made freely available and served to GEOSS.

However, our activities in support of GEOSS are not limited to the European continent.

The joint EuroGeoSurveys – Organisation of African Geological Surveys Report ‘Geoscientific Knowledge and Skills in African Geological Surveys’, financed by the European Commission, has been completed last week. This feasibility study, whose main aim has been to assess the most suited means to strengthen the Organisation of African Geological Surveys and the individual African Geological Surveys, was prepared also with the engagement and consultation of UNECA, UNESCO, Geological Society of Africa, World Bank and several other key players in the geoscientific arena.

The Report recommends to engage in a series of capacity building and training activities for the staff of African Geological Surveys at the continental scale and using and reinforcing existing African facilities including laboratories, but also building new ones. The implementation phase, which will support the AfriGEOSS initiative, will focus on geoscientific mapping, exploration and assessment of mineral resources, mapping and monitoring geohazards, and geoheritage and geotourism development. A last focus area is geoscience information infrastructure and management, which will be implemented as a continuation of the African-European Georesources Observation System (AEGOS), the pan-African spatial data infrastructure of public and interoperable geological data for the sustainable development of georesources in Africa. The facilitated access to these information assets will be based on the GEOSS Data Sharing Principles, and the Geological surveys of Europe will be mobilised to bring it forward.

The preliminary results of this feasibility study, were discussed during the European Union - African Union Ministerial Summit last March in Brussels, where the African Union Commissioner in charge for Trade and Industry expressed full support to the initiative. As a results, the European Union - African Union Ministerial Summit conclusions included the

following statement: *'We will endeavour to cooperate in such fields as geological surveys, mineral resources governance, investments, infrastructures, skills development and waste management'*.

We are confident that the next African Union Council of Ministers, which is going to be held this month at Victoria Falls, will adopt the Report and endorse the start of the first part of the implementation phase, which is foreseen to start next year for a duration of 6 years.

Through these actions we also confirm our commitment to contribute to the implementation of the GEOSS.

Thank you for your attention.