

**Statement by the Chair of the Steering Committee of the
Global Climate Observing System (GCOS)**

**GEO Plenary XII
11-12 November 2015, Mexico City**

Thank you, Chairman.

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Steering Committee for the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS).

GCOS notes the new *GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025* and welcomes its recognition of the cross-cutting nature of climate change across all the SBAs. GCOS itself has recognised that climate observations are needed not just for the climate community but also for issues such as disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness, and is planning to meet these challenges.

GCOS also recognises, and values, the role of GEO as a convening body and its work in identifying user needs in the revised GEO SBA structure.

GCOS has just released its *Status Report of the Global Observing System for Climate*. This Status Report has been submitted to the sponsoring organizations of GCOS and Parties to the UNFCCC for consideration at COP21 in Paris in December 2015 which will be important for defining future climate related observational needs. The report's main message is that while the current observing system has been very successful in identifying and characterising climate change and its drivers, the system needs to evolve to meet the new challenges posed by planning for extreme events, early warning systems, and climate change adaptation and mitigation. Improvements are needed to fill monitoring gaps (especially in Africa), to develop more detailed regional observations and to improve the archiving of, and access to, climate observations.

To address these improvements, GCOS has started drafting a new Implementation Plan, that will take into account recent developments including the revised GEO Strategic Plan. The new GCOS Implementation Plan, to be published in late 2016, will be a milestone that will influence the agenda for climate observations on a global and regional scale over the coming decade.

GCOS welcomes the potential for cooperation with GEO in developing and delivering the new Implementation Plan for GCOS and, conversely, in supporting the new thinking in GEO and its future work programme.

GEO could benefit terrestrial observations by supporting coordination of data requirements between the various global observing systems and global observation initiatives. Currently overall coordination of terrestrial observation is lacking.

GCOS will hold a conference titled “The Road to the Future”, 2-4 March 2016 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, to discuss the observing system and provide inputs into the new Implementation Plan. GCOS would like to have a wide participation at this conference and would encourage contributions from the GEO community.

GCOS would welcome a greater involvement in the development of the GEO work plan in the areas of climate observations and looks forward to identifying tasks where GEO can supplement the on-going activities of GCOS, such as facilitating access to climate datasets through GEOSS.

Finally, I would strongly encourage the GEO community to be more engaged with the GCOS expert panels on atmospheric, terrestrial and ocean observations for climate. I believe there is great potential for much improved cooperation of GEO and GCOS: such a cooperative approach would be able to serve a broader community more effectively and efficiently.

Thank you.