

UK Statement for GEO Ministerial, Beijing, November 2010.

The UK would like to extend its appreciation to the People's Republic of China for hosting this Ministerial Summit; and also to the European Commission for organising the successful pan-Europe exhibition stand.

Within the last 12 months, the international negotiations on climate change and biodiversity have shown how important it is for decision makers at a global level need access to the best available scientific evidence of environmental change, pressures and impacts and to share a common understanding of its significance. GEO is an organisation with a truly global membership and has the opportunity to be a powerful force in ensuring that evidence is collected and shared in the most effective ways possible.

The UK support and encourage the efforts of GEO to ensure that our observational systems provide the essential evidence that is fit to meet the demands of international policy forums and decision makers in a consistent way. We therefore support the progress made with the new Global Forest Observing Initiative which has strong links to FAO and other relevant bodies and encourage GEO to continue to add value in this way.

GEO presents the global environmental observation community with a unique opportunity to collaborate and foster partnerships. The UK has itself adopted a collaborative approach at a national level through activities such as the UK Environmental Observation Framework and Living with Environmental Change. These partnerships bring together a wide range of the UK organisations responsible for environmental policy, observations, and research to optimise the coherence and effectiveness of UK environmental science and ensure government, business and society have the foresight, knowledge and tools to mitigate, adapt to and capitalise on environmental change.

Working together in the UK and internationally through initiatives such as GEO is essential to this effort. The UK contributes to GEO through many European and initiatives (including GMES, INSPIRE and the Framework Programme) and through

organisations such as WMO, and POGO. The UK is also directly involved in GEO projects, including One Geology and the Quality Assurance Framework for Earth Observation (QA4EO): and is pleased to have extended its term as co-chair of the Science & Technology Committee.

In the past year the UK has made significant contributions to the GEO Data Sharing Taskforce. We welcome the creation of both the GEOSS Data Sharing Action Plan and are encouraged by today's commitment to the GEOSS Data CORE. These are in line with the developments in the UK, where the government has taken significant steps to improve the accessibility and transparency of government data and information.

In response to the initial call for contributions to the GEOSS Data CORE the UK can announce that at least 8 organisations will be making a range of datasets available to the Data Core in this first call. This contribution includes large volumes of *in situ* data and remote sensing datasets, and covers all of the societal benefit areas.

One example I would like to highlight is the National Biodiversity Network resource which now includes than 280 million individual records, covering plants, mammals, birds and invertebrates collected by volunteer networks and experts from across the UK. These will be registered in the GEO-Data Core via Global Biodiversity Information Facility.

We are also proud to register the dataset of the Continuous Plankton Recorder that has measured the ecology and biogeography of plankton in the North Atlantic and North Sea since 1931. These records have been instrumental in helping to explain to decision makers how just small changes in the temperature of the oceans have a large impact on the ecology and diversity of marine life – and subsequently on fisheries. The survey is now 'going global'

Furthermore the Natural Environmental Research Council (NERC) have pledged support to GEO through a commitment to allow open access to the vast amounts of key scientific records its holds within its data centres. These data centres represent all environmental domains and include major oceanographic, atmospheric and

geological programmes and cover the unique observations of the British Antarctic Survey.

The UK sees the pledged data for GEOSS Data Core as a significant first contribution, and one which will continue to be expanded.

We hope this data will be used to further our collective understanding of our environment, enabling us to adapt to this changing environment.

Thank you