

The Group on Earth Observations (GEO) Mexico City Declaration

Mexico City, 13 November 2015

We, Ministers, GEO Members and Participants attending the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) Mexico City Ministerial Summit:

1. Confirm that full and open access to Earth observation data, information and knowledge is crucial for humanity as it faces unprecedented social, economic and environmental challenges at global, regional, national and local levels. **Recognize** that Earth observation data and the information and knowledge derived from those observations are fundamental for identifying and implementing solutions, monitoring progress and measuring impacts.

2. Note that Earth observations take many forms including in situ, remotely sensed, and space based. **Welcome** GEO's inclusion of all of these types in its efforts. **Emphasize** that Earth observations and economic and social data, information and knowledge should be used together for policy and program decisions. **Affirm** that GEO and its Earth observations and information will support the implementation of, inter alia, the 2030 Global Goals for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the United Nations System of Environmental and Economic Accounts, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

3. Note the progress GEO has made, recalling its Geneva Declaration (2014) call to improve GEO's effectiveness, broaden its engagement with stakeholders and sustain resources. **Reaffirm** that comprehensive and sustained Earth observations and derived knowledge are needed to assess, understand and predict how Earth resources are a basis for sustainable development and how society and its choices impact the Earth life support system upon which the wellbeing of present and future generations depends.

4. Recognize that GEO is a unique partnership of governments and participating organizations committed to the coordination of Earth observation systems and building the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) for the benefit of humankind. **Acknowledge** GEO's important convening power to systematically identify and address user needs, ensure the availability of observing systems, promote standards to access the data, and cultivate public and private partnerships, all of which maximize the value of Earth observations for downstream users and decision makers.

5. Highlight how GEO initiatives are delivering value to countries and their citizens. It has been demonstrated that, in economic and social terms, the returns from open access to Earth observation data from examples of applications have resulted in measurable benefits. These benefits have been realized in a wide range of areas including: hazards; disasters; disease prevention, preparedness, and response; infrastructure planning; monitoring and management of agriculture forests, oceans, coasts, wetlands, biodiversity and pollutants; climate projections and access to clean water and sanitation.

And we therefore:

6. Endorse the GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025: Implementing GEOSS, which builds on the GEO vision and mission, to guide GEO through the next decade when Earth observations will play an increasingly critical role in evidence-based decision making for the benefit of humankind. **Resolve** to work together with an increasing number of stakeholders to enable progress to GEO's vision.

7. Call on GEO to strengthen its focus on users and stakeholders and in particular develop new approaches to effectively engage with: United Nations institutions, Multilateral Environmental Agreements, Multilateral Development Banks, additional Participating Organizations and the private sector. **Urge** governments to promote GEO nationally, and through their representation in international organizations, to realize a more effective collaboration with GEO.

8. Call on GEO to launch a GEO initiative to leverage Earth observations to support the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the 2030 Global Goals for Sustainable Development, building on the recent success of GEO's engagement with the United Nations on this issue.

9. Recognize GEO's ability to foster strategic partnerships to coordinate and integrate the multifaceted resources and expertise of the GEO community and external partners. **Call** on GEO to convene a stakeholder driven process to contribute to sustainable solutions to global challenges in the Societal Benefit Areas by identifying observation needs and gaps and developing knowledge and tools to enable delivery of useful services to users. **Call** for GEO to enhance monitoring and evaluation to track the results and benefits of this process.

10. Reaffirm support for GEO's Data Sharing Principles, and the expansion of standards-based open access to data, information and knowledge. **Resolve** to pursue the implementation of the GEO Data Sharing and Data Management Principles to the extent permitted by national laws and policies. **Acknowledge** the contribution of national and international open data initiatives in accordance with GEO Data Sharing Principles. **Call upon** the global Earth observations community to make, to the largest extent possible, Earth observation data available and accessible through the GEOSS. **Welcome** the adoption of the International Open Data Charter and **Call for** the exploration of coordination between GEO and the Charter.

11. Resolve to sustain and develop the observing systems required to provide high-quality reference data and time-series Earth observations; address observation gaps; maintain and evolve the GEOSS common infrastructure as a public good to deliver data, information, and knowledge that responds to stakeholders' requests and informs their decision-making processes. Further **resolve** to collaborate with statistical agencies and others to integrate Earth observations with social and economic data to multiply their collective value and to contribute solutions that are linked from the global to local levels.

12. Resolve to strengthen and facilitate the active participation of developing countries in GEO and the GEOSS, including through regional initiatives such as AfriGEOSS, AmeriGEOSS, and GEOSS Asia Pacific. **Welcome** the global efforts to improve data availability for developing countries such as through the European Union's Copernicus Programme, the China-Brazil Earth Resources Satellite, and the Shuttle Radar Topography Mission.

13. Resolve to reconvene in 2019 to review and reaffirm GEO's progress.

14. Extend deep appreciation to the Government of Mexico for graciously hosting this 2015 GEO Ministerial Summit; and express our gratitude to the many GEO Participants from around the world for dedicating time, talent and resources to the development and implementation of GEOSS.