

**Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Norwegian government, I would like to congratulate Mexico for the wonderful job they have done to host this very important meeting

Satellite Earth Observations are vital instruments to gain further knowledge and understanding on a number of fundamental environmental issues. Among other benefits, they help us manage common challenges related to sustainable development, climate, biodiversity as well as human benefits. SEOs are increasingly significant in combating important global challenges, mainly those related to climate change.

Norway is an Arctic country with large marine and polar areas. Norway has the jurisdiction to oversee and to sustainably manage large areas, which are of importance also for the rest of the world. In the future these areas will be increasingly important, not only because of the impacts of climate change, but also because of the natural resources these areas provide and their importance for global food supply. We depend on Earth Observation data for the sustainable management of these sensitive regions.

The monitoring of such large areas requires the use of satellites. Therefore Norway is one of the most active users of Earth observation. We use the satellites as a tool to monitor sea ice, weather, wave movement as well as ship activity and other ocean events. Norway appreciates the new opportunities to observe oceans and Polar regions at a more detailed and comprehensive level by using data from the Sentinel satellites made available through the European Earth observation program Copernicus. We see this as a key European contribution to GEOSS.

Through data provided by our Satellite Station in Svalbard (SvalSat), we have gained very useful knowledge to further enhance our understanding of ocean and Polar region activity. *Svalsat* is the only broadly accessible satellite station that may have contact with virtually all polar orbiting satellites around the world. This means that it is a vital information hub for almost all research and environmental monitoring related to earth observation.

Svalbard Integrated Earth Observing System (SIOS) is an international infrastructure project benefiting from SvalSat. With 26 partners from Europe and Asia involved, the main objective is to establish better coordinated services for the International Research community with respect to access, data and knowledge management, logistics and training. The Research infrastructure established will continue to be nationally owned by the countries which first established it. SIOS will additionally

build up Knowledge Centres in close cooperation with existing regional research networks in the European Arctic and pan Arctic initiatives such as the Sustained Arctic Observing Network (SAON).

GEO is a voluntary partnership of governments and organizations which seeks to decide and take action for the benefit of humankind as a result of information provided by earth observation data. Its “Oceans and Society: Blue Planet” program for example, seeks to raise public awareness of the role that oceans play in the Earth system, of their impacts on humankind, and of the societal benefits of ocean observations through better co-ordination. Norway is supportive of these increased efforts to continue strengthening international knowledge of ocean activity.

It is also important to emphasize Norway’s climate investments through agreements for the protection of the rainforest. The necessity of following up these agreements through monitoring explains why Norway was one of the initiators of the Global Forest Observations Initiative (GFOI). In this work, the GEO has played an essential role in ensuring that major organisations, satellite providers and stakeholders are actively cooperating. Norway is very pleased that GFOI is proposed as one of GEO’s flagships. Operative elements from the GFOI will now be transferred to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization FAO.

GEO is primarily a partnership for coordinating development of the best possible infrastructure to increase knowledge about global factors related to natural resources, human welfare and security. It is therefore essential that GEO cooperates with satellite owners, international organizations and individual countries, to ensure that all data necessary to increase knowledge and decisions are made known and available and works together, both Earth observation data and in-situ data. One of GEO’s most successful achievements for improving availability of data is the development of principles for data management and the promotion of values of open data sharing. Norway fully supports the efforts being made to establish common principles for full and open data access, and thus supporting the GEOSS Data Sharing Implementation Guidelines.

In addition, it is important for all stakeholders to know that the GEO is aware of the necessary social and political issues and to show how earth observation is an important and necessary tool to help improve welfare in a sustainable way. Therefore, we strongly believe that the GEO should demonstrate how earth observation data will assist in following up on the 2030 Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

Norway appreciates the efforts and progress made since the first Earth Observation Summit in 2003. Now, at the beginning of a new implementation plan, we welcome the new organisational

restructuring and adjustments of working plans. But further efforts are needed to ensure that the vision and intentions of GEO are brought forward. Norway therefore fully supports the GEO's new Strategic Plan.

Global challenges require global solutions. The implementation of GEOSS must be done in close cooperation with user organisations, especially UN organisations and programmes.

The GEO's work is very important. The group is a valuable partner in providing relevant and important contributions to a global response to our common challenges, especially those related to climate change, and natural disasters and the preventive work undertaken in these areas.

Finally, Norway fully supports the declaration from this meeting and will continue to support GEO and thereby contribute to realizing the vision, purpose and scope of GEO and the establishment of a new GEOSS 10 year Implementation Plan.

Thank you very much.