

## CODATA Statement to the GEO Plenary Meeting

‘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.’

CODATA fully supports this statement from the Mexico City Ministerial Declaration.

CODATA is the Committee on Data for the International Council of Science. Our mission is closely aligned to that of GEO, and we exist to promote the accessibility and reuse of data necessary to advance all areas of research. For these reasons, CODATA as a Participating Organisation is very committed to GEO’s objectives and activities.

I would like to highlight important contributions that CODATA is making to the GEO mission and call on GEO Members and Participating Organisations to redouble efforts to ensure full and open access to Earth observation data.

At the request of the GEO Secretariat, CODATA produced a White Paper on ‘The Value of Data Sharing’ which has been presented to the Plenary. It provides a concise yet thorough summary of the current evidence for the benefits of data sharing. It is a valuable and timely document that helps underpin the GEO mission and the Ministerial Declaration. What is more, we think it provides a useful framework for the GEO Data Sharing Working Group, and others in the community, to add case studies and examples that reinforce the evidence provided in the White Paper.

CODATA has contributed substantially to the work of the Data Sharing Working Group and the Data Management Principles Task Force and we commend the important outputs of these groups: the updated Data Sharing Principles and the Implementation Guidelines for the Data Management Principles.

Data sharing lies at the heart of the GEO mission and the updated Data Sharing Principles encapsulate the ideals by which National Members and Participating Organisations contribute to the GEO mission.

The simple sharing of data is not enough: data must be well-managed, usable and interoperable. For this reason we have the Data Management Principles and guidelines for their implementation, which will help all organisations making Earth observation data available through GEOSS.

The activities of GEO are part of a far wider movement to make various types of public, governmental and research data more available to improve science, accountability and citizen participation. I will give two important examples.

First, legal interoperability. A lot of work has been done in the GEO Data Sharing Working Group to clarify issues relating to the legal terms in which data is shared. This work has fed into a joint CODATA and Research Data Alliance Group that is preparing principles and guidelines to support the legal interoperability of research data. At one and the same time, this work owes a lot to GEO and will benefit the GEO community.

Second, Science International. Science International is a series of meetings between four major organisations representing global science. CODATA has been asked to lead on the 2015 Accord on 'Open Data in a Big Data World'. This is a topic of singular contemporary importance and one supports GEO's objectives. We believe that the Accord lays out principles and action points that the GEO community should also endorse. We also intend that this Accord will lead to an African capacity mobilizing initiative and we hope that this is something on which we can find partners and collaborators in the GEO community.

Finally, I would like to praise and thank the GEO Secretariat. The GEO activities that I described depend on support and management provided by the Secretariat. The support for the Data Sharing Working Group and the Data Management Principles Task Force is exemplary. Let us be under no illusions: this coordinating function is essential and for GEO to build on its success, this function needs to be strong and well-resourced.