



Statement of the Geological Surveys of Europe (EuroGeoSurveys)
at the Ministerial Summit of the Group on Earth Observations
GEO-XII

Mexico City, Mexico, 14th November 2014

Mister Chair,
Honourable Ministers,
Members of the GEO Executive Committee,
Madam Director of the GEO Secretariat,
Distinguished delegates,

EuroGeoSurveys, on behalf of 37 national Geological Surveys in Europe or 36 Member Countries, would like to thank the Government of Mexico for hosting us.

The geosciences community is one of the world's largest in-situ data providers, and the Geological Surveys of Europe alone hold several hundred thousands of records in areas like landslides mapping, groundwater, soil geochemistry or mineral resources. The information we hold goes well beyond the European borders, and is therefore of particularly high value to GEOSS.

We are already serving GEOSS with those data that can be of benefit. OneGeology, the world's largest project in the field of Earth Sciences with 117 participating nations, is one example of the tremendous contribution our community is bringing to GEOSS. And, by freely serving to GEOSS OneGeology-Europe – the first ever digital geological map of Europe, fully harmonised at a scale of 1:1,000,000 – EuroGeoSurveys has proved its full commitment to the GEOSS Data Management Principles. In fact, all the information content is not only fully discoverable, accessible and usable, but is also preserved, curated and maintained by us. Most important is its continuous updates, implemented with new scientifically sound, quality checked and official data sets. I am pleased to announce that we will complete next

year the geological mapping of all European seas. GEOSS will therefore also benefit from a full set of European geological map data both on-shore and off-shore.

Specifically concerning the GEOSS Strategic Work Plan 2016-2017, we are already able to offer our contribution through a new exciting continental scale project in Africa.

Minister Pandor,

Ms Ryan,

In our close cooperation with the Organisation of African Geological Surveys (OAGS), whose Permanent Secretariat is hosted by South Africa, we found out that the Geological Surveys of Europe hold more geological data on Africa than the African countries themselves. Recognising this needed to be corrected and in line with GEOSS principles, we have promptly collected and delivered to the Organisation of African Geological Surveys a DVD listing 5,500 records of African data held by the Europeans and now available to the Africans.

This action, which we believe has no precedence in history due to the sensitivity and importance of such data, had tremendous impacts. By coincidence, this morning I have received an email from the European Investment Bank that offers to deliver to EuroGeoSurveys the results of decades of development programmes financed by the Bank in Africa on geology and mining. They state *'several boxes, some maps and CD-ROM'*.

Minister Pandor,

Be re-assured that they will be promptly scanned by EuroGeoSurveys and made available to the Organisation of African Geological Surveys.

At the same time we are now launching a project worth about 25 million euro – or 27 million USD – co-financed by the European Commission and EuroGeoSurveys entitled 'Geoscientific Knowledge and Skills in African Geological Surveys – PanAfGeo'. The project will engage the Geological Surveys of Europe and Africa, UNECA, UNESCO, the Geological Society of Africa, the World Bank Group and several other key players, focusing on capacity building and training for the staff of African Geological Surveys in fields such as natural hazards, mineral resources and mining.

We are convinced that, this way, the AfriGEOSS initiative will receive a very strong boost.

At the same time, it is obvious that the choice of GEOSS to launch a new Societal Benefit Area on Energy and Mineral Resources, is timely and correct, and we congratulate all of you for this achievement.

We believe that the PanAfGeo project has the requisites to become a GEOSS Initiative and, perhaps, a GEOSS Flagship when it will be linked to a new action on the Americas we are just starting jointly with the Organisation of Ibero-American Geological and Mining Surveys (ASGMI) – which groups the whole Central and South America countries, and Mexico, which has just been elected President of the Organisation of Ibero-American Geological and Mining Surveys, and will therefore lead the cooperation with Europe.

This action will also seek the engagement of both the USA and Canada through their respective Geological Surveys, USGS and Natural Resources Canada, which have expressed the interest of getting involved, and I would like to openly thank particularly the USGS and Director Kimball for the excellent cooperation in place. In fact, once implemented, this action would cover the whole of Europe and the Americas, potentially bringing a major contribution to GEOSS, perhaps through AmeriGEOSS.

Through these actions we also confirm our commitment to the implementation of the GEOSS Strategic Work Plan 2016-2017 as it stands now.

Thank you for your attention.