

17 January 2014

GSDI Statement at the GEO Geneva Ministerial Summit

Honorable Ministers, Secretariat Director, GEO Co-Chairs, Delegates, and Ladies and Gentleman,

On Behalf of the Board of Directors, Officers, and Members of the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure (GSDI) Association and its community, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to provide our Statement this morning/afternoon.

The GSDI Association is an organization with members from national governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and academia that are developing Spatial Data Infrastructures around the globe. These infrastructures provide access to geospatial data, information, applications and technologies - for a variety of needs in the global community. The global geospatial community is comprised of over 2 million users and experts - which collect, process, and disseminate geospatial data, products, and services.

As a Participating Organization, we would like to congratulate GEO on its 10th event and much advancement of its global initiatives and current work plan, which will help us to sustain our planet through integrated observations.

Since its conception GEO has demonstrated remarkable progress --as showcased by the events this week- especially through the many Side Events and Exhibition which illustrate concrete implementations supporting societal benefit areas.

We would like to highlight and commend the work of the GEO Data Sharing Working Group to support the ongoing implementation of the Data Sharing Principles. Real change will only come if these commitments are translated into national laws and in the business models of data providers. As many of the GSDI members are engaged in this activity, the GSDI Association supports the need for open access to geospatial data for economic growth driven by governments and the private sector resulting in improved transparency, more extensive citizen engagement, and better, more efficient science. For example, in the United States and Europe, the sharing of geospatial data is facilitated by a strong policy framework with their Open Data Policies, the COPERNICUS data policy, the INSPIRE directive, the Public Sector Information directive and the Horizon 2020 program, that promote research and innovation.

As a Participating Organization, the GSDI Association wishes to update the GEO community worldwide on our specific actions and contributions in relation to the GEO goals and objectives. These include efforts to advance standards and policy frameworks in order to promote geospatial interoperability and innovative applications. We have an active program to provide capacity building and resources to the GEO community including:

- The Geographic Knowledge Network (www.giknet.org)
- Regional monthly SDI newsletters (www.gsdi.org/newsletters) that are disseminated electronically at no cost
- Regional SDI workshops and events including:
 - The 'Global Geospatial Conference' (www.gsdi.org/gsdiconf/gsdi14) organized by the EIS-Africa and the GSDI Association in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in November

- 2013 assembled over 500 participants from the African region, the global community and included the launch of AfriGEOSS.
- The recent international workshop on 'Geoinformation Networks for Societal and Commercial Acceptance of COPERNICUS' organized by GSDI member, European Umbrella Organization for Geographic Information (EUROGI), in Budapest, Hungary and hosted by Hungarian Association for Geoinformation (HUNAGI). The workshop resolution noted the need for involvement of the GI networks in earth observation programs and engagement in joint user events; and participants endorsed a COPERNICUS data policy providing free of charge and open access to Sentinel and other data including outputs from core services.
 - The 'International NASA World Wind Europa Challenge' (<http://eurochallenge.como.polimi.it/node/11>), supported by the United Nations, NASA, European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC), and others mobilized small and medium sized enterprises and universities to bring innovative solutions in earth observation.
 - The World Bank Institute organized a "Mapping Party for Development" (<http://maps.worldbank.org/content/article/mapping-party-development>) at the 2013 Esri International User Conference in partnership with OpenStreetMap, Digital Globe, and Esri – a GSDI member.
 - The GSDI Small Grants Program (www.gsd.org/sic1) which has provided 104 grants in developing nations with financial resources and/or professional services from the GIS Corps of URISA.
 - The annual capacity building program for three (3) professionals from developing nations by the International Center for Land Policy Studies and Training (ICLPST) through a two-week training seminar on 'Geographical Information Systems and Land Management'.

During the past several years, GSDI members have provided their expertise and resources to support the development of GEOSS to advance our mutual interests. Additionally, the International Geospatial Society (IGS) (www.igeoss.org) was established in order to enhance communications globally among individuals that are actively involved in promoting, developing, or advancing spatial data infrastructure and related concepts.

We look forward to participating in additional GEO and GEOSS developments through our strategic alliance to promote key cross-cutting solutions in data management, data quality, interoperability, standards, and capacity building. These opportunities will serve to provide integrated earth observations data and information to users and decision-makers in order to sustain our future.

The GSDI Association acknowledges the Geneva Declaration and its reaffirmations and commitments that we believe are essential in fulfilling the purpose of GEOSS and Spatial Data Infrastructures.

In closing, we thank the Swiss Federation for its wonderful hospitality, the fondue, and we congratulate them on the very successful events this week.

Thank you very much