

## **Statements from IEEE at the GEO Ministerial Meeting, 17 January 2014, Geneva Switzerland**

Dr. Gordon W. Day  
Past President  
The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers  
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### Statement of support for the Declaration:

Mr Chairman, Ministers, and Distinguished Delegates,  
IEEE is proud to have been involved in the development of GEO from the early days, and is pleased with the progress and contributions that have been made over the years. From this perspective, we are in full support of the new Declaration, noting that, to use words from the document, it is a commitment "to continue," "to renew," "to reconfirm," and "to improve" the work of GEO. I also want to express our pleasure that the Declaration expresses a strong commitment to strengthen engagement with developing countries. We in IEEE are committed to supporting engineering communities in all parts of the world as they work to improve quality of life, enhance public safety, and increase prosperity. We believe that data provided by the earth observation community has been and will be very helpful in these efforts.

### Statement on the future of GEO

Mr. Chairman, Ministers, and Distinguished Delegates:  
We in the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, IEEE, would like to express our appreciation to the government of Switzerland and the organizers of this week's meetings, and to recognize and congratulate all those organizations and individuals who have contributed to the success of GEO over the past decade.

Most of you will know IEEE as the largest and most global of the science and engineering professional societies. But today I would like to highlight the IEEE motto and our ultimate mission of "Advancing Technology for Humanity," because it so clearly expresses the alignment of GEO and IEEE. I noted with pleasure the appearance of phrases such as "benefit of society," "benefit of humankind," and "societal benefit." throughout the "Vision for GEO 2025" document.

We in the engineering community are acutely aware of the unfinished business of preceding generations of engineers. We know that that 20% or more of the earth's population has not yet benefited from technologies that became available to our grandparents a century or more ago.

We in IEEE are therefore committed to supporting engineering communities in developing countries as they work to improve quality of life, enhance public safety, and increase prosperity. We are delighted by the formation of AfriGEOSS and look forward to exploring ways that we can work together. In general, we believe that it will be through partnerships that we can have the greatest impact and we particularly encourage greater engagement with the private sector, which, among other things, has been a leading innovator in information technology.

As a large publisher, we in IEEE are in the middle of international discussions about greater access to technical literature and data, to what is commonly being described as "open access" and "open data." We are committed to providing publishing solutions that meet the needs of our community, and are exploring ways that we can facilitate access to the data that underpins the literature we publish.

And finally, as both an engineer and a metrologist, that is to say a measurement scientist, I want to

close with a personal comment on data. Lord Kelvin famously said "If you cannot measure it, you cannot improve it." And management guru Edwards Deming is often quoted as saying, "If you cannot measure it, you cannot manage it." In the engineering community, our perspective is that success generally depends on both the completeness and the quality of the available data. We in IEEE know that the earth observation community understands this principle but I want to simply and respectfully suggest to you that, as more data is accumulated and becomes available, it will become increasingly important to devote more effort, more time, and more resources to understanding data quality.

Thank you.