

Draft Report
58th Executive Committee Meeting
Hybrid Conference, 13-14 July 2022

This document is submitted by the Secretariat to the Programme Board for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chair: Stephen Volz, United States

1 SESSION I: GENERAL BUSINESS

1.1 Welcome from Lead Co-Chair and Co-Chairs, Secretariat Director

1.2 Adoption of the Agenda (Document 58.1 (Rec.3) – for decision)

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Adopted Revision 3 of the agenda as distributed.

1.3 Update on Secretariat Activities (Document 58.4 (Rev.1) – for information)

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Thanked the Secretariat for the report.

1.4 Proposed Indicators for Monitoring Progress on the 2022 Executive Committee Priority Themes (Document 58.5 (Rev.1) – for decision)

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Endorsed the proposed document.

1.5 Request to Extend the Mandate of the Pacific Islands Advisory Group (Document 58.6 – for decision)

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Endorsed the extension of the Mandate of the PIAG for an additional two years.

2 SESSION 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE GEO MID-TERM EVALUATION – BACKGROUND READING: EXCOM-57.7

2.1 Progress Report on the Expert Advisory Group (Document 58.7 – for discussion)

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Thanked Joerg Helmschrot for his presentation and the EAG for its progress;
- Requested to refine the use of the GEOSS concept in relation to different contexts in an objective manner;
- Emphasized the need for an evidence-based technical analysis of the different scenarios and their impacts, including impact on resources.
- That this analysis be presented to the next ExCom.

2.2 Initial strategy for Communicating GEO's Value Proposition (Document 58.8 – for discussion)

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Thanked Sam Nuttall for his presentation;
- Emphasized the need to communicate GEO's uniqueness and complementarity in relation to its stakeholders;
- Encouraged to continue further refinement and targeted messaging for specific audiences, in close coordination with the development of the next GEO Work Programme and the outcomes of the Post-2025 Working Group.

2.3 GEO's Engagement with SMMEs through Public-Private Partnerships (Document 58.9 – for discussion)

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Thanked Steven Ramage for his presentation;
- Requested to clearly state in the document what GEO can do in terms of contracts;
- Suggested to consider other pathways for partnerships and not to limit GEO to Public-Private Partnerships;
- Encouraged the Secretariat to continue with this process.

2.4 Clarifying the GEO Rules of Procedure (Document 58.10 – for discussion)

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Thanked the GEO Secretariat for the presentation and agreed with the proposal, not to formally stand-up a task group to review the Rules of Procedure, but to clarify points through informal means.

3 SESSION 3: WORK PROGRAMME

3.1 Report of the Programme Board (Document 58.11 (Rev.1) – for information)

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Thanked the Programme Board and the Secretariat for their work in reviewing the Implementation Plans and looks forward to the finalization of the 2023-2025 Work Programme;
- Congratulated the Data Working Group on his work for the revision of the GEO Data Management Principles Implementation Guidelines;
- Requested the PB to include information about the Working Groups in its future reports;

- Encouraged the Secretariat to set some communication platforms or calls for connecting the GEO Work Programme community, especially regarding activities impacted by the review.

3.2 Bridging the 2023-2025 Work Programme to GEO Post-2025

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Thanked Madeeha Bajwa for her presentation;
- Appreciated the bridging between the Work Programme and the path to Post-2025 GEO;
- Appreciated the intentions to integrate around nexus areas, while cautioning that not all activities may lend themselves to integration around nexus areas;
- Emphasized that activities that will not be ready for Post-2025 Incubator will still need guidance and support to mature;
- Emphasized the need to take up the results of the post-2025 Working Group to feed the integrative exercise.

3.3 National Coordination Mechanism (Document 58.12 – for discussion)

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Thanked Ernest Acheampong for his presentation;
- Cautioned against developing a prescriptive strategy;
- Suggested more emphasis to be placed on the objectives to be achieved at this stage and that a higher-level document be provided;
- Emphasized the need to respect and support diversity of GEO countries' maturity in EO;
- Emphasized the need to reflect on some challenges, such as the impact of multilayers, involving Regional GEOs, and to examine already existing mechanisms to explore possible synergies and shared experience.

4 SESSION 4: ROAD TO GEO POST-2025

4.1 Update from the Post-2025 Working Group

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Thanked Andreas Obrecht for his presentation;
- Appreciated the initial work of the Post-2025 Working Group;
- Emphasized that the future direction of GEO should be well supported by the strengths demonstrated in the current work.
- Emphasized that the Working Group reach out more to all the regions.

4.2 Preparations for the Ministerial Summit

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Encouraged to begin early planning and campaigning to ensure timely start of the planning process and securing attendance by Ministers of the Summit;
- Terms of Reference of Ministerial WG should include all key parameters (objectives, deliverables, composition, number of participants, timelines, key

milestones) to ensure effective WG activity. ToR will be reviewed by ExCom at ExCom61 and presented to Plenary-18.

5 SESSION 5: GEO WEEK 2022

5.1 GEO-18 and GEO Week 2022 (Document 58.13 – for information)

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- ExCom appreciated Ghana's efforts to host the 2022 GEO Week;
- Encouraged in-person attendance.

5.2 GEO-18 Agenda

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Thanked the Secretariat for the presentation.

Action 58.1: Executive Committee members to provide feedback regarding the GEO-18 Agenda. Due: 22 July 2022.

6 SESSION 6: REPORT OF THE BUDGET WORKING GROUP

6.1 Interim Report on Income and Expenditure as of 31 May 2022 and Projections for 2022 (Document 58.14 (Rev.1) – for information)

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Thanked the Budget Working Group for their presentation and for their work;
- Encouraged more partners to join the Budget Working Group.

58th Executive Committee Meeting Hybrid Conference, 13-14 July 2022

FULL REPORT

Wednesday, 13 July 2022

Meeting convened at 13:00

Chair: Stephen Volz, United States

1 SESSION 1: GENERAL BUSINESS

1.1 Welcome from Lead Co-Chair and Co-Chairs, Secretariat Director

Stephen Volz (United States), Americas Caucus Co-chair and 2022 GEO Lead Co-Chair, opened the meeting. Mr Volz asked Executive Committee members to introduce their new members. He welcomed Katy Matthews, the new Chief staff member lead for the US Co-Chair representation. Germany introduced Jens Danzeglocke, new member of the GEO Secretariat in Germany. Mr Volz also welcomed the new members of the GEO Secretariat. Mr Volz highlighted the key topics of this Executive Committee meeting, namely the in-person plenary in Ghana, the beginning of the preparation for the Ministerial year, the collective objective of looking at the future of GEO, the new Work Programme, the EAG process and the Post-2025 Working Group are key themes that connect across all sessions, the strategic vision of the next GEO mandate for the next ten years will be developed over the next year, working with different players, and greater involvement of the private sector. Mr Volz reminded the importance to keep the focus on the end benefit. Mr Volz looked forward to productive discussions and invited the other Co-Chairs and the Secretariat Director to provide their opening remarks.

Jung Liu (China), Deputy Director General of GEO China Secretariat, said that 2022 is a crucial year to GEO. In the long term, he noted the beginning of the preparation of GEO post-2025 strategic plan, on reassessing for better promotion of GEO's mission in the future. In the medium term, GEO will announce the 2023-2025 Work Programme this year. In the short term, Ghana will host 2022 GEO Week in Accra, with an important in-person meeting for the GEO community after the Covid pandemic. The agenda includes updates on various activities: the GEO value communication strategy, the vision for engagement with PPPs and the future GEOSS development. Mr Liu stated that China GEO plays an active role in Asia and Oceania region and that the 5th AOGEO workshop hosted by China in June was a great success. Mr Liu expressed his appreciation to Japan, Australia, Korea and the GEO Secretariat for their support throughout the workshop process. Mr Liu reminded Executive Committee members of two key upcoming events: AOGEO Regional Center for Capacity Development will organize the 2022 International training workshop on EO for sustainable development in developing countries at the end of July, and Japan GEO will host the AOGEO Symposium at the end of the year. He welcomed the active participation of the GEO community in these activities. Mr Liu noted that China GEO has been proceeding with several tasks this year. First, it continues to expand its global disaster data emergency response cooperation network, which has provided services for 31

disasters in 23 countries in recent years. The network recently launched response to the floods in Bangladesh and earthquake in Afghanistan, and a number of international organizations and agencies have been invited to become partners in coordinating the response to disaster reduction mechanism to provide rapid and reliable response and information products for major international disasters. Secondly, China GEO first conference will be held in the second half of this year in preparation for GEO Week 2022 and it is expected to make a contribution to the international community. UN Habitat and China jointly published the Songhai Global Award for sustainable development in cities, which aims to recognize outstanding cities that have made great progress in sustainable development. Mr Liu invited all GEO members to join in implementing the GEO priority engagements about sustainable development and urban resilience to promote sustainable urban development through EO.

Humbulani Mudau (South Africa), Africa Caucus Co-Chair, recognized the critical importance of the ongoing discussions in shaping the future of GEO, where decisions for the future for the benefit of the whole community will be made, including the growth of GEO beyond 2025. Mr Mudau said that South Africa looks forward to hosting the Ministerial Summit in Cape Town in 2023 and will also host the 4th SA GEO Symposium from August 21 to September 2 in Pretoria, South Africa, as well as the 6th AFRIGEO Symposium, scheduled for October 20th.

Joanna Drake (European Commission), European Caucus Co-Chair, expressed the need to put this meeting in context and referred to the extreme events happening on our planet, such as the fire season with the Copernicus emergency service already activated in Spain, the floods in New South Wales, Australia and the drought in northern Italy that is impacting agriculture and water supply. She said that what is done through EO data and services is very relevant to people's lives, to be prepared, anticipate, protect, evaluate the damage resulting from the events and finally to adapt to them. Ms Drake reminded that European countries have supported GEO since its inception and called for collective efforts at global level to address the huge challenges of harnessing observation to support climate transition. She thanked the Secretariat Director for revising human resources and priorities to meet global priorities. She stated that it was the time to deliver and demonstrate what is delivered, what services we can provide to our societies and economies so we can transition to a more sustainable planet. She emphasized the important of building on existing achievements and evolving to make the most of changes that have occurred in the domain of observations in recent times. Europe is a major contributor but will need to review and frame its collaboration with GEO to convincingly promote European values and interests to GEO governments. Ms Drake expressed the hope that the meeting will address the urgency we face and help build consensus on members participation in GEO, so that the visibility of GEO' actions is increased on the international stage, and all can benefit from collaboration with other regions of the world.

Yana Gevorgyan, GEO Secretariat Director, agreed on the need to step up to the next level to provide services and solutions that are responsive to decisions. She stressed the need to move from research to operations, finding ways to scale GEO's activities through better and more robust engagement at country level. She added that solutions space is becoming a very crowded space, but that there is a place for GEO because of the need to ensure that solutions come from reliable and authoritative data and information based on sound, scientific results, so that users and decision makers can be reassured that solutions will

last and deliver the results they seek. She said she looked forward to Executive Committee members insights, those enabling factors that would make “global to local” a real possibility.

1.2 Adoption of Agenda (Document 58. (Rev.3) – for decision)

The Chair asked if there were any comments or interventions to adjust the agenda. No requests for modification were received.

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Adopted Revision 3 of the agenda as distributed.

1.3 Secretariat Operations Report (Document 58.4 – for information)

The Secretariat Director provided a summary of highlights of the Secretariat Operations Report. Ms Gevorgyan noted the addition of new members to the GEO Secretariat: Madeeha Bajwa, Chief Work Programme Coordinator, Ernest Acheampong, Capacity Development Coordinator, and Sam Nuttall, Strategic Communications Specialist, and the departure of Douglas Cripe, Scientific Officer, who retired in June. Regarding the Climate Engagement Priority, engagement has been initiated with the Egyptian government for COP27, the Secretariat contributed to Global Stocktake with EO, and efforts were made to further develop technical guidance integrating EO into National Adaptation Plans. On Disaster Risk Reduction, strategic relationships are being deepened, for example with the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the EO Risk Toolkit, which provides use cases, technical guidance and direct links to tools, services and methodologies produced by the GEO Work Programme, was launched at the 2022 Global Platform. On the SDGs, progress was made towards a more integrated, transdisciplinary, inclusive, and collaborative approach, and the GEO Wetlands Initiative has been revived. Regarding Urban, the Secretariat is in a position to recruit a coordinator and looks forward to filling that position. The Secretariat also supported cross-cutting mapping of the GEO Work Programme.

Turning to Data, Information, and Knowledge Resources, the Data Working Group is working with GEOGLAM, on the development and implementation of an in-situ data strategy. The Open Data session at the GEO Virtual Symposium 2022 highlighted key services aiming to advance the GEO Data Sharing Principles and Data Management Principles. Nine cloud computing projects were also kicked off under the Microsoft planetary computer partnership. The GEO Knowledge Hub had an Open Knowledge session at the GEO Symposium 2022. Its content has been expanded through the inclusion of 15 new knowledge packages from eight Work Programme activities.

Ms Gevorgyan then highlighted some key points regarding the Work Programme. Programme Board Engagement Teams are reviewing the Implementation Plans for consistency with the set objectives of the 2023-2025 Work Programme, leading to a more result-oriented Work Programme. The Programme Board will approve the 2023-2025 GWP in September. Work to ensure integration and synergies will continue, with the Secretariat providing dedicated support and tools. With respect to the GEO Virtual Symposium 2022, the event continued the work of strengthening synergies across the Work Programme and exploring collaborative and integrative approaches. Recurring topics of conversation included funding for EO operationalization and scaling, supporting on-the-ground

decisions through co-design and co-development with users, the role of regional GEOs in connecting national and local users, and the potential of nature-based solutions. In terms of Capacity development, a strategy for national coordination mechanisms to promote country-level engagement and capacity to use EO for decision making and impact is being established. With input from the Executive Committee and GEO Members, this may evolve into a compilation of good practices.

Ms Gevorgyan provided information on GEO's strategic efforts. The GEO Post-2025 Working Group was launched on May 31, 2022 with 27 members, including 15 women. The group is coordinated by new team member, Andreas Obrecht, and supported by the GEO Secretariat. A key element is broad community and stakeholder engagement throughout the Post-2025 WG mandate. The Expert Advisory Group on GEOSS continues its mission, coordinated by Joerg Helmschrot and supported by the GEO Secretariat. Regarding resource mobilization and communications, the GEO Secretariat has been working on communicating GEO's value proposition, targeted communications to support engagement, fundraising and promotion efforts, and planning the future development of integrated advocacy, communications and marketing strategy. Early engagement with sustainable and impact finance sector was also done to promote uptake of and investments in GEO flagships and initiatives.

Sara Venturini (GEO Secretariat) presented the progress regarding COP27. This year for the first time there will be a proposed joint session with GEOGLAM, BLUE-PLANET, GEOGLOWS, DE-AFRICA an NAP Expo, Botswana, August 22-26, on how to mainstream EO into national decision making for climate adaptation. GEOGLAM will present an advanced draft of the NAP guidance, which is one of the key knowledge products to be promoted later at COP27. There has been engagement with COP27 Presidency and as scientific partners GEO has been providing input to high-level initiatives on water and agriculture. All insights on the value of EO for climate action will be summarized in policy briefs, which will be submitted to GEO principals in September to be shared with national delegations involved in UNFCCC process. Regarding GEO's presence at COP27, GEO community representatives will have speaking slots at Science Day + Earth Information Day and Global Stocktake Technical Dialogue. Joint side events are planned in country pavilions (e.g. Canada) and with POs (e.g. Planet, WMO), around the launch of GEO NAP guidance, GEO Wetlands renewal, ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus, and indigenous involvement. GEO requested support by national delegations to obtain recognition in Subsidiary Bodies Plenaries and technical negotiations (mainly RSO, NAP). Ms Venturini expressed hope that the policy briefs will be used by the UNFCCC delegation to inform the discussion at COP27 and promote the role of GEO in climate action. GEO Secretariat staff will join WMO delegation, but will not have the opportunity to speak in formal settings and make individual submissions as GEO.

The United States appreciated the richness of the activities and the work done to focus the activities around certain thematic areas. They welcomed the new staff members and thanked Doug Cripe for his work with GEO. They mentioned that communication between the Secretariat staff and the Working Groups was essential for good cooperation and encouraged the Secretariat to keep Working Groups informed of Secretariat activities.

Japan reported on the 4th Asia-Pacific Water Forum held in April in Kumamoto City, Japan, which was attended by 60 readers from Asia-Pacific countries and international

organizations and concluded with the [Kumamoto Declaration](#). During this forum, the Prime Minister of Japan introduced the Kumamoto Water Initiative, highlighting GEO as an example and emphasizing the importance of earth observation networks for a resilient society and economy. Under the Kumamoto Initiative, Japan GEO will seek to promote capacity development activities with stakeholders in the Asia-Oceania region, joint programs for water-related disaster risk assessments as well as their new research program for climate change prediction for local climate adaptation actions. Japan also stated that they are looking for opportunities to collaborate or consult with the Secretariat coordinator.

South Africa recognized key activities, particularly in relation to climate change and disaster risk reduction, and the efforts to provide technical guidance integrating Earth Observations into international adaptation plans. The focus should be on how to strengthen regional GEOs, as well as national coordination mechanisms. This should be a strength of GEO, building human capital and particularly in low-middle income countries.

The European Commission appreciated the fact that the GEO Secretariat informs periodically, so it can be assessed periodically how is the progress on engagement priorities. They also appreciated the Secretariat's attitude on the climate change adaptation mission, as it is one of the five missions that are pursued within the context of Horizon Europe. The European Commission also congratulated the Secretariat for becoming one of the first Friend of the EU Mission and stated that it was a unique opportunity for GEO to share its knowledge to reach out to European citizens, and also to local and regional authorities. The Commission welcomes the effort to review the data management guidelines. It also encouraged taking more examples from Horizon 2020 to give them more visibility (GEOSS platform Plus Project for example).

Spain congratulated the Secretariat for its work and pledged to work hard to support GEO, especially for COP27.

China appreciated the work done by GEOSEC and to observe cooperation of GEO with BRICS and ISPRS. China thanked the Secretariat staff for being supportive to the upcoming AOGEO Training Workshop in July 26-28.

Germany appreciated the work done by the GEO Secretariat and to hear about the staffing for the Urban Engagement Priorities and stated that will do next efforts to find a JPO to join GEO.

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Thanked the Secretariat for the report.

1.4 Proposed Indicators for Monitoring Progress on the 2022 Executive Committee Priority Themes

The Chair thanked the Secretariat and suggested that the indicators be approved. The Chair asked if there were any comments or interventions regarding the Proposed Indicators for Monitoring Progress on the 2022 Executive Committee Priority Themes. No objections were raised, nor changes requested.

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Endorsed the proposed document.

1.5 Request to Extend the Mandate of the Pacific Islands Advisory Group

Emma Luke (Australia) presented the recommendation from the Pacific Island Advisory Group (PIAG) that the Executive Committee extend the PIAG mandate until end of year 2024, with no further changes to the existing terms of reference. Ms Luke provided the background of the group's establishment and what has been achieved to date. The reasons for the extension' request are the following:

- The process has been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and so building momentum with PIAG was slow at the start;
- All members of PIAG and in particular PICT representatives want to continue the progress that is underway;
- The extension will align with broader GEO planning efforts, namely Post-2025, the new Work Programme and the upcoming Ministerial.

Ms Luke explained what additional things could be accomplished by extending the mandate:

- Articulated Engagement Strategy to strengthen GEO-PICT engagement;
- Published resources:
 - GEO Value Proposition for PICTs: Guide to GEO Work Programme for the PICTs; Directory of the PICTS EO Ecosystem;
 - Face to face engagement with PICTs: essential for meaningful engagement;
 - Possibility of securing one or more PICT ministers to the GEO Ministerial Summit 2023;
 - More time to think about the next step is for the PICTs in GEO.

China agreed that PIAG should extend its mandate to 2024. China acknowledged that the PIAG has done a lot, including supporting Digital Earth Pacific, coordinating data for Tonga and promoting the need to serve pacific island countries and territories under the umbrella of GEO and AOGEO.

The European Commission, Japan, South Africa, the US, Australia, Spain, Costa Rica, and Germany indicated their support.

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Endorsed the extension of the Mandate of the PIAG.

2 SESSION 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE GEO MID-TERM EVALUATION

2.1 Progress Report of the Expert Advisory Group

Joerg Helmschrot (GEO Secretariat) presented the progress made by the EAG on the reevaluation of GEOSS. Mr Helmschrot recalled the role of the EAG and informed of the key activities that have taken place in the last months. So far, there have been two technical meetings, the establishment of two Working Groups, the first on GEOSS Concept and Infrastructure and the second on Provider, Users and Utilisation, and participation in GEO community activities, such as at the GEO Symposium. Mr Helmschrot thanked the Secretariat for making the EAG session at the Symposium a

success. One finding was that participants refer to GEOSS and GEO interchangeably and that there is confusion around the definition of GEOSS in the community. The preliminary findings of the EAG are:

- Terms are often used interchangeably;
- GEOSS as a concept was developed in an environment with only a limited number of EO data providers serving a limited number of end users, mainly with very specific requirements. Operationalization of EO data processing and service provision was undertaken by those end-users according to specific needs. The private sector played no significant role as a data provider/user;
- The originally conceived GEOSS concept, i.e. the coordination aspect including setting of principles, facilitating data sharing, interoperability and standardization as well as coordinating and advising on investments in observation technology was only partially realized. Reasons, amongst others, are an emerging private sector leading to the vast commercialization of satellite technologies and observation supported by the great demand on information and data by a rapidly increasing user community, but also limited funding;
- Challenges to assess the GEOSS concept and infrastructure against the past whilst GEO undergoes a substantial transformation (2023-2025 WP, Post-2025 GEO) and revises its value proposition may affect or create missed opportunities for integration with GEO WP activities and regional GEOs;
- The deliberations, at this stage, indicate that no unanimous positions might be foreseeable and reaching consensus might become a challenge, if not unrealistic;
- Despite the acknowledgement of the value GEOSS has created to various communities, the positions within EAG range from supporting of the existing GEOSS concept and its underlying infrastructure and further development to an outsourcing of components to specialized agencies and GEO partners, or even the cessation of GEOSS altogether;
- The EAG will further discuss and assess at least 4 preliminary options/scenarios and related implications (Pro/Con), informed by the outcomes from the working groups;
- Mr Helmschrot ended its presentation by informing of the EAG next steps until GEO Week 2022.

The US thanked Joerg and the EAG team for the progress made and recognized the ongoing engagement with the community, and complexity this adds to the work. US said they hope that the EAG can bring some clarity to the definition of the concept GEOSS and the different uses of the term in different contexts. They also emphasized that it is important to be analytical and not opinion-based when considering the options, so that the ExCom can understand the impact different choices may have on the communities that are supported. US expressed their support to the following option under Finding 7: “GEOSS concept with a reduced scope to act as a common denominator of regional and/or thematic nodes and communities, to guide users to the right content, ensure common data management and interoperability principles, and hence enabling cross-regional and cross-domain use cases.”

The European Commission emphasized the need for evidence-based analysis, taking into account a wide range of impact that would be considered from technical to financial aspects. The evolution of GEOSS is an opportunity to tailor it to the needs of the EO

community and to meet users' needs, which differ according to the regional context, capacities, maturity of structures and data sharing practices. At the European level, the European Committee has been committed to modernize the existing infrastructure, via the Platform Plus Project, and they said they invite representatives from other regions of the world to contribute to this exercise. Besides being a neutral and inclusive space for data users and providers, GEOSS has a potential that could be exploited in acting as a shop window of GEO beyond its own community.

China thanked the European Commission for their commitment. China suggested focusing on user needs and making the platform more user-oriented, perhaps also looking at what can be absorbed from the work and achievements of the private sector. China agreed with the need to refine the GEOSS concept according to different contexts.

Germany acknowledged the complex work done by the EAG and supported the idea of having more refinement and clarification in the report. Regarding private sector participation, Germany cautioned that GEO should not be faced with private sector dependencies and that it is important that the GEOSS infrastructure be under governmental and intergovernmental oversight. Germany also stressed the importance of knowing who the users are. It agreed with the other members of the Executive Committee on the need to analyze which implementation option is the most appropriate from a technical point of view. Germany also recalled that the investments that have been made so far should not be forgotten. Finally, as it seems that there will be no consensus among the members, the different opinions and their authors should be visible in the final report.

Japan thanked Joerg for the progress of the evaluation. Japan recalled what the GEOSS concept has achieved since the G8 Summit in 2003. This concept has allowed GEO to collaborate with various stakeholders in the EO community and connect disparate systems. In this context, Japan said it is important to reflect on what is being done within the GEO vision and mission, and to discuss substantive programs rather than the concept itself. Japan stated that it expects the evaluation of the GEOSS concept to be considered on the basis of a careful assessment of the impact of the construction and transformation of programs. Japan stated that they look forward to the report and reiterated the role and responsibility of the Executive Committee in the thorough review and consensus building for the development of the post-2025 strategic mission.

South Africa agreed with members who stated the need for a detailed in-depth analysis on the GEOSS evaluation.

CEOS asked if the EAG had conducted a survey of diverse and potential users and members of the GEO community to understand why they did not, or very rarely, use the GEOSS portal and what their main criticisms of the system were.

Joerg responded to CEOS that a survey had been conducted by the Secretariat and that the EAG had also initiated a survey. The EAG recognized in the discussions that there is a reluctance on the part of low- and middle-income countries to use GEOSS, for a variety of reasons, including communications and technical and human capacity. Regarding the point raised by China, the EAG also recognized that the system could be transformed into a more user-oriented one. Mr. Helmschrot stated that they have insight into what is happening on the private sector side as well.

Spain asked to consider synergies with other initiatives primarily at the regional and global level and to consider whether a more operational or conceptual GEOSS is desired to guide members.

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Thanked Joerg Helmschrot for his presentation and the EAG for its progress;
- Requested to refine the use of the GEOSS concept in relation to different contexts in an objective manner;
- Emphasized the need for an evidence-based technical analysis of the different scenarios and their impacts, including impact on resources.
- That this analysis be presented to the next ExCom.

2.2 Initial Strategy for Communicating GEO's Value Proposition

Sam Nuttall (GEO Secretariat) outlined the direction GEO is taking to communicate its value proposition. Mr Nuttall proposed the three main goals, which are advocacy (advocating the value of Earth observations as critical evidence for better environmental decisions, policies, and investments), understanding (recognizing the role of GEO in solving global problems, understanding GEO's outcomes, impact, and additionality, knowing what GEO tools can help and how to contribute to or access them), and action (using GEO tools and services, funding GEO initiatives and the GEO Secretariat, working more closely and effectively with partners in the GEO community). Mr. Nuttall presented some initial ideas on stakeholder mapping and the implication for communication needs and message reach and influence. Mr. Nuttall highlighted final considerations and next steps:

- Consistent messaging across GEO channels;
- Continue targeted messaging, dependent on further review and refinement of GEO email lists, as well as updates to the website;
- Engagement with partners on campaigns and products will require financial or in-kind communication support from these partners;
- The Secretariat will seek to reinvigorate a community of practice to support greater engagement and dissemination opportunities;
- The Communications team will work closely with the Chief Work Programme Coordinator and the Post 2025 Working Group on the development of the value proposition.

Greece appreciated the more robust approach to communicating GEO value-proposition and emphasized that each GEO member should serve as an evangelist of GEO for the regional and local communities in which they are active and be proactive in promoting dedicated capacity building activities within the GEO community on how GEO's work can be further spread. Greece expressed the need to harmonize channels and players in a dynamic manner.

Costa Rica stressed the importance of sharing GEO objectives with its community, so that the members are able to see where they can add value and how they can promote the use of EO. This could help to work as a community, with different role to promote what GEO does. Costa Rica raised a question on how to involve regional GEOs in this strategy.

The European Commission welcomed the communication strategy and the effort in developing value-proposition. They expressed the need to refine the core message about GEO and mainstream the language in an impact-based way, to have a widely understandable narrative. GEO is starting to resonate with new channels, and the next step would be to develop communications tailored to specific audiences.

Germany appreciated the improvement in the communications strategy and stated that the role, the uniqueness, and complementarity of GEO in the landscape of all the other players should be clearly communicated.

The United States appreciated the systematic analysis approach for understanding audiences and community stakeholders. They agreed with other comments about the need for messages tailored to different communities in addition to the broad top-level message and on the need to show how GEO is unique and complementary to other stakeholders. The United States encouraged the Secretariat to continue further refinement and targeted messaging in close coordination with the development of the next GEO Work Programme as well as align with the outcomes of the Post-25 Working Group as those become available.

China thanked the Secretariat for the analysis and they said they looked forward to a more detailed and structural proposal, with different strategies for different categories of stakeholders.

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Emphasized the need to communicate GEO's uniqueness and complementarity in relation to its stakeholders;
- Encouraged to continue further refinement and targeted messaging for specific audiences, in close coordination with the development of the next GEO Work Programme and the outcomes of the Post-2025 Working Group.

2.3 GEO's Engagement with SMMEs through Public-Private Partnerships

Steven Ramage (GEO Secretariat) presented the proposed approach for the GEO Public-Private Partnership Committee. He said that during the industry track of GEO 2022 week, stakeholders met virtually to explore ways to accelerate action through PPPs, with examples of lessons learned from DLR and Planet. 16 SMMEs presented their work in EO, and industry experts shared their knowledge, as well as their solutions. The idea of supporting SMMEs has been around for several years now, and this would be a way to do it across the value chain. The idea is also to look at what GEO members are looking for in these efforts, and to build on existing practices. Some members may have already started working on PPPs, others may not, so the PPP committee should look at these activities. The committee would be composed of interested members, private sectors, industry bodies, and academic representatives. The goal would be to determine what our role is in developing PPPs and to develop ideas on how it could potentially be done. Mr. Ramage stated that an initial idea would be to look at GEO Work Programme activities, such as Digital Earth Africa. He noted that Climate KIC is the largest public-private innovation partnership in Europe and that GEO has begun to engage with them. The idea would be to think about other potential methodologies or guidelines for GEO members to participate in PPPs and the pathway for funding these activities. The suggestion is to start on a 12-month basis and make an initial announcement at GEO Week 2022.

The Chair appreciated connecting it to the Work Programme as well and asked if it could be expected from the GEO Work Programme Coordinator to do an assessment of opportunities for PPP engagement in Work Programme activities as part of the scope of work the Secretariat can provide.

Germany recommended to clarify in the document what GEO can do in terms of contracts.

The European Commission welcomed the document and stated that as PPPs are one of the options, that are complex and take time but that can be part of a broader strategy, other ways should also be considered for partnerships.

Mr. Ramage responded that other pathways could also be considered, and that input would be welcome on this issue.

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Requested to clearly state in the document what GEO can do in terms of contracts;
- Suggested to consider other pathways for partnerships and not to limit GEO to Public-Private Partnerships;
- Encouraged the Secretariat to continue with this process.

2.4 Clarifying the GEO Rules of Procedure

The Secretariat Director presented the topic related to the Action 57.2 linked to the MTE findings and recommendations. This action required to prepare terms of reference for a task force to review the GEO Rules of Procedure. Ms Gevorgyan said that it was not the right time to look at structural changes clarifications as the Post-2025 has begun and that other ideas and suggestions could come in the course of the process. It is suggested to focus on clarifying the language in commercial sector engagement through communications work but not to proceed with the originally envisioned task. It will be requested that the Post 2025 Working Group consider these findings and recommendations in their work.

Germany, Japan, the European Commission, Australia, China, Spain and South Africa indicated their support with the proposal of the GEO Secretariat.

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Thanked the GEO Secretariat for the presentation and agreed with the proposal, not to formally stand-up a task group to review the Rules of Procedure, but to clarify points through informal means.

Meeting adjourned at 16:00.

Thursday, 14 July 2022

Meeting convened at 12:00

3 SESSION 3: WORK PROGRAMME

3.1 Report of the Programme Board

Andiswa Mlisa (South Africa), Programme Board co-chair, presented the item on behalf of the Programme Board. She started by presenting the vision and strategies for the post-2025 GEO Work Programme. The Programme Board welcomed the integration of the GEO Work Programme through a co-created nexus and incubator approach as a continuation of an ongoing GEO direction. Programme Board members shared some elements during the meeting, included:

- Integrate via nexus areas across the EO value chain so as to advance and build on the successes of the activities of the GEO Work Programme;
- Connect across the value chain with ongoing initiatives and programmes beyond GEO to ensure synergies and prevent duplications;
- Scope out the integration experiment with individual GWP activities, broad-based partnerships and risk management; and
- Come up with a structured process to identify, anticipate and integrate user perspectives.

Regarding the EAG, the Programme Board appreciated the progress made and the diversity of thinking. It was asked on some aspects to provide clarity to address the issue that was raised by the Mid-Term Evaluation. The Programme Board welcomed the update on the plans and progress in the preparations for the GEO Week 2022. The Programme Board also welcomed the extensive review efforts of the Engagement Teams and the GEO Secretariat's integration recommendations on Pilot Initiative submissions. They took note that lack of relevant information in some IPs was a hurdle for the review process and would need to be addressed by activity leads in Plan revisions. On the Data Working Group, the Programme Board decided on the revision of the GEO Data Management Principles Implementation Guidelines. Regarding GEO Awards, the Programme Board endorsed Secretariat's proposal to coordinate the 2022 GEO Awards on behalf of the Subgroup in line with the criteria and process. The Secretariat will convene a diverse and representative jury from available previous awardees, PB and GEO community at large. In other items discussed by the Programme Board, Ms Mlisa noted the following:

- The GEO Virtual Symposium 2022, a key event co-organized by the Programme Board, has been summarized in a separate document which can be found [here](#);
- Reminded members of the protocols with regards to formal engagements through Programme Board Principals and Alternates during meetings and the need to adhere to same protocols when corresponding via email. Members were encouraged to conduct Board business in an appropriate and respectful manner to GEO Structures and all individuals;
- Took note of the Request to extend the Mandate of the PIAG;
- PB-24 on 6-7 September, in-person.

The European Commission said they looked forward the finalization of the Implementation Plans. EuroGEO will be a beneficiary from the review conducted by the Regional Engagement Team. The European Commission stated that EUs contributions to GEO, such as Copernicus should not be understated in the Work Programme. Copernicus (CAMS) and Copernicus Climate Change Service are both operational and these directly serve GEO engagement priorities. Efforts should be pursued between the Secretariat and the European Center for Medium Range Weather to anchor Copernicus services to the GEO Work Programme. The European Commission commended the Data Working Group for its work in revising the guideline. They emphasized the strong link between the work of this Working Group and the development of the EU around data driven innovation, specifically defined by European strategical data and associated legal instruments.

South Africa appreciated the efforts made to revise the work programme and asked how the revision will be planned to fill the gaps regarding the lack of information in some implementation plans.

The United States appreciated the Programme Board effort to continue moving towards a collaborative approach and nexus areas as well as developing the Work Programme. They recognized that GEO could contribute to the growth of individual projects, cross-project work, and synergies in scaling up projects where applicable.

China appreciated the work done by the Programme Board and its Engagement Teams together with the Secretariat in reviewing the implementation plans. Regarding AOGEO, China and other members committed to working more closely through regional GEOs and to be effective in linking global action with local needs. China said that more specific criteria and requirements have been set for the Implementation Plans for the 2023-2025 Work Programme, which will be effective in reducing redundancies and making impact. China encouraged the Programme Board and the Secretariat to protect the enthusiasm of the various applicants to join the Work Programme, for example by setting a communication platform or calls to connect the community, especially for Implementation Plans that have been affected by the review process. Regarding GEO Awards, China welcomed the fact that the Secretariat will take on the coordination and reminded that some Executive Committee members had recommended to have an institutional check by the Executive Committee.

Germany appreciated the good work done to address all items and encouraged to have information about status and activities of other Working Groups in Programme Board reports.

Spain agreed with Germany about the need to provide information about the other Working Groups. Spain also asked what was meant by “Operational Solutions at Scale”.

Ms. Mlisa responded to the European Commission that there are activities in the Work Programme that are linked to Copernicus or come from the Horizon 2020 program and assured that the community benefits from the enrichment of these programs. Regarding the issue raised by South Africa, she responded that no initiative was left behind and that the Programme Board reviews implementation plans with recommendations to fill in missing information and direct them where they are more appropriate. This approach is also supported by the desire to move toward more inclusive and collaborative activities and to avoid having only one institution or country for an activity. Regarding the issue raised by China, Ms. Mlisa assured that there are opportunities for feedback and calls for

activities affected by the review process. Regarding the working groups, she responded that their progress is incorporated in the engagement around the Symposium and its report, which is also incorporated in the report of the Program Board. For Spain, she explained that the operational solutions consist of providing services and products whose availability, level of information and adequacy decision makers can rely on.

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Thanked the Programme Board and the Secretariat for their work in reviewing the Implementation Plans and looks forward to the finalization of the 2023-2025 Work Programme;
- Congratulated the Data Working Group on his work for the revision of the GEO Data Management Principles Implementation Guidelines;
- Requested the PB to include information about the Working Groups in its future reports;
- Encouraged the Secretariat to set some communication platforms or calls for connecting the GEO Work Programme community, especially regarding activities impacted by the review.

3.2 Bridging the 2023-2025 Work Programme to GEO Post-2025

Madeeha Bajwa (GEO Secretariat) introduced this agenda item. She explained GEO's strategic plan and its main efforts which will focus on the nexus approach and user needs. GEO will work with the value chain, especially users, but also promoting partnerships such as PPPs. For the Work Programme, she said there will be efforts to embrace the complexity of the nexus approach, as there are many crosscutting activities. In order to have an impact, GEO will also need to have funding and be creative in finding funding sources. Therefore, the new 2023-2025 Work Programme will be developed with a focus on integration and operationalization aspects. The goal is to build on what has already been done and move forward with integration. The process is complemented by a co-created incubator approach. The entire process should be driven by the Work Programme activities with the engagement of the Executive Committee and Programme Board. Ms Bajwa then presented the milestones that will accompany this process, through 2025. Collaborative tools are also planned (Slack and ProofHub) to support communication within the community. Ms Bajwa finally presented the next steps until the Ministerial, namely, to develop the new Work Programme, design integration workshops and collaborative tools by September 2022; to showcase the integration approach under a nexus, implement the workshops and continue to develop different strategies by GEO Week; and to identify, secure funding and start implementation under at least one nexus as well as to start iterating, evaluating and scaling by the GEO Ministerial.

The Chair thanked for the presentation and asked about clarification about the difference between incubation and integration and whether the incubator is about guiding activities to maturity or whether it is more focused on incubating cross-cutting activities or integration within the Work Programme.

European Commission appreciated the approach for building the bridge between the Work Programme and the Post 2025. They cautioned against the risk of confusion in the GEO community, as not every activity is something that could be integrated into the nexus and recalled that the results of Post 2024 should be shared with the wider community and

the Executive Committee so as to continue the dialogue with the community to guaranty the success of the process.

The United States said that this new Work Programme will be key to start to move to the Post-2025 world and appreciated the effort to look across activities as well as to ensure that there is no overlapping efforts. They supported the attention to scaling. As they appreciated the nexus perspective they recalled not to forget other activities not included in these.

South Africa said that they are seeking clarity on the role of regional GEOs, especially when the Post-2025 process has just started working on this and their role in this transition.

Ms Bajwa answered that integration efforts will be made across the Work Programme, to emphasize the coordination within it. On this basis, selected activities will be incubated and then upscaled, while efforts will be made to find funding. As for Regional GEOs, they are cross-cutting across the Work Programme and will be part of each nexus and leverage the capacity building work. The Post 2025 will also inform the integrative exercise, their reflections will be taken into account.

China raised concern regarding the activities that are not so mature and their opportunity to grow under the umbrella of GEO.

The US emphasized the need to nurture initiatives, in missing areas and with key deliverables and to search how to expand their resources.

The Secretariat added that as GEO moves toward 2025 and beyond, a post-2025 incubator is being designed, with some activities already providing results with communities. The goal is to scale these up, through increased funding. To China, she explained that the majority of activities have not yet reached that level and that efforts will continue through the 2023-2025 Work Programme with increased support to them through countries, and regional GEOs.

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Thanked the Secretariat for the presentation;
- Appreciated the bridging between the Work Programme and the path to Post-2025 GEO;
- Appreciated the intentions to integrate around nexus areas, while cautioning that not all activities may lend themselves to integration around nexus areas;
- Emphasized that activities that will not be ready for Post-2025 Incubator will still need guidance and support to mature;
- Emphasized the need to take up the results of the post-2025 Working Group to feed the integrative exercise.

3.3 National Coordination Mechanism

Ernest Acheampong (GEO Secretariat) presented the member engagement pathway and the national coordination mechanism and how it would be used to generate broader impact. Under this mechanism, the focus is on strengthening collaboration, and co-design to identify data needs and priorities of different countries. A key point is to get the country's institutions to come together to accomplish this task, so that engagement is increased.

Mr Acheampong presented the guiding principles for this mechanism, namely: leveraging existing coordination mechanism, flexibility due to varying national dynamics, domiciles in national institutions with human and financial resources, addressing national priorities and data needs, increasing relevance and value proposition to members, and looking at high-level political influence.

The expectations for the national coordination mechanism are the following:

- Impact on national development and policy;
- Increased deployment of GEO activities;
- Strengthen institutional partnerships;
- Enhanced enabling environment;
- Collaborative projects and initiatives;
- Increased institutional capacities and capabilities.

Mr Acheampong explained the detailed steps towards a national GEO, which would include regional support, engagement with Work Programme activities and a focus on impact, among others.

The Chair appreciated the framing of the process and cautioned about the language which should not seem prescriptive.

Greece advised to put more emphasis on the objectives we want to achieve, and to have a higher-level document at this stage. Greece also informed that data collection, EO maturity indicators have already been implemented by e-shape, which have been tested, and since then improved, and so that e-shape colleagues could share their experience to consider how to improve the strategy.

The European Commission welcomed the efforts in this exercise to improve the impact. They cautioned against making the structures too complex and advised thinking about the impact of multi-layers. Other regional organizations have already been effective in reaching national levels, institutions and resource sharing. Regional GEOs were mentioned in the Mid-Term Evaluation and can have this role, but perhaps this role can be made more slick without adding too much complexity in GEOs. They said that they have some experience with the Copernicus program and its governance that could be shared.

South Africa welcomed the initiative and felt that it is a valuable way to raise awareness and disseminate information about GEO. South Africa already has a mechanism, set up by the Department of Science and Innovation, that provides a conduit for engagement between communities and AfriGEO, as well as Global GEO. South Africa said they believe that an active mechanism will be able to ensure inclusiveness and promote diversity for a strong future GEO. South Africa agreed on the need to be careful about the approach and the language and to demonstrate how GEO can help countries, without being prescriptive.

China shared that they have a national GEO coordination mechanism which promotes Chinese resources to participate in GEO collectively and were pleased with the proposal presented to the Executive Committee. In 2011, China formed an inter-ministerial coordination mechanism, with 16 ministries, including the Ministry of Sciences and Technology which is the lead, and agencies to promote the participation from China in GEO. As a concrete achievement of this mechanism, they gathered data resources from many departments and established the China-GEOSS platform, and through this platform

they gather their resources to make contributions to DRR and other activities under the umbrella of GEO. China said they would be pleased to share their experience in terms of coordination mechanism, structure, coordination method, and other elements. China also concurred that the diverse situations in different countries should be considered and respected.

Spain agreed that the National Coordination Mechanism is a good way forward but expressed concern about the perspective of the document. They advised to first analyze what is already present and to look for synergies to avoid duplications. Spain stated that they are currently working on a strategy regarding Copernicus with GEO involved as one principle and that they would be happy to share their experience.

The US recognized that Colombia and Peru established or planned to establish national GEO groups. They stated that having a national mechanism is very valuable, such as USGEO for them, which is key to streamline their own observation requirement processes, coordinating the EO activities of 13 different agencies, funding, limit overlaps, leverage investments, coordinate requirements, etc.

Germany agreed with the statement that a national coordination mechanism on Earth observation is a very important tool to realize the service capacity of earth observations in the Member States in an optimal way. Germany has already established an appropriate structure many years ago and did best experiences in networking, information exchange and initiating and fostering GEO-related activities.

Australia supported the intervention made by South Africa and added that a less-prescriptive set of principles will support the diversity of GEO countries' maturity in EO.

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Cautioned against developing prescriptive strategy;
- Suggested more emphasis to be placed on the objectives to be achieved at this stage and that a higher-level document be provided;
- Emphasized the need to respect and support diversity of GEO countries' maturity in EO;
- Emphasized the need to reflect on some challenges, such as the impact of multilayers, involving Regional GEOs, and to examine already existing mechanisms to explore possible synergies and shared experience.

4 SESSION 4: ROAD TO POST 2025

4.1 Update from post-2025 Working Group

Andreas Obrecht (GEO Secretariat) presented an update on the Post-2025 working group. He presented the composition of the group, which is very diverse and includes 15 women out of 27 members. He informed about the timeline of the Working Group, which includes 2 more sessions of meetings until GEO Week 2022. A second meeting has been held and members focused on initial items regarding strategic foresight, focus area, situation analysis and strategic positioning, scope and format of the strategy and value proposition, and community engagement.

Chair reminded the importance to have a mature product by March 2023 Executive Committee Meeting. The Chair stated that it would be helpful to have this topic on the agenda of the Executive Committee meeting prior to the Plenary.

European Commission said that it is important to start the reflection on post-2025 and that it is needed to systematically promote the use of Earth Observations for socio-environmental challenges. The creation of the group is a good step in this direction. European Commission stressed the importance to not doing it at the expense of the current strategy and not forget what has been achieved jointly and advised to have a solid base of evidence.

South Africa welcomed the work done which is a great opportunity to redefine the right language, especially for the coming events that are planned. They said they looked forward the strategy framework conversation.

Japan appreciated the initial work done and expressed its enthusiasm about the collaborative effort with support from Working Group. Japan said that they believe deep consideration and consultation with various stakeholders in each region is key to make success in the mission development. Japan expressed its willingness to facilitate the discussion in the Asia-Oceania region with China, Australia and Korea.

The United States concurred with the European Commission's comment on the fact that the future direction of GEO should be well supported by the strengths that we have demonstrated in the past and exercise currently.

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Thanked the Secretariat for the presentation;
- Appreciated the initial work of the Post-2025 Working Group;
- Emphasized that the future direction of GEO should be well supported by the strengths demonstrated in the current work;
- Emphasized that the Working Group reach out more to all the regions.

4.2 Preparations for the Ministerial Summit

The Secretariat Director introduced the topic. She stated that the timeline is based on previous experiences and that in December the Working Group should start working. In April 2023 a first version of the Ministerial Declaration, the agenda and the Post-2025 strategy will be shared with GEO principles so that the Working Group can receive feedback to consolidate the documents.

The United States stated that it would be useful start collecting those interested in participating and defining the parameters of the Working Group prior to plenary, so that at next Executive Committee meeting there can be a detailed outline. Ms Gevorgyan answered that it was the intention to develop the terms of reference. The United States advised to put more emphasis on communication and get regular update on the status of the Ministerial, including finalizing the logistics for the event, and to try to do this as soon as possible to ensure the best participation of all.

South Africa said that they look forward to hosting the Ministerial and welcomed the Secretariat proposal to set up a Working Group and getting the Ministers on the calendar.

The European Commission emphasized the need to not dismiss specific actions commitment. Decision-makers should be exposed to tangible results that address tangible challenges they face.

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Encouraged to begin early planning and campaigning to ensure timely start of the planning process and securing attendance by Ministers of the Summit;
- Terms of Reference of Ministerial WG should include all key parameters (objectives, deliverables, composition, number of participants, timelines, key milestones) to ensure effective WG activity. ToR will be reviewed by ExCom at ExCom61 and presented to Plenary-18.

5 SESSION 5: GEO WEEK 2022

5.1 GEO-18 and GEO Week 2022

Shiloh Osae (Ghana) presented Ghana's statements on behalf of the Minister of Technology, Science and Innovation. Mr. Osae expressed his gratitude to GEO and his support for GEO's vision beyond 2025. He thanked the GEO community for their confidence in Ghana to host GEO Week 2022 and said he looked forward to inviting them to experience Ghanaian culture. Mr. Osae expressed the hope that Ghana will make GEO Week not only a meeting but also a place for long-term relationship building and collaboration, both internationally and locally. He also noted that the Ghanaian Cabinet has approved Ghana's space policy, which is an important step. The government has committed to GEO activities by mandating the Ghana Institute of Space Science and Technology, which will be transformed into the Ghana Space Agency, to coordinate activities with local and international space partners. He said Ghana will continue to build relevant capacity in the use of EO data and resources for socio-economic development and expressed the hope to explore together with GEO the capacity building initiative. In addition, the efforts to establish a crop monitoring system in Ghana fit well with GEOGLAM activities. The Ministry looks forward to the development of a national coordination mechanism for GEO with relevant agencies and stakeholders to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in the country.

Wisdom Donkor (Ghana) member of the organizing committee presented an overview of the organization of the GEO Week 2022 edition, that will take place Accra International Conference center, Ghana, from 31 October to 4th November. He stated that this was an opportune time for whole Africa to rally behind this conference, to address some of the challenges that are faced in the continent. The entire event is going to be hybrid, for those not privileged to attend the conference in person. The venue will be the Accra International Conference Center, which includes a main Auditorium for 1800 people, two large community halls, meeting rooms in various sizes, a large space for exhibition and an area for catering. Several committees have been set up for organizing the event:

- Health Safety and Security: will be in charge of the helpdesk within the conference center, COVID protocols; Ghana health service, ambulance service and fire service will take part; the entire center is secured by the national security, and it is planned to have also the Ghana police to assist in the security of the entire event;

- Visa and Travel support: includes Ghana immigration service, and an airport companies and government agencies to help facilitate visas for everyone; they are also working with private transport organizations;
- Accommodation and Tourism: are working to get a discount for the approved hotels that will be recommended for the conference;
- Ministerial Conference: is a possibility that is still being discussed, the Global Food Observatory (supported by the World Bank) could be convened as part of the event;
- Youth and Hackathon: as Africa has the youngest youth, discussions during the conference should include youth-centered policies where youth will be empowered; it is important also to make sure the youth can also take part in the conference; regarding the Hackathon, there is a lot of data not being leveraged, and the aim is to look at those data and see what can come out of them;
- Technical Aspects: e.g. video production for which there will be technical volunteers;
- Staff Support: for everyone going to the conference;
- Catering: as people will come from various of the world, they are working to make sure that at least everyone will get something to eat and that there is coffee and tea available at all times for participants;
- Rapporteurs and Translation: they are working on this point to make sure that at the end of the conference the report will be ready to be submitted to GEO; for translation, they aim to provide translation English to French and VICE_VERSA, and if any country has volunteers to translate into other languages, they are asked to inform the organizers.

Steven Ramage presented additional information on the organization of GEO Week 2022 and its agenda. He explained that a small GEOSEC team had recently visited Ghana to tour the venue and meet with the local organizing committee. The Vice President of Ghana has agreed to deliver a short speech during GEO Week which will provide national and international coverage. The event also has the support of the Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation. Steven Ramage emphasized the in-person meeting and really wanted to encourage people to come. He presented the event banner, with an African design, which can be found on the website. The call for side events is closed with over 50 applications. The call for the GEO delegation will be shared and members are encouraged to respond quickly. The draft agenda is being developed and Mr. Ramage encouraged members to provide input. The website is now online. Planning for the youth track and the industry track is underway. Mr. Ramage also presented the draft agenda for the event.

The US appreciated the effort of Ghana to host this in person GEO Week and encourages the in-person attendance. As the US were planning to support an exhibit at the GEO week, they would like to stress the understanding of the logistics as soon as possible.

European Commission thanked for details and the offer for comments and ideas on the agenda, as the Executive Committee wishes to be closely associated to the elaboration of the agenda. The European Commission stated that activities around EO in Africa should find a place in the Conference. Major relevant initiatives are currently underway within the European Union (For Africa, ...). They were pleased to announce that they would provide 30,000 Euros to assist Ghana in the organization of the GEO Week and would be happy to engage with the local organizing committee and contractor.

Japan very much appreciated Ghana's preparation for the GEO week 2022.

South Africa supported the in-person attendance as recommended by the US. South Africa stated that they remain ready to assist Ghana with the preparations as well as through the AfriGEO Secretariat.

Costa Rica agreed that in-person participation should be encouraged, however there are several countries like Costa Rica that lack enough funding for travelling and the virtual format has been a good solution in those cases to engage with the events.

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- ExCom appreciated Ghana's efforts to host the 2022 GEO Week;
- Encouraged in-person attendance.

5.2 GEO-18 Agenda

Steven Ramage (GEO Secretariat) introduced this topic. He informed that information about the exhibition will be published on the website. Regarding the European Commission, he thanked the Commission for their additional funding and stated that any additional funding from other members would be very helpful in organizing GEO Week 2022. Mr. Ramage informed that the agenda is not there for approval, but that any input and comments would be welcome. Responding to China, he explained that the Secretariat closed applications for side events on July 8 and that what could be done once the side events are decided is to share the calendar and people can consider which side events they want to join in.

The US concurred with China's comment to send the agenda to Executive Committee members, as it would be an opportunity to provide feedback and to determine if the objectives are being met.

The Secretariat agreed with this idea and will wait for Executive Committee members comments. These comments will have to be provided by July 22, 2022.

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Thanked the Secretariat for the presentation.

Action 58.1: Executive Committee members to provide feedback regarding the GEO-18 Agenda. Due: 22 July 2022.

6 SESSION 6: REPORT OF THE BUDGET WORKING GROUP

6.1 Interim Report on Income and Expenditure as of 31 May 2022 and Projections for 2022

Lawrence Friedl (United States) presented this item. He said that at June 22 meeting of the Working Group the income and expenditures were reviewed as 21st May, as well as the projections for the rest of 2022. The projected income is in line for the 2022 budget at about 3.9 million CHF, what had been projected and which is consistent with previous years. He expressed that they were pleased to see GEO tapping in the Trust Fund surplus to fund for example temporary staff especially for EAG and the Post 2025. He noted that on the item 14.1 of the document, they were still going to provide a minor update. From

March Executive Committee Meeting, the Working Group had an action to consider the findings of the Mid-Term Evaluation that were related to communications about the Trust Fund and future GEO Pledge Campaigns. At June meeting they initiated the effort related to this topic and included discussions with Sam Nuttall (Secretariat). As the efforts on this action are expected to intersect with ongoing efforts related with the new communications strategy, resource mobilization and the Post 2025, Mr Friedl stated that they were going to work with those groups as well while pursuing this action. He also said that they will be reviewing the interviews made with GEO Principals about their view on the Trust Fund also to complete this action. Mr. Friedl said that will provide a report by next Executive Committee meeting. He ended by thanking Imraan Salojee (South Africa) and Gilles Ollier (EC) who recently completed their roles and said that they were looking forward to working with new members.

The Secretariat recalled that in the proposed indicators for implementing Executive Committee priorities, one of the indicators is about securing funds to support participation of diverse individuals in GEO events. Thus, the Secretariat called the Executive Committee members for support and encouraged to potentially increase their contributions to accommodate the ability to support more participation, or to begin contributing even if it is at a small scale.

The United States appreciated everyone's contribution to the Trust Fund and encouraged everyone to consider contributions both financial and in-kind. The US also appreciated the staff hiring from the Secretariat. They also declared that they were able to increase contributions for this year, including additional fund to support the GEO indigenous alliance.

The Working Group members called on more partners and members in the Budget WG. They long for new people joining the Working Group. They also encouraged to consider broadening awareness about the Pledge Campaign, as it continues through the entire year.

The European Commission reported that its contribution of 1.2 million Euros of the GEO Trust Fund was recently paid to the GEO host. The same contribution is being introduced for 2024, and the same level of revenue will be maintained for the GEO Trust Fund in 2022 compared to 2021, in the range of 3.9 million Swiss francs.

Outcomes: The Executive Committee:

- Thanked the Budget Working Group for their presentation and for their work;
- Encouraged more partners to join the Budget Working Group.

Meeting adjourned at 16:00.