

U.S. Comments on the Interim Report of the Post-2025 Working Group

November 25, 2022

The United States thanks the Post-25 Working Group for its work in developing this Interim Report on the next GEO strategy and for its extensive global community engagement. The United States views the feedback from the community engagement as critical to the final product and urges the Post-25 WG to take that input as it takes into account thinking beyond just the main participants in GEO.

The United States cautions the Post-25 Working Group (WG) from moving into implementation. While it would be fine and encourages to provide ideas for consideration, we would like to see the WG focus on a high-level strategy that provides enough context and clarity for the Secretariat and the GEO community to develop implementation plans between next year's Ministerial Summit and GEO Week 2024.

Regarding the Value Proposition

The United States views the value of GEO as:

- **CONVENER:** Ability to convene groups across the EO spectrum together, including countries, private sector, non-for-profits, and other organizations
- **EQUITABLE SOLUTIONS:** Unique, safe, environment for EO innovation, co-development, and transdisciplinary collaboration to create equitable solutions
- **SCALABLE:** Enables flexible implementation and serves as a environment to grow, nurture, and scale projects
- **LINK POLICY AND PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS:** Able to link policy development to successful and practical solutions on a global scale

The United States urges the Working Group to share a draft Value Proposition with the community as soon as possible for additional comments.

Regarding the five considerations

The United States is supportive of the five high-level considerations. However, as they are fairly short, we would like to see them expanded to provide as much clarity as possible.

Regarding each consideration:

- *Increase Equitable Access to Earth Observations:* The United States would like to see emphasis on free and unrestricted public data and open data from the private sector for low- and middle-income (LMI) countries. In particular we would like to see countries, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector work together to enable multi-use licenses for LMI countries, along with exploring other financing mechanisms.
- *Optimize the GEO Work Programme:* The United States agrees that streamlining the GEO Work Programme activities is needed to focus on key outcomes and coordination around nexus areas will enable delivery of an impact-oriented GEO Work Programme. We would like to see a Work Programme where activities work together

in a complementary manner and focus on impact of the work, but at the same time find a way to include new ideas and the generation of pilot projects that help to drive innovation. In addition to streamlining the activities themselves, the United States encourages a consolidation and clarification of the types of GEO activity, which currently include flagships, initiatives, pilots, foundational activities, working groups, and nexus activities to name a few. The growing typology of GEO activities is reflective of an evolving GEO, but is increasingly difficult to understand, especially with respect to the notion of GEO priorities.

- *Strengthen GEO Governance:* The United States agrees that the governance structure needs to be changed to include Participating Organizations, and Affiliates more substantively in the governance and implementation of GEO. The United States would like to see member countries maintain their role as the "steward" of GEO to ensure it remains open, transparent, and fair, but sees a need to integrate POs and Affiliates in a new and more inclusive way. We believe this type of governance model can be accommodated while maintaining GEO's status as an intergovernmental organization.
- *Mobilize New Donors, Private Sector, and Innovative Financing:* The United States is supportive of the idea of building up external funding sources, effective public-private partnerships, and looking at other philanthropic organizations is needed. The United States would like to encourage GEO to look at existing models of innovative finance adapted by other intergovernmental organizations and United Nations bodies.
- *Strengthen Communication and Advocacy:* The United States agrees on the need to improve communication around the utility of GEO to external entities and within the GEO community. In addition to proactive communication, we would like to see methods for intentional listening and using that input to incorporate the needs of the global community as well as better orient and incorporate those needs into future GEO activities. The communication and advocacy aspects should highlight stronger linkages between needs and deliverables. In addition, an annual GEO report on the State of Earth Observation has utility but should not be at the expense of Work Programme activities.

The United States looks forward to seeing a more complete strategy document at the March 2023 Executive Committee Meeting.