

**Earth Observation Summit**  
***Ad hoc* Group on Earth Observations (GEO)**

**Terms of Reference**

Recalling the Earth Observation Summit Declaration of 31 July 2003, the participating governmental entities (collectively referred to as the “Members”) set forth the following, legally non-binding Terms of Reference for the *ad hoc* Group on Earth Observations (GEO).

**1. Purpose and Functions of the GEO**

The GEO will seek in its work to:

- 1.1 improve coordination of strategies and systems for observations of the Earth and identify measures to minimize data gaps, with a view to moving toward a comprehensive, coordinated, and sustained Earth observation system or systems;
- 1.2 coordinate an effort to involve and assist developing countries in improving and sustaining their contributions to observing systems, as well as their access to and effective utilization of observations, data and products, and the related technologies by addressing capacity-building needs related to Earth observations;
- 1.3 exchange observations recorded from *in situ*, aircraft, and satellite networks, dedicated to the purposes of this Declaration, in a full and open manner with minimum time delay and minimum cost, recognizing relevant international instruments and national policies and legislation;
- 1.4 prepare a 10-year Implementation Plan, taking into account existing activities and building on existing systems and initiatives, with the Framework being available by the Tokyo ministerial conference on Earth observations to be held during the second quarter of 2004, and the Plan being available by the ministerial conference to be hosted by the European Union during the fourth quarter of 2004;
- 1.5 define a process to periodically evaluate and revise the 10-year Implementation Plan; and
- 1.6 conduct such other activities, consistent with the Declaration, as the Members may deem necessary.

## **2.0 Organization of the GEO**

- 2.1 The GEO welcomes and is open to all interested governments and the European Commission. Each Member will name one representative and one alternate. Each Member will determine the terms of its participation in the activities of the GEO. The list of current Members is contained in Annex I to these Terms of Reference, and will be updated at each meeting.
- 2.2 The GEO may also invite the participation of organizations, international bodies, and individual experts. The list of current participants is contained in Annex II to these Terms of Reference, and will be updated at each meeting.
- 2.3 The GEO will meet at such times and places as determined by its Members.
- 2.4 At its inaugural meeting, the GEO will elect four co-chairs from among its Members, at least one of which will be from a developing country Member, to serve until 31 December 2004.
- 2.5 The GEO will work by consensus of its Members.
- 2.6 The GEO may establish subgroups, as appropriate.
- 2.7 Administrative Secretariat support to the GEO will be provided by the United States, working with staff designated and supported by other Members and participants, as deemed necessary and appropriate by the co-chairs.

## **3.0 Funding**

Unless otherwise agreed, any costs arising from activities under these Terms of Reference will be borne by the Member or participant that incurs them, and will be subject to the availability of funds, personnel, and other resources.

## **4.0 Duration**

- 4.1 All activities under these Terms of Reference will commence upon adoption and will continue until 31 December 2004, unless extended or terminated.
- 4.2 The terms of this document may be modified at any time by written agreement of the Members.

**Annex I**

Argentina  
Australia  
Belize  
Brazil  
Canada  
China  
Denmark  
Egypt  
European Commission  
France  
Gabon  
Germany  
India  
Ireland  
Israel  
Italy  
Japan  
Kazakhstan  
Mexico  
Morocco  
Netherlands  
New Zealand  
Norway  
Republic of Congo  
Republic of Korea  
Russian Federation  
South Africa  
Spain  
Sweden  
Switzerland  
Thailand  
Ukraine  
United Kingdom  
United States

**Annex II**

Central American Commission for the Environment and Development (SICA/CCAD)  
Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS)  
European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting (ECMWF)  
European Space Agency (ESA)  
European Organization for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT)  
Global Climate Observing System (GCOS)  
Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS)  
Global Terrestrial Observing System (GTOS)  
Integrated Global Observing Strategy Partnership (IGOS-P)  
Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)  
International Agency for the Development of Environmental Information (ADIE)  
International Council for Science (ICSU)  
International Geosphere-Biosphere Program (IGBP)  
International Group of Funding Agencies for Global Change Research (IGFA)  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)  
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)  
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)  
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)  
World Bank (IBRD)  
World Climate Research Programme (WCRP)  
World Meteorological Organization (WMO)