



GROUP ON EARTH OBSERVATIONS

GEO – Group on Earth Observation - Statement

At the First Session of the
Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction
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Informed decision making will be more and more based on Observations of the Earth. Sustained monitoring of the Earth System is required now more than ever, in a time of growing populations, increasing energy and resources demands and rapid environmental changes.

For Disasters Risk Reduction, where the time factor is essential, having immediate access to information via existing observation systems is even more critical.

GEO, the Group on Earth Observations, has been established to coordinate existing and future Earth observing systems with the goal of realizing a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) over the next 10 years.

GEOSS is to achieve *comprehensive, coordinated and sustained* observations of the Earth system, in order to improve monitoring of the changing state of the Earth, increase understanding of Earth processes, and enhance prediction of the behavior of the Earth system.

GEOSS will be an essential tool to assess the growing vulnerability and risk to societies and economy and, as an early warning system, to detect and monitor upcoming disasters.

GEO will contribute to the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction:

- By coordinating and improving observation systems, dedicated to risk assessment and management
- By contributing to the definition and implementation of a multi-hazard risk management approach
- By bringing together all communities dealing with hazards
- By promoting end to end projects on Risk Management

In addition to Disaster Reduction, GEOSS will enhance delivery of benefits to society in eight other societal benefit areas (SBAs):

- Health (understanding environmental factors affecting human health and well-being);
- Energy (improving management of energy resources);
- Climate (understanding, assessing, predicting, mitigating, and adapting to climate variability and change);
- Water (improving water resource management through better understanding of the water cycle);
- Weather (improving weather information, forecasting, and warning);
- Ecosystems (improving the management and protection of terrestrial, coastal, and marine ecosystems);
- Agriculture (supporting sustainable agriculture and combating desertification);
- Biodiversity (understanding, monitoring, and conserving biodiversity).

The Group on Earth Observations (GEO) has today 71 Members and 46 Participating Organizations.

The first Ministerial Summit of GEO, since it was created 2 years ago, will take place in Cape Town, South Africa, on 30 November this year. It will report on the progress accomplished towards the building of GEOSS.