

Our Ref: 2015-108/GEO/SDG

GEO Principals

Geneva, 19 August 2015

**Subject: Heads of State Statements at SDG Summit in September**

Dear GEO Principal,

I am pleased to report that the final outcome document of the UN General Assembly negotiations on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) contains a very important reference to Earth observations (EO). The document, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, is expected to be adopted by the Heads of State of the UN Member States at the Sustainable Development Summit to be held in New York in September. On behalf of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), I thank all of you who were involved in achieving this outcome.

This language provides a critical foundation for GEO's continued engagement with UN organizations and Member States to encourage the integration of Earth observations in national statistics to more effectively measure, monitor and achieve the SDGs, as well as build capacity throughout the world:

*Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*

**Follow-up and review**

*76. We will support developing countries, particularly African countries, LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs, in strengthening the capacity of national statistical offices and data systems to ensure access to high-quality, timely, reliable and disaggregated data. We will promote transparent and accountable scaling-up of appropriate public-private cooperation to exploit the contribution to be made by a wide range of data, **including earth observation and geo-spatial information**, while ensuring national ownership in supporting and tracking progress.*

To strengthen the impact of these words, I would now like to encourage work within your governments to suggest the inclusion of one or more of the following sentences in the Statement your Head of State will deliver at the UN Summit in September. These few additional words will help to underscore the important role of EO in the SDG process and the value of the GEO community working closely with UN and national agencies to create an effective SDG measuring and monitoring process. The proposed text is provided below. Please take the opportunity to tailor it to your country's particular needs and priorities.

- As called for in the outcome document we are approving today, Earth observation and geospatial information will play a critical role in enabling each of our nations to effectively measure, monitor and, ultimately, achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, thereby giving us the “world we want”;
- (Country) applauds the efforts of the United Nations Statistics Division, in collaboration with international organizations such as the Intergovernmental Group on Earth Observations, to integrate Earth observation and geographic information with national statistics that can be used to monitor and measure progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals;
- (Country) urges the United Nations organizations to work closely with international, intergovernmental organizations, such as the Group on Earth Observations, to help nations build the human and technical capacity to access and use data and information that will be essential to measuring, monitoring and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Thank you, in advance, for your continued efforts to increase GEO's opportunities to contribute its experience, expertise and resources in this vital global agenda. Please feel free to contact us at [secretariat@geosec.org](mailto:secretariat@geosec.org) with any questions or comments. We stand ready to assist in anyway that we can.

Yours sincerely,



Barbara J. Ryan  
Secretariat Director