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Statement by

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IGOS Co-chair

at Earth Observation Summit II
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in Tokyo, Japan

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the co-Chairs of the Integrated Global Observing Strategy Partnership, I am very honored to have the opportunity to speak to you today.

Why IGOS ?

The first Earth Observation Summit in July last year and the subsequent work of the ad hoc GEO has confirmed that our need for information on the current state of the Earth System and its processes is today greater than ever before. The information necessary for our improved understanding will require additional systematic and sustained observations of Earth. The Integrated Global Observing Strategy Partnership (IGOS-P) was established in 1998 by a formal exchange of letters among the 13 founding partners for the definition, development and implementation of the Integrated Global Observing Strategy.

What is IGOS ?

Many of you were informed at the GEO-2 meeting in Baveno that the principal objectives of the IGOS-P are to address how well user requirements are being met by the existing mixture of observations, including those of the global observing systems, and to ensure they are met in the future through better integration and optimization of remote sensing and *in-situ* systems.

The IGOS-P serves as guidance for defining and implementing individual observing systems. Implementation of the Strategy, more specifically, the establishment and maintenance of the components of an integrated global observing system, however, lies with those governments and organizations that have made commitments.

The IGOS-P provides an overarching view of all the components of the observing systems. It assesses contributions to an overall system for collecting the information required for global change processes. Governments benefit from information that will allow them to target their future contributions in a cost-effective manner.

To aid the development of the Strategy, the Partners use a "Theme" approach to address perceived Earth observation priorities.

The IGOS Partners
www.igospartners.org

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GTOS

ICSU
IGBP
IGFA

IOC-UNESCO
UNEP
UNESCO

WCRP
WMO

IGOS Theme Process

The Theme approach allows the coherent definition and development of an overall global strategy whilst recognising the different state and stage of development in different areas. The Theme approach contains priority observations for specific issues.

The Theme approach was also adopted because IGOS-P recognises that it is impossible, in one step and for all eventualities, to complete the exercise of defining all the necessary observational requirements and hence the observational systems, data handling, processing and analysis infrastructure for a comprehensive global system

Since 1999, the IGOS Partnership has approved four themes: Oceans, Carbon cycle, Geohazards, and Water cycle. Themes for Atmospheric chemistry and Coastal are under preparation. Consideration is being given to developing two new themes, on Land and on Cryosphere. Due to the newness of the process and the complexity of the topics, it has generally taken two to three years for a theme proposal to be developed into an approved report ready for implementation.

It is expected that the results from IGOS Themes will increase scientific understanding, help provide early warning of change and guide policy-making for sustainable development and environmental protection. At the same time, opportunities will be created for capacity building and assisting countries to obtain maximum benefit from the observations.

Implementation Capacity

IGOS-P is not itself an implementing entity, but we do have a responsibility to ensure that its work has an impact and produces results.

While governments play an important role, to suggest that only governments make observations would be an oversimplification. Clearly governments fund national space agencies, scientific research activities, and operational observation programmes, but nongovernmental organizations and even the private sector have roles both in space-based and in *in situ* observations.

The Theme process could be used to build partnerships and high levels of institutional commitment. This suggests an important role in stimulating the development of implementation capacity, not just in technologies but also in data processing, archiving, analysis and delivery. Historically, the technological capacity to observe the environment has run far ahead of the capacity to analyze and use the information. A Theme should give greater emphasis to the entire decision-making chain to ensure that observations are used widely and effectively. It should identify national and regional needs and provide solutions.

The IGOS Strategy and GEOSS

With the four IGOS Theme reports that are now in the process of implementation, IGOS-P has made significant progress. We anticipate that this momentum will continue, especially in light of the ongoing GEO process. IGOS-P has also developed a unique forum for coordination and communication within the Earth observation community in which Partners have worked together to better understand and investigate Earth processes. We welcome the opportunity to see the fruits of our efforts contribute directly to the development of a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS).

I invite the delegates of this conference to visit the IGOS web-site (www.igospartners.org) where detailed information about the IGOS Partnership and its Themes can be found.

Thank you.

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