

Our Ref.: 2008349/GEO/2009-2011WP

All GEO Members

Geneva, 28 March 2008

**Subject: GEO 2009-2011 Work Plan preparation**

Dear Colleagues,

At its recent meeting, the Executive Committee agreed to initiate the preparation of a new 3-year Work Plan for GEOSS implementation which would begin in 2009. The purpose of this letter is to start the development of this new 2009-2011 Work Plan.

The 2009-2011 Work Plan will provide a one year overlap with the 2007-2009 Work Plan, thus ensuring the continuity of existing actions. It will offer the appropriate timeframe for preparing the next GEO Ministerial Summit in 2010 by turning "Early Achievements" into "Mid-term Achievements". Finally, with an ending date in 2011, this Work Plan will also allow the GEO community to build, with no delay, upon the outcome of the 2010 Summit.

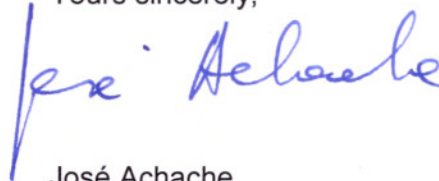
As with the previous Work Plan, the development of the 2009-2011 Work Plan will be conducted in three steps (see schedule in attached document). The first step is being initiated with the present letter and will end on 1 July with the release of a Version 1 (V1) for technical review. This technical review will be jointly conducted by the four GEO Committees and by the GEO community, whose members will be invited to provide individual comments. Based on the outcome of the technical review, and the recommendations made by the Executive Committee, the Secretariat will prepare the 2009-2011 Work Plan Version 2 (V2), to be submitted for official review on 1 September. Based on this official review, a Version 3 of the Work Plan (V3) will be issued in October, together with other Plenary documents for acceptance at GEO-V meeting.

To initiate the development of the 2009-2011 Work Plan, the Secretariat is hereby inviting all experts from the GEO community to make proposals and suggestions following the development guidelines attached. These guidelines have been prepared with the GEO Committees and the Executive Committee to ensure that they reflect the main conclusions of the GEO-IV Plenary and Cape Town Ministerial Summit. All inputs are due to the Secretariat by 9 May. The Secretariat will then prepare the 2009-2011 Work Plan Version 1 with the support and guidance of the four GEO Committees and the Committee Co-chairs Coordination (C4) group.

The preparation of the GEO 2009-2011 Work Plan will be an opportunity to build on the progress achieved in 2005-2008 and drive the GEO process towards convergence by consolidating a number of Tasks and initiating more encompassing cross-disciplinary actions. Moreover, when defining the scope of the next Work Plan, it should be remembered that GEOSS will be moving into its fifth year of implementation in 2009. This upcoming period could move beyond individual system- or community- building activities and focus more on cross-cutting and overarching Tasks in order to actually build GEOSS. These Tasks could not only cut across societal benefit areas but also across system-types (e.g. observing, processing, data assimilation, modelling, dissemination, information). In addition, they could address some key issues that have not yet been properly advanced by the current Work Plan, such as the combined use of socio-economic data and the generation of services.

I look forward to your contribution to this important next step towards a Ministerial Summit in 2010 which we hope to make as productive and successful as the Cape Town Summit.

Yours sincerely,



José Achache

Secretariat Director