

Environment

Commitment

“Held First and Second Earth Observation Summits (EOS) and adopted a Framework document on a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS). Planning to adopt a final 10-year strategic implementation plan on GEOSS at Third EOS in 2005 and working to identify the international mechanism to provide coordination and oversight for GEOSS.”

*Science and Technology for Sustainable Development:
“3r” Action Plan and Progress on Implementation*

Background

At the 2003 Evian summit, the G8 called for an integrated earth observation system (EOS) to observe and track climate change and other environmental trends on Earth. Such an integrated climate tracking system could provide valuable information to the benefit of all nations. Three summits (the first, second and third Earth Observation Summits) have been held to date. The third summit took place on February 16th, 2005, and was held in Brussels, Belgium. At the third EOS (EOS-3) summit, in accordance with the Sea Island commitment, a ten-year strategic implementation plan was adopted. The GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan outlined the “essential steps to be undertaken, over the next decade, by a global community of nations and intergovernmental, international, and regional organizations, to put in place Global Earth Observation System of Systems.”⁵⁰² The 10-Year Implementation Plan also outlines the methods of governance that the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) will employ to provide coordination and oversight for GEOSS. The plan states that the GEO will meet in plenary at least annually at the senior-official level, and periodically at the Ministerial level. The document goes on to say that the GEO plenary will establish an elected executive committee, subsidiary bodies which will include science and technical advisory mechanisms, and a secretariat, which will be comprised of “co-located, well-qualified, professional and administrative staff”⁵⁰³

For the full EOS-3 resolution, see:

earthobservations.org/docs/Third%20Summit%20Tsunami%20Communique.pdf

⁵⁰² “The Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) 10-Year Implementation Plan (as adopted 16 February 2005)” <earthobservations.org> Last Accessed: 5 May 2005

⁵⁰³ Ibid.

Assessment

Country	Non-Compliance -1	Work in Progress 0	Full Compliance +1
Canada			+1
France			+1
Germany			+1
Italy			+1
Japan			+1
Russia			+1
United Kingdom			+1
United States			+1
European Union			+1
Overall: +1.00			

Individual Country Compliance Breakdown

1. Canada

Canada has complied with its commitment to be an active participant in the Global Earth Observation System of Systems. As a member of the Group on Earth Observations,⁵⁰⁴ Canada was present at the EOS-3 summit and agreed with the implementation plan that was reached at that summit.

At the EOS-3 summit the President of the Canadian Space Agency, Dr. Marc Garneau, speaking on behalf of Canadian Minister of the Environment Stephane Dion, stated: “Canada is proud to be a party to the adoption of this 10-Year Implementation Plan. [...] Canada has been a very active participant in the preparation of the Plan, including hosting the fifth meeting of the ad hoc Group on Earth Observations in Ottawa in November 2004. Canada looks forward to participating with equal or greater vigour during the implementation of the Plan.”⁵⁰⁵

2. France

France has complied with its commitment to be an active participant in the Global Earth Observation System of Systems. As a member of the Group on Earth Observations, France was present at the EOS-3 summit and agreed with the implementation plan that was reached at the summit.⁵⁰⁶ France is also member of the European Space Agency, which has contributed a great deal to the GEOSS initiative (see European Union entry below). France also contributes bilaterally to a project known as PUMA, which since 1996 has ensured that 53 African national meteorology services have been capable of making use of data provided by European weather satellites. PUMA has set up a total of 59 receiving stations across the African continent — one

⁵⁰⁴ “Group on Earth Observations: Members” <earthobservations.org/members.asp>

⁵⁰⁵ Garneau, Marc. “Canada Country Statement” Canadian Group on Earth Observations Media Room <www.ec.gc.ca/press/2005/050216_s_e.htm>

⁵⁰⁶ “Group on Earth Observations: Members” Group on Earth Observations Website. <earthobservations.org/members.asp>

for each participating country and six regional centres — and 350 technicians will have been trained by September of this year.⁵⁰⁷

3. Germany

Germany has complied with its commitment to be an active participant in the Global Earth Observation System of Systems. As a member of the Group on Earth Observations, Germany was present at the EOS-3 summit and agreed with the implementation plan that was reached at that summit.⁵⁰⁸ Germany is a member of the European Space Agency, which has contributed a great deal to the GEOSS initiative (see European Union entry below).

4. Italy

Italy has complied with its commitment to be an active participant in the Global Earth Observation System of Systems. As a member of the Group on Earth Observations, Italy was present at the EOS-3 summit and agreed with the implementation plan that was reached there.⁵⁰⁹ Italy is a member of the European Space Agency, which has contributed a great deal to the GEOSS initiative (see European Union entry below).

5. Japan

Japan has complied with its Sea Island Summit pledge. Japan attended the third Earth Observation Summit (EOS-3) meeting on February 16th, 2005 in Brussels, Belgium⁵¹⁰ and currently serves as one of four co-presidents of the Group on Earth Observation.⁵¹¹ At the EOS-3 summit the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's (JAXA) Executive Director Yoji Furuhashi, as well as agreeing with the GEOSS initiative, signed on to the "Charter On Cooperation To Achieve The Coordinated Use Of Space Facilities In The Event Of Natural Or Technological Disasters (hereinafter called "The International Charter Space and Major Disasters")".⁵¹² This charter, created in 2000, aims to provide "free earth observation satellite data and others based upon the best efforts of participating agencies at the time of major disasters."⁵¹³

6. Russia

Russia has complied with its commitment to be an active participant in the Global Earth Observation System of Systems. As a member of the Group on Earth Observations, Russia was

⁵⁰⁷ "Earth and Space Week: Third Earth Observation Summit agrees ten-year GEOSS action plan" European Space Agency Press Release. February 17th, 2005. <www.esa.int/esaEO/SEMSABYEM4E_index_0.html>

⁵⁰⁸ "Group on Earth Observations: Members" <earthobservations.org/members.asp>

⁵⁰⁹ "Group on Earth Observations: Members" <earthobservations.org/members.asp>

⁵¹⁰ "Speeches and Statements by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi" <www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/koizumispeech/2004/06/22science_e.html>

⁵¹¹ "Uniting to make a World of Difference" European Magazine on Research. <europa.eu.int/comm/research/rtdinfo/44/01/article_2026_en.html#notes>

⁵¹² "Accession to the International Charter "Space and Major Disasters" Japan Space and Exploration Agency Press Release. February 2005. <www.jaxa.jp/press/2005/02/20050210_disasterscherter_e.html>

⁵¹³ Ibid.

present at the EOS-3 summit and agreed with the implementation plan that was reached at that summit.⁵¹⁴

7. United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has complied with its commitment to be an active participant in the Global Earth Observation System of Systems. As a member of the Group on Earth Observations, the United Kingdom was present at the EOS-3 summit and agreed with the implementation plan that was reached.⁵¹⁵ The United Kingdom is also member of the European Space Agency, which has contributed a great deal to the GEOSS initiative (see European Union entry below). The United Kingdom also contributes bilaterally to the PUMA project to disseminate earth observation data to African states.⁵¹⁶

8. United States

The United States of America attended the third Earth Observation Summit (EOS) meeting on February 16th, 2005 in Brussels, Belgium⁵¹⁷, in compliance with their Sea Island Summit pledge. The United States joined 60 other nations in formally agreeing upon a ten-year plan to implement a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS)⁵¹⁸ in order to “achieve comprehensive, coordinated and sustained observations of the Earth system”⁵¹⁹. U.S. Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez solidified American commitment to the plan at the Summit by presenting the United States’ plan for an integrated U.S. Earth Observation system and identifying it as one of President Bush’s environmental priorities⁵²⁰. The United States is also one of four current co-presidents of the Group on Earth Observation.⁵²¹

9. European Union

The European Union has complied with its commitment to be an active participant in the Global Earth Observation System of Systems. The European Union is one of four current co-presidents

⁵¹⁴ “Group on Earth Observations: Members” Group on Earth Observations Website.
<earthobservations.org/members.asp>

⁵¹⁵ “Group on Earth Observations: Members” Group on Earth Observations Website.
<earthobservations.org/members.asp>

⁵¹⁶ “Earth and Space Week: Third Earth Observation Summit agrees ten-year GEOSS action plan” European Space Agency Press Release. February 17th, 2005.
<www.esa.int/esaEO/SEMSABYEM4E_index_0.html>

⁵¹⁷ “MOST delegation attended the Third Earth Observation Summit”
irdc.ia.ac.cn/cistc/english/Info/showInfo.asp?id=35776

⁵¹⁸ “Third Earth Observation Summit Agrees On Ten-Year GEOSS Action Plan” Space Daily News. February 21st, 2005. <www.spacedaily.com/news/eo-05u.html>

⁵¹⁹ “The Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) 10-Year Implementation Plan” Group on Earth Observations.
<earthobservations.org/docs/10-Year%20Implementation%20Plan.pdf>

⁵²⁰ “Strategic Plan for the U.S. Integrated Earth Observation System”
<iwgeo.ssc.nasa.gov/draftstrategicplan/IEOS_Draft_strategic_plan.pdf>

⁵²¹ “Uniting to make a World of Difference” European Magazine on Research.
<europa.eu.int/comm/research/rtdinfo/44/01/article_2026_en.html#notes>

of the Group on Earth Observation.⁵²² At the summit European Commission Environmental Commissioner Stavros Dimas stated his belief that a combination of different Earth Observation systems is needed to study the Earth: “Good policy needs good science — we need to understand the environment in order to protect it... launching a system that will greatly enhance our understanding of the environment and will hopefully help us to do what we can to improve it.”⁵²³

Director-General of Research at the European Commission Achilleas Mitsos has emphasized Europe’s commitment to GEOSS, stating that, “Europe has invested strongly in this project. It is of particular interest to us as European Earth observation expertise is among the most advanced in the world. It is a field in which the European Space Agency (ESA) member states have provided strong support...”⁵²⁴ This support includes the €11 million the European Commission has contributed to the PUMA project to date.⁵²⁵ Additionally, the PUMA Task Team is working on a follow-up project called African Monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable Development (AMESD), that extends beyond meteorology to cover Earth Observation capacity-building, with the intention of providing support for African policy makers. This program will serve as the African link to GEOSS.⁵²⁶ The ESA’s Earth Observation Science and Applications Department is also involved in a project called TIGER which is focused on applying Earth Observation to Africa, with a particular focus on water management issues⁵²⁷

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May 29, 2005*

⁵²² “Uniting to make a World of Difference” European Magazine on Research.
<europa.eu.int/comm/research/rtdinfo/44/01/article_2026_en.html#notes>

⁵²³ Cited in “Earth and Space Week: Third Earth Observation Summit agrees ten-year GEOSS action plan” European Space Agency Press Release. February 17th, 2005.
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⁵²⁴ Cited in “Uniting to make a World of Difference” European Magazine on Research.
<europa.eu.int/comm/research/rtdinfo/44/01/article_2026_en.html#notes>

⁵²⁵ “Earth and Space Week: Third Earth Observation Summit agrees ten-year GEOSS action plan” European Space Agency Press Release. February 17th, 2005.
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⁵²⁶ “Earth and Space Week: Third Earth Observation Summit agrees ten-year GEOSS action plan” European Space Agency Press Release. February 17th, 2005.
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⁵²⁷ “Earth and Space Week: Third Earth Observation Summit agrees ten-year GEOSS action plan” European Space Agency Press Release. February 17th, 2005.
<www.esa.int/esaEO/SEMSABYEM4E_index_0.html>