

Country Statement

by

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On behalf of
The Honourable John Baird, M.P., P.C
Minister of the Environment

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Thank you Mr. Chairman

On behalf of the Honourable John Baird, Minister of the Environment, who unfortunately cannot be with us here today, and the Government of Canada, I would like to express our appreciation to Dr. Mangena and thank the Republic of South Africa for organizing the Fourth Earth Observation Summit.

Canada is proud to be an active participant in the Ten Year Implementation Plan for the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) and express our appreciation to experts worldwide who have contributed to the impressive array of accomplishments over the last two years. We fully support the Cape Town Declaration and express our appreciation to the Republic of South Africa for leadership in crafting a declaration that has achieved such wide ranging consensus.

Threats to our environment are a clear and present danger and Earth observation systems have an important role to play in understanding the challenges we face. This is nowhere more

evident than in the growing challenge of climate change.

GEOSS will contribute to the health, safety and economic prosperity of our citizens through increased understanding of the carbon cycle, water cycle and availability, air pollutants, and the identification and protection of sensitive ecosystems.

In a regional context, Canada is participating in efforts to raise awareness about existing GEOSS in the Americas activities, strengthen partnerships, and advance a dialogue about opportunities, capabilities, and requirements in the Americas.

Canada recognizes the need to better understand changes that are underway in our Arctic. We take our stewardship role of this vast territory very seriously. We are bringing forward an integrated northern strategy focused on protecting our environmental heritage and promoting sustainable economic and social development. As part of this strategy, we will build a world-class Arctic research station to further our understanding of this fragile environment. This commitment to

building a legacy to the International Polar Year is consistent with the GEOSS outcomes and objectives.

We are also committed to completing a Federal Earth Observation Strategy for Canada. We will work with other levels of government, with industry and academia to develop a national partnership and plan. We view this as prerequisite to safe and responsible economic development of our agriculture, forestry, energy and mineral resources.

Mr. Chairman, Canada is a committed partner in this important enterprise. In order to secure maximum benefit from Earth observation systems, I want to emphasize that continued investment in this partnership will help us create useful and timely information, products and services. This investment is the jewel in the crown to assist all humankind to mitigate natural disasters, improve economic performance and achieve sustainable development goals.

We look forward to the work ahead. It is only through concerted and collaborative efforts that we can ensure a better planet; one that is safer and healthier for all of its inhabitants.