

Speech by Minister Wan Gang at the Closing Session of the Cape Town Ministerial Summit

Your Excellency Minister Mangena,

Your Excellency Commissioner Potocnik,

Your Excellency Minister Kempthorne,

Dear colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With nearly one-year preparations and hard work, today we released the Earth Observation Cape Town Declaration after a whole-day fruitful discussion. On behalf of the Chinese delegation, I would like to express my warm congratulations. The meeting today reviewed the previous work of GEO and laid out plans for the next phase. We are gratifying to see that GEO has achieved a lot in the past 2 years, for instance, GEONETCast has a global coverage in EO data distribution, GEOPortal now provides data to its users on web, just to mention a few. Those have laid a sound foundation for the early accomplishment of the GEOSS.

As we all know, climate change becomes a global issue. It attracts world's attention due to its high relevance to various aspects of the national economy and social development, concerning eco-environment, energy, water resources, health and sustainable development of the mankind. The work of GEO is very positive to dealing with these challenges. The GEOSS and the 9 societal benefit areas are intended to give support to our decision makers in this regard. Therefore, the international community shall keep a close eye on the progress of GEO and the work of GEO, and jointly propel the construction of GEOSS.

The Chinese government attaches great importance to earth observation, and puts in a great amount of financial, material and human resources. Thus far, China independently made and launched meteorological, oceanic, earth resources, environmental and disaster-mitigating satellites and small satellite, which formed a relatively full-fledged earth observation satellite serial structure. This structure helps shape a series of aviation-oriented earth observation ability and bases. The groundwork done in aviation and aerospace, coupled with field observation stations set up in line with the function and demand of relevant agencies in China enables the China Integrated Observation System come into being. The relevant authorities in China have formulated development strategies in their own domains, based on which the 10-Year Plan has been put forward. In the coming 10 years, China will integrate its satellite

observation platforms with field observation stations and other observation systems to form an optimized Integrated System. The said system is an integral part of the GEOSS and will make its due contribution to the GEO progress.

In the area of earth observation, China values highly the international cooperation. For example, the jointly developed China-Brazil Earth Resources Satellite(“CBERS” for short) not only serves the two countries with earth resource images but also benefits the world as a whole. In December 2004, when tsunami hit south and southeastern Asian countries, China provided image data to help the victim countries with their relief work.

Being a member of the executive committee and one of the 4 co-chairs of the GEO, we thank all the members for your trust and support. We will continue to make our contribution to GEO together with all the members. We will exert our utmost efforts to cooperate and communicate with you to take forward the GEO development and to enable every participating member benefit from the work of GEO. China will persistently support GEO, promote the building of GEOSS and make contribution to the sustainable development of the human society.

Thank you!