

Statement from Finland to the 2015 GEO Ministerial

The Group on Earth Observation is embarking on a new 10 year journey. How will we track the success of this trip? Looking back at the first GEO decade, it was not one ship on one trip, but many boats going on many journeys. GEO provided the flag to hiss on the top of the masts. The vehicles had to be built and operated by GEO members and regional collaborations. Many of these trips were shorter than 10 years, but all got to achieve some parts of the GEO goals.

Most successfully GEO has been sharing data on the virtual seas of the internet. Global partnerships building vessels together is unfortunately out of trend so the GEO flag is flying less in real infrastructures. Virtual and real worlds are more and more merging. So for the next 10 years many more journeys shall hiss this flag higher and more constantly. Modern technology is helping to form a global fleet of Earth Observation actions and GEO will provide the common flag to sail under. Ships will have to be built by GEO members and partner organisations, who should all carry the GEO flag visibly.

GEO delivers by helping this observation fleet to efficiently monitor the Earth on common interests for one global picture that is as crisp and detailed as possible all over the globe. This challenge calls for involving all monitoring activities and developing partnerships to get many partners to sail under a common flag on a common mission. Finland is having a very diverse set of small vessels in very many disciplines already active in many partnerships and it will encourage all to sail under the GEO flag. Especially carbon and GHG observations, which are so prominently important for managing climate change mitigation, will have to build a observation network under a common flag and we wish for all GEO members to join it. Also atmospheric composition, forests and cryosphere monitoring deserve more global efforts.

GEO Success is in the size of these networks, in the data amounts they can produce and especially in the amount of application that the data experiences. By tracking these indicators GEO can wave its flag more consciously. Finland will sail its observation fleet under the GEO flag in the next decade and will help in building global fleets for at least carbon and cryosphere observations. Let's all fly with GEO colors.