

**CEOS Formal Statement to the  
GEO Mexico City Ministerial Summit  
by Dr. Alex Held, 2015 CEOS Chair Representative  
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)**

**Mister Chairman**, Distinguished Guests, on behalf of the Chair of the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS), it is an honour for me to give this statement, coming as it does at the closing of one decade of the important CEOS-GEO relationship, and the dawning of an exciting new one.

Earth observations from space provide the only comprehensive, global, long-term understanding of the Earth system and how it changes. Satellite data significantly augments the accuracy and quality of information derived from other sources of Earth Observation data, leading to improved scientific understanding, better informed decision-making, cost savings and greater societal benefits, and for that reason it is a foundation for all GEO activity.

Through the major sustained investments made by its 55 Agencies that include the largest space agencies in the world and major stakeholders users of satellite data, CEOS coordinates the availability of satellite data to GEO. As of November 2015, CEOS Agencies have over 130 Earth observation satellites in orbit, and CEOS was by far the largest provider of data to GEO.

The coordination role that CEOS plays benefits GEO in many ways: it makes satellite observation of the Earth more cost effective for individual governments; enables more comprehensive observation of the Earth system; enables more data to be made available for more users, a significant portion of it at no cost; and ensures important data gaps are closed. By working together through CEOS, we are able to bring the potential benefits of satellite data to all nations, space-faring or not.

GEO's ability to convene and connect all players, across the complete value chain is its core strength. It is the means by which the comprehensive satellite data we provide is translated into products that deliver impact in the hands of those tackling big issues like sustainable development, disaster risk reduction and climate change.

So it is my pleasure to express CEOS's full support for the *GEO Strategic Plan 2016-2025*. In our view, this plan lays a very strong foundation and promises a bright future for the next decade of GEO. The emphasis it places on strengthening GEO's convening role is laudable. We are committed to further increasing our already significant contributions to the future success of GEO, and encourage others to do the same.