

Our Ref: 2013-86/GEO/AfriGEOSS

GEO Principals

Geneva, 30 July 2013

Dear GEO Principals,

You may recall that the GEO-IX Plenary, in November 2012, fully endorsed the AfriGEOSS initiative, and that several GEO Members and Participating Organizations expressed their willingness to participate.

The main target of AfriGEOSS is to link current GEO activities with existing capabilities and initiatives in Africa in order to enhance the region's capacity for producing, managing and using Earth observations. You can refer to Document 10, GEO-IX, attached for addition information.

The Plenary also acknowledged that the initiative would provide the necessary framework for coordination across Africa, and recognized the need to link AfriGEOSS to on-going bilateral and/or multilateral initiatives so that these could be better leveraged, exploiting synergies and minimizing duplication.

Based on the endorsement by Plenary, a Working Group has started to put AfriGEOSS into practice; the Group includes representatives from GEO African Member countries covering all African regions, as well as the GEO Secretariat. The Working Group, in the next few months, will develop a high-level Implementation Plan for AfriGEOSS, addressing both the infrastructure and the services/application components, based on sub regional networks that will form the backbone of a regional (continental) network and, in parallel, will define an appropriate coordination framework. The Working Group is now gathering information on initiatives and projects that currently exist and is also taking actions to involve the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Union, in order to leverage their initiatives.

The Group agreed to officially launch the AfriGEOSS initiative on November 5, in Addis Ababa, at the joint AfricaGIS 2013 Conference and the GSDI-14 World Conference, see <http://www.gsdi.org/gsdiconf/gsdi14/>. The launch will likely be followed by a workshop to discuss the initiative in more detail, and to coordinate other contributions.

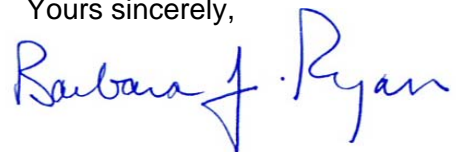
To ensure that the AfriGEOSS initiative will build on what is already being developed, we are particularly interested in establishing a clear picture of the activities that GEO Members and Participating Organizations (POs) outside Africa are supporting.

In this regard, may I ask you to share any information that you can provide on existing and/or planned activities related to the enhancement of the capacity of African countries for producing, managing and using Earth Observation data and information. It would be particularly useful if this information could reach the Secretariat ([secretariat@geosec.org](mailto:secretariat@geosec.org); cc: [grum@geosec.org](mailto:grum@geosec.org)) by September 13. By the same date, we would welcome your views on AfriGEOSS objectives and coordination arrangements.

In closing, we would like to ask all GEO Members and POs to support AfriGEOSS and to promote participation from other African countries, in view of strengthening GEO membership across the continent.

Finally, we would like to invite you to attend the Addis Ababa Conference, which is expected to be a great opportunity to jump-start this important initiative.

Yours sincerely,



Barbara J. Ryan  
Secretariat Director