

**Group on Earth Observations – GEO-XIV Plenary
Washington D.C., United States, 25-26 October 2016
Statement of Dr. Christian Feichtinger, Executive Director
International Astronautical Federation (IAF)**

The International Astronautical Federation (IAF) is honored to participate as a GEO Participating Organisation in the GEO-XIV Plenary. On behalf of the more than 300 IAF members from 66 countries around the world and IAF President Jean-Yves Le Gall (who is also President of CNES, the French Space Agency), I testify to the importance of global Earth observation to our members and the prominent role of Earth science/Earth observation in IAF activities.

IAF in March 2007 formally established a Subcommittee of its Earth Observation Committee to work closely with the Group on Earth Observations and foster IAF activities relating to the implementation of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS). IAF's GEOSS Subcommittee, currently chaired by James Graf of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory and Wolfgang Rathgeber of the European Space Agency, has been very active for the last decade in promoting GEOSS-related activities. Together with the European Space Agency and U.S. and European space companies, the Subcommittee co-sponsored a GEOSS/Global Change Seminar in connection with the June 2007 Paris Le Bourget Air Show. GEO's South African Co-Chair, Phil Mjwara, keynoted an IAF Plenary Event in connection with Climate Day at the International Astronautical Congress (IAC), October 2008 in Glasgow. In collaboration with GEO, the IAF GEOSS Subcommittee organized a Space Sensors for Climate Monitoring Workshop at UNESCO in Paris in March 2010. The Subcommittee has organized additional Plenary Events at IACs on a number of timely GEOSS-related topics: Global Climate Monitoring (Daejeon, Korea, 2009); Global Sea Level Rise (Prague, 2010); Monitoring Fresh Water from Space (Cape Town, 2011); Disaster Monitoring from Space (Naples, 2012); Space-borne Observations of Droughts, Desertification and Floods (Beijing, 2013); Cryosphere in Retreat (Toronto, 2014); and "Big Space Data" Driving Sustainable Development and Economic Growth on Earth (Adelaide, 2017). The GEOSS Subcommittee also organized IAC Highlight Lectures on "International Earth Observation Missions" (Cape Town, 2011); "The role of Space-based Assets in Providing Critical Environmental Intelligence," featuring GEO's U.S. Co-Chair Kathryn Sullivan (Toronto, 2014); and "The Great Barrier Reef: Assessing its Health from Space," (Adelaide, 2017). The Subcommittee co-sponsored a virtual forum with the global Earth observation community on, "Solutions for Barriers to Access to Application Services: Earth Observation Capacity Building," in connection with IAF's June 2014 Global Application Conference at UNESCO in Paris.

IAF formally joined GEO as a Participating Organisation at the GEO-X Plenary, January 2014 in Geneva, sponsoring a Plenary-related Side Event: "Opportunities in Global Space Applications: the IAF and GEOSS." IAF is committed to continuing its close relationship with GEO. We very much appreciate the active involvement of GEO's current Secretariat Director in our IAF GEOSS Subcommittee. As GEO addresses potential expansion of its engagement with commercial sector organisations, IAF is prepared to share its experience as a broad-based federation that includes government space agencies, intergovernmental organizations, commercial companies, professional associations, universities, and learned societies.