

***Integrated Earth Observation System***  
***ad hoc Intergovernmental Group on Earth Observations (GEO)***

*Formerly known as the Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Working Group*

**Concept Paper for the Inaugural Meeting**  
**1-2 August 2003**

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**Background**

As a result of the Earth Observation Summit (31 July 2003, Washington, DC), countries recognized the need to support:

1. The exchange of observations recorded from in situ, aircraft, and satellite networks, dedicated to the purposes enumerated in the Declaration, in a full and open manner with minimum time delay and minimum cost;
2. The concept of a comprehensive, coordinated, and sustained Earth observation system that will meet the collective requirements for observations, minimize data gaps, and maximize the utility of the system;
3. The establishment of an *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Group on Earth Observations (GEO) -- formerly known as the Intergovernmental Ad Hoc Working Group -- to prepare a 10-year implementation plan for a comprehensive, coordinated, and sustained Earth observation system, with the plan being available within one year for discussion and subsequent adoption; and The identification of strategies to improve observing systems and to advance the capacity-building of local scientific expertise in developing countries. This inaugural meeting of the GEO will begin the process to develop a 10-year implementation plan. Additional meeting information is provided in the following paragraphs.

**Overview and Objectives**

The 1-2 August 2003 inaugural meeting of the GEO will serve to facilitate international collaboration to advance planning for a comprehensive, coordinated, and sustained Earth observation system. The expected outcomes of the inaugural meeting are to:

- Reach agreement on the Terms of Reference;
  - Identify a work plan and schedule for preparing a Framework outline for an integrated Earth observation system by Spring of 2004; and
- Reach agreement on a framework for the 10-year implementation plan. Meeting participants may also begin to address elements of a plan, which may include:

- The initial architecture of an integrated Earth observation system.
- Requirements for an integrated Earth observation system to support planned information infrastructure at the national level.
- A systems analysis of the information infrastructures that exist at the international level and currently operate using global Earth observations.
- Gaps in the current observation system framework.
- The exchange of observations recorded from in situ, aircraft, and satellite networks, dedicated to the purposes enumerated in the Declaration, in a full and open manner with minimum time delay and minimum cost.
- Strategies to improve observing systems in developing countries and advance the capacity building of local scientific expertise.
- Specific country contributions to an integrated Earth observation system.
- Multinational organizational requirements from such entities as the Integrated Global Observing Strategy (IGOS) Partnership.
- A preliminary 10-year implementation schedule.

## **Participants**

**Participation for this first meeting will be by invitation only. Each government participating in the Earth Observation Summit is requested to identify one senior-level representative and their senior-level governmental alternate for this inaugural meeting of the *ad hoc* intergovernmental Group on Earth Observations (GEO). It is anticipated that the country representatives will possess a broad knowledge of national goals, interests, and potential Earth observation contributions as well as a broad knowledge of observation capabilities.**