GEO Global Forest Observations Initiative (GFOI) Status

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www.earthobservations.org www.geo-fct.org

Context

- FCT Task (Science, methods and demonstrations) established by GEO Plenary in 2008
  - Significant progress reported to Plenary (2009)
  - Stressed need to move from preliminary science and demonstration to more systematic observations
- Concept phase group established to define how to achieve systematic observations
- GEO Global Forest Observations Initiative (GFOI) Concept Phase Report developed during 2010

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Need for systematic observation

- Rapidly evolving policy context, notably through the Paris-Oslo and UNFCCC processes on REDD+
  - COP-15 explicitly cited the need for national forest monitoring systems and for observations (Decision 4/CP. 15)
- Information on both forest cover and forest carbon stocks is crucial for monitoring reduction of emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
  - comprehensive information needed for forest policy, programming, planning and management

Concept Phase Report Outline

- *Mission statement for the GFOI*
- *Introduction* – defining need
- *Current status and key activities of the GEO FCT task*
- *Operating context* – GEO role and essential partners
- *Key components* – main elements
- *Planning phase* – briefly describes next steps
- *Recommendations* – decisions put to GEO Plenary

Recommendations

GEO-VII Plenary was invited to:

- Take note of the significant progress made in the GEO FCT task during 2010
- Support the strengthening of the GEO FCT task and development of a Plan for the Global Forest Observation Initiative in 2011
- Support the establishment of a GFOI Task Force
- Recommend that the Plan for the Global Forest Observation Initiative be submitted to GEO VIII Plenary in 2011

GFOI Mission

- The mission of the GEO Global Forest Observations Initiative (GFOI) is:
  - sustained availability of satellite and ground observations in support of national forest information systems
  - support countries in the use of observations in national forest information systems – respecting national choices of data and tools
- GFOI will support long-term observation needs of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
  - will engage with other key users, notably FAO and IPCC

Key components of GFOI

- *Support to national governments:* consistent and comparable methods for individually developed and comparable national systems.
- *Observations and measurement*: regular and routine (systematic) observations are essential for effective reporting.
- *Methods and protocols for data collection, processing and integration:* development of methods and protocols for data collection, processing and integration.

Key components of GFOI

- *Continuing research and development:* promote coordinated research and development needed for continuous improvement
  - FCT activities will continue as a technical assistance role within GFOI
- *National capacity building:* to help governments develop national forest information systems, GEO will work in collaboration with other providers such as the FAO.

2011 Progress

- GFOI Task Force has had several telcons and will meet face-to-face in London in late June:
  - Australia, Brazil, China, ESA/CEOS, FAO, GEOSEC, IPCC, Japan, Norway, Tanzania, UK, USA, UNFCCC, World Bank
- Planning Team (Australia, GEOSEC, Norway, USA, ESA/CEOS) is developing IP content
- On track for submission to GEO Plenary

Issues to note

- GEO-FAO partnership at the heart of GFOI institutional arrangements
- New staff in appointment as foundation of Geneva Project Office for GFOI
- Major intergovernmental process expected in 2012 to provide strong launch for GFOI
  - Drawing on experience of weather (GOS) and oceans (GOOS)