

**Statement of the Director of the GCOS Secretariat to SBSTA 39  
Monday 11 November 2013, Warsaw, Poland**

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

As Director of the GCOS Secretariat, it is a pleasure to be able to report to you on behalf of our partner observing systems for climate. All of our partner systems are led by United Nations Organisations, supported by the International Council for Science, or are part of global frameworks for space-based and surface-based observations.

In my short report to you today, I want to emphasize the important role that SBSTA and the Conference of Parties has played in fulfilling actions identified in the Implementation Plan for the Global Observing System for Climate, since the plan was updated in 2010.

There have been quite a few building blocks for a GCOS in the recent past, and I would like to thank Parties who supported and contributed to these activities. Just to give you two light-house examples: there is ESA's Climate Change Initiative, which is generating products based on GCOS's Essential Climate Variable concept, and the Copernicus Earth Observation Programme, which will include an operational service giving access to information for monitoring and predicting climate change.

GCOS would also like to thank the United States Geological Survey and NASA for the successful launch of Landsat 8 on 11th February this year. This assures continuity of one of the longest, unbroken records we have of changes to our Planet's land surface.

But, I also have to raise critical issues in particular on the traditional surface-based networks:

- Surface stations are still in need of system improvements, in particular in the less developed world. Here our experience is that little money can do a lot.
- Ocean observations from fixed moorings have been in dire straits, as ship time to maintain these systems has become unaffordable for the network owners. Governments need to adjust budgets well in advance to master the financial burden and achieve a balanced not a piecemeal evolution of the observing system.
- A framework for terrestrial observations will need to be revitalized to ensure continued global coordination. Here partners in the United Nations system have to agree on a way forward which will benefit all sides.

Nearly 10 years ago, Parties of this body helped establish the GCOS Cooperation Mechanism, which has enabled donor funds to be applied to support continued operation of key climatological stations that were at risk, but which now needs to be reinvigorated to avert decline in essential climate observations – for the atmosphere, oceans and land.

Finally, Mr Chairman, SBSTA invited GCOS to report on its timetable for assessing the adequacy of global observations for climate. We have started the process of developing a report assessing the progress of global observations for climate, to be delivered for 2015, which will be followed by an implementation plan in 2016.

That concludes my statement today, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

