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Geneva, 19 July 2012

Dear Community of Practice Members,

I am writing to follow-up an earlier invitation from the GEO Task “Building a User-Driven GEOSS” (ID-04) for participation in the upcoming joint Science and Technology Stakeholders and Communities of Practice Workshop, to be held in Bonn, Germany from 28-31 August 2012. From the attached draft schedule you will see that there are two sessions devoted solely to the Communities of Practice, and several other sessions to be held jointly with Science and Technology Stakeholders.

The Communities of Practice (COPs) have played a substantial role in coordinating efforts in selected areas of GEOSS, and have served to galvanize much of the support we are now experiencing. A series of working sessions to explore lessons learned, best practices, and the value proposition of GEO – i.e. what is the complementarity of GEO and GEOSS.

Each Community of Practice will be asked to provide a 10-minute presentation that would cover the elements described above, as well as any other that seem relevant. The collective experience from the COPs not only needs to be marshaled for effective engagement through the end of our first term, but also for informing decision makers regarding the Post 2015 era.

There will be a series of breakout sessions on specific topics that would be designed to provide additional input to this effort. Topics could include:

- How has GEO made a difference to the management, science and user engagement of the COP's to date, if indeed it has?
- From the perspective of the COPs, what guidance is offered regarding priorities up to 2015 and then beyond;
- What new management structures and activities need to be implemented to improve the role of the COPs in individual communities in the future?

Additionally, the first face-to-face meeting of the ID-04 Task members will be held on Monday, 27 August 2012. You are most welcome to participate in this meeting as well. A separate invitation will be issued.

The Communities of Practice have been an integral part of the success of GEO and will provide an important voice for the future of GEO. They form a critical link between the science activities that comprise GEO and the Societal Benefit Areas that attract the attention of policy makers. I encourage you and your colleagues to participate in this important initiative.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Ryan
Secretariat Director