



Our Ref: 2007246/Health/GEO

Mr Keith Bull
Executive Secretariat
United Nations Economic
Commission for Europe
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva
Switzerland

Geneva, 29 March 2007

Dear Mr Bull,

On behalf of our Member governments, the European Commission, and our Participating Organizations, I am pleased to introduce you formally to the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), a new intergovernmental organization established in February 2005 following a series of ministerial-level summits. The ministers' vision for GEO is to realize a future wherein decisions and actions for the benefit of humankind are informed via coordinated, comprehensive and sustained Earth observations and information. To achieve this, GEO is charged with establishing a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) within the next ten years.

In creating GEO and formalising the GEOSS concept, ministers specifically identified "understanding environmental factors affecting human health and well being" as one of nine societal benefit areas to be addressed by the GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan. Through strengthened and more coordinated Earth observations, the GEOSS should improve decision-support tools for meeting the many challenges of human health management, including monitoring the harmful effects of air pollution.

In this context, GEO aims to provide direct support to the mission of the UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP) and its various bodies, such as the Task Force on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution (TF HTAP). The GEO 2007-9 Work Plan (enclosed) states that GEO should "(C)o-ordinate and facilitate appropriate activities and consortia that complement UNECE CLRTAP TF HTAP activities and pursue implementation of projects integrating Earth observation data on long range transport with other data, such as health and socio-economic data, to improve decision making." This support has, to date, included the co-hosting by GEO (together with one of the participating organisations of GEO, the World Meteorological Organization) of the TF HTAP meeting on Integrated Observations for Assessing Hemispheric Air Pollution, held in Geneva in January 2007.

EHLM Division
Date received: 03 AVR. 2007
Action/Attention: KRB