

Statement made by Trevor Platt on behalf of POGO

Beijing Ministerial Summit

5 November 2010-11-24

Madame Chairman,

We live on a Blue Planet, and the Oceans affect all the societal benefit areas of GEO, without any exceptions. It is only through the collective efforts of all nations that we can observe, share and inform ourselves about the oceans, and understand better their role in the Earth System. The ocean is the biggest reservoir on planet Earth of heat, of water and of carbon. Rates of change of these variables dictate the environmental conditions we experience on land, such as our weather and climate. We rely on the oceans for food, for recreation, for transport. But the oceans are under threat from a variety of causes, and many of their key properties changing at an alarming rate: the threats include pollution, ocean warming, loss of ice cover, changing distribution of marine life and ocean acidification. We now have the technology to observe the ocean in all its aspects, including physics, chemistry, biology and geology. We have the ability to sample the remotest parts of the oceans, from the Antarctic to the Arctic, and to reach the deepest trenches of the oceans, miles below the surface. POGO is committed to help build the capacity, in developing countries, to implement this technology and interpret its results, through the Centre of Excellence in Ocean Observations, located at the Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences, and through a fellowship programme sponsored jointly with the Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research, to name only two of POGO's various capacity development initiatives. Organisations with an ocean mandate have joined together under the umbrella of Oceans United, led by the Partnership for Observation of the Global Oceans, to work with GEO to ensure that the ocean observations take their rightful place in GEOSS for addressing all societal benefit areas of GEO.