



## MEDIA ADVISORY

November 20, 2007

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## **U.S. Group on Earth Observations Set to Announce**

### **Drought Monitor, Real-Time Air Quality Forecasts, Remotely-Sensed Data to Monitor Global Land Conditions, More Scientific Advances**

On behalf of the U.S. Group on Earth Observations (USGEO), U.S. Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne will announce a number of important scientific advances, including the North American Drought Monitor program developed by the U.S, Canada and Mexico. Developed initially for use in North America, the monitor is a resource that can be of vital use to other continents as well. Announcement will be made at a press conference of the intergovernmental Group on Earth Observations (GEO) on November 30 in Cape Town, South Africa.

Drought has become one of the world's most costly and far-reaching disasters. Direct costs in the U.S. alone average \$6-\$8 billion yearly. Drought can devastate nations and food security. Less known is its significant impact on disease and power generation. In the last 30 years, there is evidence that the impacts of drought are increasing worldwide.

Also to be announced: putting climate data to operational use; a new low-cost approach to disseminate urgently needed environmental data; real-time air quality forecasts to protect global public health; remotely-sensed data to monitor global land conditions; and support for more informed decision-making throughout Central America, and soon in Africa, in critical areas such as disaster management, weather forecasting and fire monitoring.

The U.S. is one of four co-chairs of GEO, which is leading the worldwide effort to develop GEOSS, the Global Earth Observation System of Systems. Turning the world into a new frontier, GEOSS is cutting across borders, sectors and disciplines to open a world of possibilities, enabling scientists, policymakers and the public to envision a world where more people will be fed, more resources will be protected, more diseases will be mitigated or prevented, and more lives will be saved from environmental disasters. Over 70 governments and nearly 50 international organizations participate in GEO at the ministerial level

**WHAT: GEO Ministerial Summit Press Conference**

**WHO: Dirk Kempthorne, U.S. Secretary of the Interior**

**Wan Gang  
Minister of Science and Technology  
People's Republic of China**

**Mosibudi Mangena  
Minister of Science and Technology  
Republic of South Africa**

**Janez Potocnik  
Commissioner for Science and Research  
European Commission**

**WHEN: November 30/ 11:00 AM**

**WHERE: Cape Town International Convention Centre  
Cape Town, South Africa**

**Advance accreditation on below form required by November 26. Telephone interviews may be arranged.**

## **Group on Earth Observations – Plenary IV and Ministerial Summit 28 to 30 November 2007, Cape Town, South Africa**

### **REQUEST FOR ACCREDITATION OF MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES**

Please submit this form together with a photocopy of your valid professional press card to the GEO Secretariat Press Office, by email to [press@geosec.org](mailto:press@geosec.org) or by fax to +41 22 730 8520, or to the South African host organization, by email to [nhlanhla.nyide@dst.gov.za](mailto:nhlanhla.nyide@dst.gov.za) or by fax to +27 86 681 0167. Please note that for security reasons **all accreditation requests must be received by 26 November**. You must still bring the required supporting documents with you to the conference centre.

**PERSONAL DATA**  
(Please type or print clearly)

Applicant's last name: \_\_\_\_\_

First name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_

Passport or Identity Document (ID) type and number: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth and location: \_\_\_\_\_

Media organization for which accreditation is requested:

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Head office location (city and country) \_\_\_\_\_

Please check as appropriate:  Print  Radio  TV/film  Photo

Applicant's permanent home address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City/Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_