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**U.S. RELEASES EARTH OBSERVATION STRATEGIC PLAN TO TAKE THE PULSE OF  
THE PLANET**

The Bush Administration today announced the release of the Strategic Plan for the U.S. Integrated Earth Observation System (IEOS). The plan will serve as the framework for the U.S. contribution to the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), a ten-year implementation plan involving nearly 60 countries to develop an integrated observation system to realize specific societal benefits. The U.S. hosted the world's first global Earth Observation Summit held in Washington, D.C. on July 31, 2003.

“This initiative reflects President Bush's leadership in linking actions to facts, and forming international partnerships for effective action on global environmental problems,” said John H. Marburger III, science advisor to the President and director, Office of Science and Technology Policy. “Earth is not just a passive stage where human events occur, it is a complex dynamic system in which humans play a continually expanding role. The Integrated Earth Observation Strategic Plan is designed to help us play that role responsibly. It takes advantage of new technologies for gathering, integrating, and communicating data on a global scale, and provides the basis for sustainable development.”

“The information provided from an integrated Earth observation system will change the way people live, work and play,” said retired Navy Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr., Ph.D., undersecretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. “Knowledge is indeed power and this system will give us the power to harness a greater understanding of the complexities of the planet.”

GEOSS and IEOS will facilitate the sharing and applied usage of global, regional and local data from satellites, ocean buoys, weather stations and other surface and airborne Earth observing instruments. The end result will be access to an unprecedented amount of environmental information, integrated into new data products benefiting societies and economies worldwide.

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The U.S. Plan is focused on nine societal benefit areas:

- Improve weather forecasting
- Reduce loss of life and property from disaster
- Protect and monitor our ocean resource
- Understand, assess, predict, mitigate, and adapt to climate variability and change
- Support sustainable agriculture and forestry, and combat land degradation
- Understand the effect of environmental factors on human health and well-being
- Develop the capacity to make ecological forecasts
- Protect and monitor water resources
- Monitor and manage energy resources

With weather- and climate-sensitive industries accounting for about one-third of the nation's GDP, the U.S. Integrated Earth Observation System will enable the U.S. to improve the accuracy, timeliness and reliability of weather information. Improving the capability to assess, predict, monitor and respond to hazardous events is key to reducing their occurrence and severity, and relies heavily on the use of information derived from well-designed and integrated Earth observation systems.

An interagency working group made up of 15 federal agencies and 3 White House offices developed the U.S. strategic plan under the auspices of the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) Committee on Environment and Natural Resources (CENR). The interagency working group was recently replaced by a standing subcommittee under CENR called the United States Group on Earth Observation (US GEO), which will continue to develop implementation and integration plans for the United States system, and to provide input into the implementation of the global system of systems.

For more information, including a copy of the plan, please visit: <http://iwgeo.ssc.nasa.gov/>.

#### *About the National Science and Technology Council*

The National Science and Technology Council (NSTC), a cabinet level council, is the principal means for the President to coordinate science, and technology policies across the Federal Government. NSTC acts as a “virtual” agency for science and technology to coordinate the diverse parts of the Federal research and development enterprise.

An important objective of the NSTC is the establishment of clear national goals for Federal science and technology investments in areas ranging from information technologies and health research to improving transportation systems and strengthening fundamental research. This council prepares research and development strategies that are coordinated across Federal agencies to form an investment package that is aimed at accomplishing multiple national goals.

To obtain additional information regarding the NSTC, contact the NSTC Executive Secretariat at (202) 456-6101

*About the Office of Science and Technology Policy*

Congress established OSTP in 1976 with a broad mandate to advise the President and others within the Executive Office of the President on the impacts of science and technology on domestic and international affairs. The 1976 Act also authorizes OSTP to lead an interagency effort to develop and to implement sound science and technology policies and budgets and to work with the private sector, state and local governments, the science and higher education communities, and other nations toward this end. The Director of OSTP serves as co-chair of the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology and oversees the National Science and Technology Council on behalf of the President. For more information visit [www.ostp.gov](http://www.ostp.gov).

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