

Declaration presented at the Global Launch Event of the International Year of
Planet Earth (IYPE)
UNESCO, Paris, 12-13 February 2008

Preamble

Recalling that the General Assembly of the United Nations has declared 2008 as the International Year of Planet Earth;

Considering life depends on a self-sustaining Earth system that is unique, diverse and ever-changing;

Emphasizing that all decisions on global sustainability should be informed by the wealth of existing and potential Earth sciences' knowledge;

Noting that the wealth of Earth-sciences' related information available on issues like climate, water and other natural resources, energy, health, soils, the ocean, deep earth, natural hazards or life itself remain largely unknown to the public and often untapped by policy and decision makers;

Convinced that the IYPE and the Earth sciences can play a significant role in promoting the sustainable use of Earth resources and can provide valuable contributions to society through the UNESCO-led United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and the promotion of UN Millennium Development Goals, and

Persuaded that creating respect for Planet Earth, raising public awareness of the vulnerability and potential of the Earth's components and mitigating natural hazards will provide the basis for a more peaceful, prosperous and fulfilled community of nations;

Therefore, we

1. *Urge* decision makers of all nations to make freely available and utilize the wealth of knowledge about our Planet Earth and to encourage the development of new knowledge and technologies for the benefit of developing and developed nations alike;
2. *Encourage* Earth science communities, as well as public organizations and private industry, to support this initiative for the development of new knowledge and to develop strategies that will reduce the impact of natural hazards and guide sustainable development to meet the current needs of our expanding global society and of generations to come;

By

- a) *Improving access to* Earth science knowledge through revised national educational systems and enhanced research capacity in Earth and Space Science institutions and universities;
- b) *Producing* global, digital and publicly available information on System Earth such as "OneGeology" and "UN Spatial Data Infrastructure" (UNSDI) projects;
- c) *Promoting* awareness of the structure, evolution, beauty and diversity of the Earth system and its human cultures inscribed in landscapes, through the establishment of "Geoparks", biosphere reserves and World Heritage Sites as a public tool for conservation and development;
- d) *Investing* in Earth monitoring mechanisms (both remote and in-situ) for the purpose of predicting large-scale changes in the Earth's spheres using and enhancing existing global Earth observation systems;
- e) *Establishing* an International Research Centre on Earth sciences for sustainable development, and
- f) *Producing* books, DVDs and other media tools that will make Earth scientific knowledge more accessible to the public and provide a lasting legacy for the IYPE.

***Make the Earth a better place for humankind -
Earth Sciences for Society***