

# LIAO Xiaohan at the Earth Talks, GEO 2023

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**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.3974/geodp.2023.04.14>

**CSTR:** <https://cstr.escience.org.cn/CSTR:20146.99.2023.04.14>

On November 6–11, 2023, the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) successfully held the GEO Week conference themed “The Earth Talks” at the Cape Town International Convention Centre in South Africa. The week-long event comprised the 19th GEO Plenary, the 6th Ministerial Summit, the 62nd Executive Committee Meeting, as well as nearly 70 side events and exhibitions showcasing Earth observation achievements. Nearly a thousand representatives from around the world participated in various activities during the conference week. The Chinese GEO delegation, organized by the National Remote Sensing Center, consisted of nearly 70 delegates representing the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, the China Meteorological Administration, the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Tsinghua University, Wuhan University, Tongji University, and other institutions. Director Liao, Xiaohan, Vice Directors Bai, Yuqi and Liu, Qinhua, and Secretary-General Liu, Chuang of the Geographic Big Data Working Committee of the Geographical Society of China were among the members of the Chinese GEO delegation attending the conference.

At the opening and closing ceremonies of the Ministerial Summit of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), co-chair and Vice Minister of the Ministry of Science and Technology, Mr. Zhang, Guangjun, delivered speeches and gave a special address on the topic of “Bridging the Digital Divide”. On behalf of Mr. Zhang, Guangjun, the rotating co-chair, Professor Liao, Xiaohan from the Geographic Big Data Working Committee of the Geographical Society of China and the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences, attended the 62nd Executive Committee Meeting and chaired the exchange sessions and closing ceremony of the Ministerial Summit.

Professor Bai, Yuqi, Vice Director of the Geographic Big Data Working Committee of the Geographical Society of China and a professor at Tsinghua University, was invited to chair the conference forum titled “Bridging the Gap: GEO’s Coordinated Approach to National

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**Received:** 15-11-2023; **Accepted:** 30-11-2023; **Published:** 24-12-2023

**Citation:** Liu, C., Bai, Y. Q. LIAO Xiaohan at the Earth Talks, GEO 2023 [J]. *Journal of Global Change Data & Discovery*, 2023, 7(4): 435–438. <https://doi.org/10.3974/geodp.2023.04.14>. <https://cstr.escience.org.cn/CSTR:20146.99.2023.04.14>.

and Global Engagements”. Guests including Ernest Acheampong, Capacity Development Manager at the GEO Secretariat; Rahanna Juman, Deputy Director of the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA) in Trinidad and Tobago; Marilyn Calvo Mendez, Geographer at the National Meteorological Institute of Costa Rica; Evangelos Gerasopoulos, Director of the Greek Earth Observation Office; and Shannon Kaya, Director of Transformation, Innovation, and Engineering at the Department of Environment and Climate Change Canada, shared their insights on the value, challenges, and feasible solutions for building national coordination mechanisms. Representatives from China, Ghana, Italy, and other GEO member countries participated in the discussions. The conference aimed to mobilize more proactive engagement from countries, bridge the gaps in national GEO initiatives, and achieve consensus on close cooperation at different levels including global, regional, national, and local.



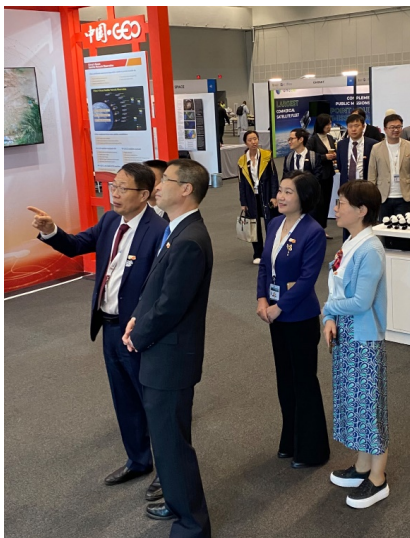
**Figure 1** Group photo of the Chinese delegation attending GEO Week 2023 (Cape Town International Convention and Exhibition Centre, Cape Town, South Africa, November 10, 2023)



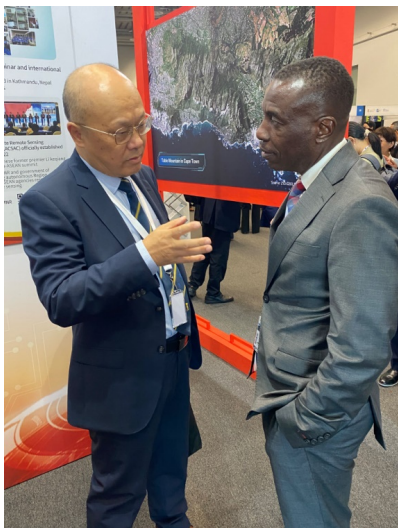
**Figure 2** Group photo of the closing ceremony

As the Secretary-General of the Geographic Big Data Working Committee of the Geographical Society of China and Professor at the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Professor Liu, Chuang attended the conference in her capacity as the Director of the China GEO Data Publishing Center. She was invited to serve as a guest speaker at the GEO Data Quality Ground Validation Subcommittee, where she delivered a keynote speech on how the Global Change Science

Research Data Publishing System ensures data quality through the data publishing processes of the *Journal of Global Change Data & Discovery* and the *Digital Journal of Global Change Data Repository*. She emphasized the importance of data content and quality for unlocking the value of data and promoting sustainable development, particularly as GEO enters a new decade of development focusing on intelligent development based on data. Attendees highly appreciated the practice of ensuring data quality through the publication of datasets and data papers. Liu, Chuang also delivered an interactive report on the application of open data to support the cluster of case studies on “High-Quality Geographic Product Habitat Protection and Sustainable Development”.



**Figure 3** Zhang, Guangjun, Vice Minister of the Ministry of Science and Technology, Gu, Xingfa, head of GEO Asia Pacific Region, Zhao, Jing, Director of the National Remote Sensing Center, Wu, Lan, Vice President of the Chinese Academy of Surveying and Mapping, visited the China GEO Exhibition area



**Figure 4** Professor Liao, Xiaohan and Mmboneni Muofhe, Deputy Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation of South Africa at the Earth Talks, GEO 2023



**Figure 5** Group photo of the Bridging the Gap Forum



**Figure 6** Experts who served as guests at the GEO Data Quality Ground Validation Chapter



**Figure 7** Liu, Chuang on Open data Support for “Habitat Protection and Sustainable Development of high-quality geographic Products” Make interactive reports on the application of case clusters

During the conference period, the main focus of the China GEO Data Publishing Center, the “Global Change Science Research Data Publishing System”, was showcased at the exhibition booth, featuring the *Journal of Global Change Data & Discovery*. The deputy editors-in-chief Ryan, Barbara J., Gu, Xingfa, Liao, Xiaohan, Liu, Chuang, and editorial board member Liu, Qinhua were all present at the booth. There was enthusiastic discussion among attendees regarding the strategic development of GEO for the third decade and the development of the journal.



**Figure 8** Liu, Chuang, Ryan, Barbara J., Gu, Xingfa, Associate Editors of *Journal of Global Change Data & Discovery*, Liao, Xiaohan and editorial board member Liu, Qinhua

During the conference period, Vice Minister Zhang, Guangjun of the Ministry of Science and Technology assumed the role of Rotating Chair for the year 2024 at the 19th Plenary of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), taking comprehensive charge of the work for the next year. The conference adopted the “Post 2025: Third Decade Strategic Plan”, the “Cape Town Ministerial Declaration”, and the “Youth Declaration”. Established in 2005, GEO is currently the largest intergovernmental cooperation organization in the field of Earth observation globally. China, as a founding member of GEO and representing the Asian region, serves as one of the co-chairs of the organization.