



# Declaration for a Geoscience Information Commons

“Knowledge is the common wealth of humanity”<sup>1</sup>

## *Preamble*

The Electronic Geophysical Year (eGY) joins with the International Council for Science, the World Summit on the Information Society, and many other bodies in recognizing that knowledge is the common wealth of humanity. We have a shared responsibility to create and implement strategies to realize the full potential of digital information for present and future generations. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond, access to digital information and new technologies for information integration and knowledge discovery will influence the free and productive development of societies around the world. Providing ready and open access to the vast and growing collections of cross-disciplinary digital information is the key to understanding and responding to complex Earth system phenomena that influence human survival. In the geosciences, as elsewhere, the issues of concern are as follows.

### *Article 1: Data access*

Earth system data and information should be made available electronically with interoperable approaches that facilitate open access.

### *Article 2: Data release*

Owners, custodians, and creators of Earth system data should work together to share their digital information with the world community, though in a manner that respects intellectual property rights and security constraints.

### *Article 3: Data description*

Providers and users of Earth system data and information should share descriptions of structure, content, and contexts to facilitate interoperability and the discovery of relationships within and between information resources.

### *Article 4: Data persistence*

Data and information about the Earth system should be preserved and sustained in forms that are both software and hardware independent so as to be openly accessible today and in the future.

### *Article 5: Data rescue*

Effort should be made to identify and rescue critical Earth system data and ensure persistent access to them.

### *Article 6: Common standards and cooperation*

Standards for interoperability should be identified, created, and implemented through international collaboration.

### *Article 7: Capability building*

Communities with advanced information technology and communications capabilities should contribute to developing such capabilities elsewhere to reduce the digital divide.

### *Article 8: Education and public outreach*

Students, scientists, decision-makers, and the public should be informed about and be enabled to contribute to our understanding and management of Earth system phenomena that impact human survival.

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<sup>1</sup> Adama Samassekou, Convener of the UN World Summit on the Information Society.