



REMARKS OF DR. LIGIA CASTRO DE DOENS  
ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL  
NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITY  
REPUBLIC OF PANAMA  
IN THE OCCATION OF THE EARTH OBSERVATION  
SUMMIT

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA  
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Dear colleagues,

Firstly, On behalf of the National Environmental Authority of the Republic of Panama, I would like to thank the kind hospitality of the people of South Africa.

As you may be aware, our country and the Mesoamerican region are home to the one of the most megadiverse areas of the Planet. We host the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor. Unfortunately, Mesoamerica is also heavily impacted by climate variability and change, including the interannual extreme events, which result in significant socioeconomic losses and delay sustainable development of our people.

Currently, in the context of several political and economic development processes, and the expansion of the Panama

Canal, our country is undergoing rapid transformations. These transformations, require timely data, information, and knowledge about the status of the earth systems, so that we, as a nation, follow a sustainable development path.

In this regard, and following the common but differentiated global responsibilities principle, our nation is investing in supporting those national and regional initiatives that will facilitate a better future for our people, our region, and the World.

In 2005, in the context of the United Nations Environmental Programme's 15<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Summit, the 33 Latin American and the Caribbean Ministers of the Environment agreed to establish a committee to mainstream Earth Observation into the activities of the Environmental Ministries. Currently, Panama is coordinating this committee, and with the support of UNEP-DEWA, we are implementing a capacity building agenda on geospatial technologies and the environment, satisfactorily addressing several of the GEOSS societal benefit areas.

More recently, in 2007, Panama also committed resources to enable a Regional Centre for the Analysis of Environmental Change and Climate Change, in response to the Iberoamerican Forum of Environmental Ministers. We expect that this initiative start becoming fruitful and could address the climate change societal benefit area of GEOSS.

With the establishment of SERVIR in Panama in 2005, our goal is to use the best technology possible to visualize and monitor our natural resources, protect our people and property, and take sound socioeconomic decision based robust and dynamic knowledge about the Earth Systems.

The SERVIR System represents a tangible example of GEOSS in action at the regional and local level and the benefits of

having a system that uses Earth Observations and predictive models to improve timely decision making and mitigate the effect of socio-natural disasters.

This System could symbolize a “good practice” about regional support for the continuity, and sustainability of GEOSS, and serve as example for the creation of a global network of Earth Observation practical and operational users, modelers and information systems developers.

I would like to particularly take this opportunity to thank USAID, NASA, NOAA, EPA, ESRI, CATHALAC and UNEP for their support to the Mesoamerican region. Also, I would like to announce that the Government of the Republic of Panama is making the necessary resources available for the longer-term sustainability of SERVIR, by donating a land of several hectares for the establishment of the adequate operation facilities. Also, we have committed human, institutional and financial resources to strengthen the System. I now, would like to invite the donor community to leverage human, institutional and financial resources to make this a truly example of multilateral collaboration towards sustainable development.

Nonetheless, we are here not just to highlight our own progress, but also to call upon the nations of the World who have remote sensing capabilities to strengthen their commitments and cooperation to those who do not, for at the end of the day the timely use of these technologies will help the developing countries attain sustainable development.

I would like to finish by quoting His Excellency, Martin Torrijos Espino, President of the Republic of Panama, during the inauguration of SERVIR in February 2005:

“FROM NOW ON, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO IMPROVE HUMAN LIFE, IN FULL HARMONY WITH NATURE, WHICH IS THE MAIN ETHICAL OBJECTIVE OF ANY TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT”

Thank you very much...