

GEO MINISTERIAL SUMMIT

CAPE TOWN - 30th November 2007

Statement of the Portuguese Delegation

Portugal wish to stress in this Summit the importance of GEO's contribution to the integration of the different earth observation systems, allowing the implementation and maintenance of a global infrastructure to support sustainable development.

Portugal is committed to this concept and to this Group from the beginning, participating in the Committees and also in the Working Group related with tsunamis.

Among some other activities regarding earth observation, within the European Union we are involved in the GMES initiative, which can be considered as an important contribution to GEO.

We also cooperate in some GEO' activities with several developing countries, namely in Africa, mostly addressing capacity building needs.

As member of GEO and while assuming the Presidency of the European Union Council at present, Portugal feels obliged to report to this ministerial summit on a initiative that is being organised under this Presidency and we expect that will have a strong relation to the future development of GEOSS.

As many of the participants in this meeting may be aware, African stakeholders have already called upon the EU to plan the extension of GMES to African users, in a declaration signed in Maputo, last year.

The Portuguese EU Presidency is currently organising, with the collaboration of the European Commission, ESA and EUMETSAT, an event on "Space for Development: the case of GMES and Africa", to be held in Lisbon next December 7th, just before the Europe-Africa Summit.

This event intents to be an answer to the Maputo Declaration, concerning the development of what could be called the "GMES Africa".

The main objective of this event is to launch a process for the extension of GMES services to Africa, based on a long term dialogue among European and African stakeholders and users involved, leveraging on existing relevant initiatives, projects and programmes for maintaining and building earth observation capacities in Africa.

While strengthening the international dimension of GMES, this initiative aims also to consolidate both the European and African contributions to GEOSS.

Is, therefore, expected to benefit from, and to contribute to the development of GEOSS, exploring the various links to a harmonious integration of both GMES and a future "GMES Africa" into the dynamics of GEOSS.

In this context, Portugal is committed to contribute, both to GMES and to GEOSS, fully supporting the Cape Town proposed Declaration, and hopes to work together with all the members of this Group, in the framework of "GEOSS 10 year Implementation Plan".

Thank you.

Head of Portuguese Delegation
Adérito Serrão