



Group on Earth Observations (GEO)
Beijing Ministerial Summit
5 November 2010
Switzerland

Honourable ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of Switzerland, I would like to thank Minister Wan and our hosts of the People's Republic of China for their hospitality to us here in Beijing and for the excellent organisation of this event.

As you know, Switzerland engaged in GEO from the very beginning, and supports the ongoing GEO process to establish a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS). Switzerland is proud to host the GEO Secretariat office at the WMO headquarters in Geneva – a location which creates valuable synergies with WMO and the many other international organizations located in Geneva.

Today, we are here to review the first 5 years of implementation of GEOSS, as well as to make important decisions for the future implementation until 2015 and even beyond. The **Report on Progress 'Observe – Share – Inform'**, as well as the exhibition, demonstrate impressively the achievements of GEO over the last years. We would like to particularly highlight the establishment of GEONetCast, the strengthening of the satellite-based component of the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS) by a well-coordinated response of all space agencies worldwide to the GCOS Implementation Plan, the GEO projects to understand environmental factors affecting human health and well-being (eg. aeroallergens), the progress in the implementation of the GEOSS Common Infrastructure (GCI), the Global Forest Observation Initiative as well as the GEO Biodiversity Observation Network (GEO BON).

Despite of these impressive success stories, it is import at this mid-term point to carefully evaluate the GEOSS implementation. Switzerland therefore very much welcomed receiving the **Mid-term Evaluation Report** here at GEO-VII which assesses GEO's accomplishments and shortfalls in the first 5 years of implementation. It clearly addresses some of the challenges for GEO, in particular

- The voluntary governance structure of GEO, which has so far been successful for advancing GEOSS, but we are aware that careful attention has to be given to the availability of sustainable resource commitments from Members and Participating Organizations to GEOSS.

- The proper crediting of contributing components. Here, we are pleased to already see substantial improvements since the last Ministerial Meeting in 2007 and we would like to encourage the GEO Secretariat to continuously treat this point with utmost importance.

Switzerland welcomes the **Beijing Declaration** presented by Vice Minister Cao. It includes many central themes for the coming years, for example:

- The need of all Member States to take the necessary measures to sustain and enhance both in-situ and space-based observation systems in all nine GEO Societal Benefit Areas.
- The importance to promote and advance the implementation of the GEOSS Data Sharing Principles.
- Finally, the importance to establish national and regional GEO coordination mechanism, to mobilize the numerous individual contributions as a bottom-up process.

Ministers, Delegates, Ladies and Gentleman,

Switzerland supports these central themes for the coming years and endorses the **Beijing Declaration**.

In closing, we would like to thank the Director and the staff of the GEO Secretariat for their excellent and dedicated work in assisting us in reaching our goals, towards the GEO Vision of *'realizing a future wherein decisions and actions for the benefit of humankind are informed by coordinated, comprehensive and sustained Earth observations and information'*.

Thank you for your attention.