

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen

In space all countries are small, but only a few small countries have understood this. Norway's use of space depends on functioning international collaborations.

GEO is an eminent example of a well functioning international collaboration and Norway gives its full support to the Declaration presented at this meeting. Norway is also impressed by the progress already achieved and will continue to support GEO.

Norway has had to build its capacity from scratch over few years. This has only been possible through an active participation in the different European Earth Observation initiatives and bilateral collaboration with several countries.

Norway has therefore significant experience in climbing the steep hill of capacity-building, we will gladly share this experience with countries on the verge of beginning this ascent.

Norway's large ocean areas to the far north are ideally suited for satellite monitoring, but the value of this monitoring is greatly reduced without Earth based verification and validation. However, in-situ measurements by themselves are essential components of GEO.

Norway's main focus has been on marine and polar research and applications. We have recently initiated a programme looking into the importance of snow and ice in the understanding of global climate change.

Our Ground Stations on Svalbard and in Antarctica are important components in GEO and GEOSS, we will continue to develop these facilities for the common good.

Norway will specifically look into the possibilities for extending the collaboration on space application for marine issues with our hosts, as well as other Countries in the region.

Space is not the only answer for the important challenges we face, but none of these issues can be resolved without the use of space. GEO is an essential tool for this.

Thank You.