

Statement of Italy
at Beijing Ministerial Summit of the Group on Earth Observations
(5 November 2010)

Mr Chairman,
Honourable Minister Wan Gang,
Honourable Ministers,
Honorable Governmental Representatives
Distinguished delegates and participants,

The Italian Delegation wishes to express its gratitude to the Government of China for the excellent organisation of the GEO VII and of this Ministerial Summit. The hospitality is remarkable and has allowed us to reinforce our common feeling with your country as well as the vision of GEO and the way forward.

Mr Chairman,

Italy has been among the Countries which contributed to the birth of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) in 2002. We have always been supporting this initiative politically, financially, and in kind, through the provision of expertise and know-how. We definitely reaffirm the interest of the Italian Government in a global programme striving to combine remote sensing with in-situ data to improve cost effectiveness and to maximise the use of every kind of Earth observations data, products and services by an ever increasing number of stakeholders. Italy believes that this approach is strategic in meeting urgent global challenges such as the many disasters we all face daily, the management of natural resources, the climate evolution, the desertification and the biodiversity changes.

The Italian space programme COSMO-SkyMed represents our main contribution to the space component of the Global Earth Observation Systems of Systems (GEOSS). The success so far achieved with our partners in this programme, Argentina and France, will open new opportunities and services, in particular in favour of the less favoured countries. It is a major duty for us to work **with and for** these countries as a precise goal of our national Cooperation activity. Typical is the example of the Italian Space-base in Malindi, Kenya, where we collaborate with national local experts providing a fundamental support to servicing different satellites since 25 years while integrating this activity with high quality Capacity Building performed and in Kenya and in Italy. I invite the honourable delegates to visit the Italian Space Agency corner in the Exhibition area.

As for the non-space component, which Italy considers equally important as the space one for evident reasons, we also contributed to the first round of Pilot

Projects by providing access to our own key Environmental Data Sets and Information Services. Through the joint coordination of ISPRA, the National Institute for Environmental Research, and the National Research Council, we will continue to improve these contributions, by promoting cooperation with willing partners in neighbouring regions. We also bring our well known expertise in the field of disaster prevention and management, mercury effects on different environmental ecosystems, geo-hazards, such as landslides, earthquakes and volcanism.

An example is the Italian Landslide Inventory, a national flagship project which uses in situ and aerial photos, already shared within Europe, presented in the EuroGEOsurveys booth, while you will also find several GEO relevant projects with Italian leaders or partners in the European Commission booth.

Mr Chairman,

Italy gives strong value to the results of the Mid-Term Evaluation of GEOSS implementation and we recognize the achievements so far, as well as the great challenges ahead, political, technical and organizational.

While keeping the voluntary nature of GEO, we do consider globally necessary to increase our efforts in: coordinating our earth observation resources and systems; creating stronger user communities to secure the user pull necessary to enlarge markets for integrated satellite and in situ services which will allow to create new jobs; increasing the capabilities for systems interoperability and, finally, in improving the way we communicate our efforts as proven by this important Ministerial.

Last but not least, we all need to strengthen the “political commitment” at country level showing the potentiality which GEO is able to provide and already provides.