

GEO Ministerial Session

Intervention of the Italian Head of Delegation

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues, dear friends of the Swiss Government

It is with great pleasure that, on behalf of the Italian Government, I am here to express the interest that Italy has always had for GEO.

With the political responsibility of the Italian Ministry of the Environment Land and Sea and of the former Minister Corrado Clini who regrets not to be here today due to unexpected institutional duties, Italy has been among the GEO founders in 2003 in Washington D.C. and hosted the first preparatory meeting in November 2003 in Baveno. On this occasion there were identified the grounds for the final establishment of GEO in Bruxelles in 2005.

The present Ministerial meeting is particularly important as we are concluding GEO 1 and moving to GEO 2. We are still convinced that GEO can be a fundamental tool to support decision makers and a wide variety of users, from the public to the private sectors which can in turn benefit from GEO and create further added value, e.g. environmental assessments and reporting, resource mapping, early warning systems, risk and investment analysis for the industrial and insurance sectors, and so on.

This Ministerial Session demonstrates that the original vision was a good one and it represents a success in terms of scientific, technical and policy outcomes. Less in terms of the attendance of national delegations vis-à-vis the 89 Member Countries.

It is worthwhile to point out that the EU has been strategic for the GEO success thanks to the Commission structure and its competencies and commitment.

Italy is proud to contribute to this success with a growing number of research institutions, their motivated experts and professionals working within EU programs and with other global players. A greater further commitment will be provided also in the Executive Committee where we will seat again.

In fact, year by year, the Italian contributions by CNR, ISPRA, INGV, CMCC, CIMA and key Universities have increased in specific SBAs, in cross cutting areas and in new initiatives responding to identified gaps such as the Global Network for Observations and Information in Mountain Environments, launched by Italy and Chile, ICIMOD and many other partners.

Today we face the start of a new era for the organization of GEO which after the first decade needs to clarify **where** to go, **how** and **with which internal structure and guidance**. We therefore endorse and support the continuation of GEO and GEOSS to 2025 recognizing the positive value of this choice.

Earth Observations are ever more necessary for a better understanding of climate changes and for a knowledge based decision making on several global sustainable development issues. We need to move towards greener economies, more resilient and healthier societies. We need to ensure food, water and energy security, sustainable land use and livable cities. GEO can help in this path.

Data sharing and efficient information systems, **built with and for clearly identified users**, are fundamental for the success of GEO.

On this, but not only, GEO and COPERNICUS need to work more closely together.

The next decade will be strategic to achieve these goals also in partnership with less developed countries as climate and its effects are global.

With the right combination of ambition and pragmatism, GEO can be a great path finder and a very useful “nest” where ideas, activities and services may start their life and get to maturity before being transferred to other entities, including UN agencies, institutionally identified to go ahead in the work paved by GEO.

So far the GEO structure has lived up to the pioneering spirit of its founders and I am proud to be one of them: we will see if it will be necessary to revise the present governance according to the evolution of the tasks and the duties to be decided for the next decade. Probably new more committing initiatives will be required.

After its first cycle, a new more ambitious trajectory is needed: a deeper commitment of every member country will be necessary to ensure the success. Be sure that Italy will be on board to continue to support these efforts and we confirm our endorsement to the Geneva Declaration.

Thank you for your kind attention.