

Contribution of Belgium to the GEO Plenary X - Geneva – 15-16 Januari 2014

Agenda point 6: *Formal statements from Members and Participating Organisations on key events and activities. (related to GEOSS implementation, max 3 min.)*

Statement by Ambassador Bertrand de Crombrugghe, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Belgium to the Office of the United Nations and the other International Organizations in Geneva

Madame Chair,
Your Excellency's,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to thank the Swiss Government as well as the Secretariat of GEO for hosting and organizing this plenary session and Ministerial Summit.

Since long my country has been deeply involved in earth observation as we had have our own national research programme for observation by satellite for more than 29 years. Furthermore Belgium is very actively involved in international programmes with the ESA and EUMETSAT and participates in bilateral programmes with France for SPOT and for PLEIADES or with Argentina for SAOCOM.

Last year PROBA-V, an ESA satellite financed by Belgium, has been successfully launched. For those who might not know PROBA-V is the follow-up programme of SPOT VEGETATION and as such continues the more than 15 years of SPOT VEGETATION data series. Meanwhile this new satellite is fully operational and delivers very promising results.

With improved mission characteristics compared to the SPOT VEGETATION mission, PROBA-V will deliver on a 2 day basis data from the whole world at a resolution of 1/3km and even better. It gives us the capacity to monitor the evolution of vegetation on a day to day basis throughout the world and to make accurate worldwide agricultural forecasts. It is therefore a very powerful instrument for development cooperation and food security policy. With the long-time series of VEGETATION data it also contributes to climate change research in the domains of land cover and desertification.

The PROBA-V data, which is a contributing mission to the European Copernicus programme, will deliver together with others data to the GEOGLAM initiative through the FP7 SIGMA project which we fully support.

But like any satellite PROBA-V has a limited lifetime and will stop delivering data in 2018!

Belgium is well aware of the importance of the benefits that the VEGETATION mission brings to the world. Therefore we would like to invite other member states or partners from all over the world to explore the possibility to contribute to a successor for the PROBA-V mission. Time is ticking, 5 years from now is very near. We have to act very fast to guarantee the continuity of this type of data.

Madame Chair,
Your Excellency's,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As PROBA-V is a wonderful tool to support the monitoring of agricultural & environmental dynamics around the globe and as such contributes to the aims of GEO and GEOSS we are hopeful that the extension of its lifecycle will go hand in hand with the extension of GEO's mandate which we fully support.

In line with that we are looking forward to a successful adoption of the Ministerial Declaration tomorrow.

Thank you for your attention.