



**CEOS Chair 2016**  
**David Williams and Alex Held**  
**CSIRO**  
Tel: +61 2 6246 5718  
[Dave.williams@csiro.au](mailto:Dave.williams@csiro.au) &  
[Alex.Held@csiro.au](mailto:Alex.Held@csiro.au)

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**CEOS SIT Chair 2015-2017**  
**Stephen Briggs**  
**ESA**  
Tel: +44 1235 444 269  
[Stephen.briggs@esa.int](mailto:Stephen.briggs@esa.int)

**CEOS Executive Officer**  
**Jonathon W. Ross**  
**Geoscience Australia**  
Tel : +61 2 6249 5847  
[Jonathon.ross@ga.gov.au](mailto:Jonathon.ross@ga.gov.au)

**CEOS Secretariat Contacts**

**ESA**  
**Ivan Petiteville**  
Italy  
Tel: +33 06941 80567  
Fax: +33 06941 80532  
[ivan.petiteville@esa.int](mailto:ivan.petiteville@esa.int)

**EUMETSAT**  
**Paul Counet**  
Germany  
Tel: +49 6151 807603  
Tel: +49 6151 807866  
[paul.counet@eumetsat.int](mailto:paul.counet@eumetsat.int)

**NASA**  
**Christine M. Bognar**  
United States  
Tel: +1 202 358 2066  
Fax: +1 202 358 2919  
[christine.m.bognar@nasa.gov](mailto:christine.m.bognar@nasa.gov)

**NOAA**  
**Kerry Ann Sawyer**  
United States  
Tel: +1 301 713 7074  
Fax: +1 301 713 2032  
[kerry.sawyer@noaa.gov](mailto:kerry.sawyer@noaa.gov)

**MEXT/JAXA**  
**Chu Ishida**  
Japan  
Tel: +81 50 3362-4192  
Fax: +81 29 868-5987  
[ishida.chu@jaxa.jp](mailto:ishida.chu@jaxa.jp)

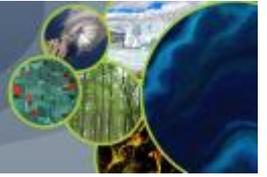
Dear CEOS Colleagues.

It is a great pleasure to invite, on behalf of the European Space Agency, your participation to the 31<sup>st</sup> meeting of the CEOS Strategic Implementation Team (SIT) to be held at the ESA ESRIN centre (Frascati, Italy) on 19-20 April 2016.

2015 has been a critical year with the emergence of several treaties related to Disaster Risk Reduction (Sendai, March 2015), to the Sustainable Development Goals (New York, September 2015) and to Climate Change (Paris, December 2015). It also marks a milestone for GEO with new strategic goals and a new governance model for the coming decade with potentially a much greater role for Participating Organisations, including CEOS. This convergence of calendars has created new opportunities that should be assessed during the next SIT meeting. What are the main decisions and most urgent needs from the international community that could be addressed by the CEOS Agencies? How should we organize ourselves to efficiently respond to the COP21 outcomes, to derive potential actions related to the SDGs, to address the next GCOS Implementation Plan, to partner with major disaster risk management stakeholders in GEO-DARMA?

The conjunction of these major questions to space agencies worldwide suggests that we take stock of our current activities and those which are emerging. I believe we need to ensure we can address those of highest priority among the emerging tasks, with the risk that others less appropriate might otherwise step into some of those roles. We need also to understand the best way to manage and implement our partnerships with a wide range of bodies. I see these as exciting opportunities, not as threats, and we should ensure we can capture them appropriately. I suggest then that at SIT-31 we might set aside some time to address these more strategic issues of priority and resources, while maintaining our full commitment to ongoing initiatives.

Following the 2015 CEOS Plenary, concrete measures must also be taken during the SIT meeting to progress with the actions related to the GEO Carbon and Water strategies. In addition, we will report on progress on the major GEO initiatives currently supported by CEOS such as GFOI and GEOGLAM and also on the two studies initiated by the CEOS Chair. In addition the CEOS 3-year Work Plan will be submitted for adoption.



In concert with the CEOS SIT meeting, please note that facilities will be available on 18 April for side-meetings. If you intend to organize such a meeting, we kindly ask you to fill the accompanying side-meeting request form and to return it by 15 January 2016 at the latest.

We encourage you also to prepare your travel and visa requirements, and to begin to consider your needs for local accommodation. More detailed information will be available in the new year.

Please contact Carmen Comparetto ([Carmen.Comparetto@esa.int](mailto:Carmen.Comparetto@esa.int)) if you have questions or specific requirements regarding your participation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow background, appearing to read 'SAR'.

Stephen Briggs  
CEOS SIT Chair