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The CEOS Plenary and a Farewell from the UK Chairman.

Dr. Colin Hicks, BNSC (UK), CEOS Chairman

More than 100 Principals and delegates from both international space agencies and UN organisations attended the 19th annual Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS) Plenary hosted by British National Space Center (BNSC) at the Cumberland Hotel in London. The Plenary marked the conclusion of the UK year under the chairmanship of the Director General of BNSC, Colin Hicks who remarked:



Colin Hicks addresses Delegates

"The year had gone exceedingly quickly, but much progress had been made, although there was still some way to go before the international structure of the Group on Earth Observation (GEO) and the role of CEOS would be fully resolved"



Lord Sainsbury encourages CEOS to continue its good work

The proceedings opened with a series of keynote speeches led by the UK Science and Innovation Minister, Lord Sainsbury, who

welcomed delegates to the Plenary, giving words of support to the work of CEOS and encouraging continuing close international cooperation with GEO developments. A point echoed by both the following speakers, Minister Xu of China (past CEOS chair) and Dr. Conrado Varotto of Argentina (the incoming Chair). The session was concluded by Colin Hicks who supported the statements made by the previous speakers and reinforced the need for members to be more proactive and for the troika of past, present and future CEOS chairs to play an increasingly important role.

The Plenary focused on the progress that had been made on the

international Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) Implementation Plan and the role of CEOS. The work of the CEOS Task Force, set up 12 months previously and led by the Strategic Implementation Team (SIT) Chairman, delivered its report with some 21 recommendations on how CEOS should adapt to the new GEO era. Delegates were pleased that Prof. José Achache the GEO Director General was able to attend the Plenary and comment on the recommendations presented. These recommendations were accepted by delegations present and welcomed by Prof. José Achache as a positive step forward in the CEOS effort to adapt and support GEO initiatives.

However delegations showed some concern at the contents of the new draft GEO 2006 work plan, which had been circulated for comments, as this implied that GEO was looking to have a much stronger role in directing the work packages by establishing its own working groups.



Delegates listen and debate topics at the Plenary

(to be continued on next page.)



Participants of the CEOS Plenary 2005 in London



17th Strategic Implementation Team (SIT) Meeting

Dr. Yasushi Horikawa

JAXA (Japan), Outgoing SIT Chairman

The 17th CEOS Strategic Implementation Team (SIT) meeting took place on 14th November 2005 at the Cumberland Hotel in London, The United Kingdom. The SIT-17 meeting did not follow the recent pattern of business of SIT meetings. Rather it focused on the following key topics which dominated CEOS efforts in 2005:

- The conclusions of the CEOS Task Force with 21 recommendations on how CEOS should adapt to the new GEO era;
- The latest GEOSS Work Plan from GEO;
- The way forward on the 'CEOS Implementation Plan for Space-based Observations for GEOSS' which has been recommended by the Task Force as a focus for an implementation-based approach by CEOS in future; SIT-17 focused on the Climate Chapter of this Plan which also served as the CEOS response to the GCOS Implementation Plan and is being developed in time for COP-12.

A key objective for SIT-17 was to develop a common understanding of the way forward for that Implementation Plan. And it was agreed that the SIT effort in 2006 should focus on 3 elements, and not just the Climate Chapter of the CEOS Implementation Plan:

- The CEOS Response to the GEOSS 2006 Work Plan: the January workshop would address the relevance of the CEOS-GCOS efforts to the GEOSS Climate SBA Work Plan for 2006 and beyond;
- The CEOS Response to the GCOS Implementation Plan: also serving as the Climate Chapter of the GCOS Implementation Plan;

- The CEOS Implementation Plan framework - the CEOS process to coordinate space agency programmes.

It was noted that CEOS has the opportunity to move to the next stage and be promoted from a forum for discussion to a forum which delivers implementation results through effective coordination of its members' projects, and that the CEOS Implementation Plan efforts in 2006 must also address the overall implementation process of CEOS, and identify short-term tasks from the GEOSS Work Plan which space agencies can commit to across all 9 SBAs.

After the two year tenure, the SIT Chairmanship was handed over from JAXA to ESA. I acknowledge the contribution of JAXA predecessor, Yoji Furuhashi, in his time as SIT Chair, and thank participants' great efforts in not only the SIT but also the Task Force set up 12 months previously. And I welcome Dr. Volker Liebig, ESA who takes over the SIT Chairmanship for next two years effective from the CEOS Plenary.

SIT-18 will be held in mid-March at ESA ESRIN in Frascati under ESA's chairmanship. ■



Outgoing and Incoming SIT Chairmen

(continued from Page 1.)

Delegates were reassured that this was not the case and that organisations such as CEOS would form the backbone of delivering such work packets.

During the year the UK also chaired the G8 group of nations conference at Gleneagles where the GEOSS Implementation Plan was endorsed, providing further underpinning to GEO and identification of 9 Societal Benefit Areas (SBA). In addition the UK had also held the Presidency of the European Union during the second half where supporting statements had been made regarding the need for sustained environmental monitoring to help have a better understanding of Climate Change.

CEOS has been focusing on common international requirements through its Working Groups and its

involvement with IGOS in areas such as environmental measurements, climate change and disaster monitoring, especially in the wake of the current spate of world disasters. CEOS has 21 years of expertise and experience, which can help to encourage the greater use of satellites to provide a timely response to such needs. Prof. José Achache acknowledged these activities, which fully support the efforts being made by CEOS in providing representation of the space agencies to GEO.

With significant progress being made in the CEOS/GEO interaction process the Plenary proceeded with reports on the normal business of the CEOS year, which was



Argentina accepts the CEOS chairmanship

(to be continued on next page.)

Report from the IGOS-P12 bis Meeting in London

Dr. Conrado Varotto, CONAE (Argentina), CEOS Chairman and IGOS-P CO-Chairman
Dr. Donald Hinsman, WMO, IGOS-P Co-Chairman

IGOS-P 12bis was held in London, UK, on November 17, 2005, and Co-Chaired by Donald Hinsman (WMO) and Conrado Varotto (CEOS/CONAE). The focus of the meeting was to review the role of IGOS-P in the context of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and to review the potential involvement of IGOS-P in tasks defined in the draft 2006 GEO Work Plan. The Partners welcomed the presence of the new Director of the GEO Secretariat, Prof. José Achache, and the members of the GEO Work Plan Team, Mr. Guy Duchoissois and Mr. Yukio Haruyama, who joined the meeting to present the results of the Work Plan process and status and the way forward proposed by the Secretariat.

The GEO Director expressed his opinion that IGOS and its Themes are an extremely useful source of resources for the development of the objectives in many of the 9 Societal Benefit Areas (SBA's) of GEO. [It should be noted at GEO-II held a month later on 14-15 December that IGOS-P was cited three separate times as an example of how a GEO Participating Organization provides valuable input to the GEO process]. Although IGOS-P Themes do not necessarily correspond on a one-to-one basis with the SBA's, they provided a sound foundation in the elaboration of the GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan. It remains to be agreed by IGOS Partners the way in which the IGOS Themes and Process can best contribute to the GEO process and this will be a major discussion point at IGOS-P13 scheduled for May 2006.

In this line, the Partners evaluated the possibility of expanding the IGOS Process for the elaboration of two new Themes in Health and Energy, two of the GEO's

SBA that are not addressed in any way by the current Themes and require a major new initiative by GEO Members and Participating Organizations. The expansion of the Partnership to include new members who could actively contribute to such new Themes was also discussed. It was agreed that the Partnership would offer to work with WHO to further develop the health Theme in 2006 both within the IGOS Theme process and within the GEO Task process. It was also agreed that the Energy Theme was less well developed and would require more scoping in 2006 prior to a decision on an Energy Theme proposal.

Following recommendations made at IGOS-P 12 held in May 2005, an informal Theme Leaders meeting was held on the day previous to IGOS-P12bis, in which it was decided to establish a formal Theme Leaders Group to provide a "think-tank" on strategic level to Partners and become a forum for cross themes collaboration, seeking integrated aspects of IGOS across themes, streamlining reporting, providing a focus for resourcing, strengthening dialogue with CEOS-SIT, help crystallize relations between IGOS and GEO. Afterwards, each Theme Leader made a brief update on the status of the Themes, full reports will be presented at IGOS P 13 that will be held in Geneva, on May 22-24, 2006. ■

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presented in more detail in the Annual Report by the CEOS chairman. Plenary business concluded with a ceremony in which the UK handed the CEOS chairmanship to Argentina.



Delegates enjoy the hospitality of Lancaster House dinner

Two official events were organised to provide a more relaxing atmosphere for continuing discussions and networking. On the first evening of Plenary a drinks reception was held at the London Science Museum, fittingly in the Space Gallery, and hosted by the Chief Scientific Adviser, Sir David King. On the second evening of Plenary and at the conclusion of Plenary business a dinner hosted by

Lord Sainsbury at Lancaster House brought a fitting closure to the UK year of office.



Colin Hicks, Minister Xu and Sir David King enjoy the Science Museum reception

The UK confirmed its commitment to supporting CEOS activities throughout 2006 as an active member of the CEOS troika (past, present and future Chairs). It was with great pride that we handed over the chairmanship knowing that we had played an active role in the history and development of CEOS. ■



Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and CEOS: Working together

Prof. José Achache, GEO Secretariat Director
Dr. Guy Duchossois, GEO Work Plan Manager

GEO has raised a lot of enthusiasm and support among the scientific and user communities within the 60 Member countries, the European Commission (EC) and over 40 international Organizations. It is expected to generate significant “added-value” to the current utilization of Earth observations. “Delivery” is therefore a driving goal for GEO and the numerous activities performed by the Secretariat during the second half of 2005 have been geared to define an ambitious but realistic programme of work or “Work Plan”. The implementation of this Work Plan will rely primarily on the efforts and trust of GEO Members and Participating Organizations as GEO is based on a “best effort approach.” It will require a high level of coordination, which will be provided by the Secretariat.



On 1st September 2005, Professor José Achache took up his duties in Geneva as GEO Secretariat Director

Starting from the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) 10-Year Implementation Plan and through a wide consultation of the GEO community (over 800 contributions from external experts were received and analyzed), a draft Work Plan for 2006 was generated, covering all 9 Societal Benefit Areas (SBAs) and 5

cross-cutting domains. Iterative reviews with GEO members led to improving the definition of individual tasks and clarifying respective roles of the Secretariat, GEO Standing Committees and GEO Members and Participating Organizations which, ultimately, will implement these tasks.

In parallel, the GEO Secretariat has engaged on activities of strategic nature, expanding and strengthening links with new and existing partners (WHO, IEA, OECD, DIVERSITAS, WMO), interacting with major national and regional Earth Observation initiatives (USA IEOS, ESA/EC GMES) and major organizations in charge of research and development programmes (EC DG Research, NSF, MEXT and other national organizations).

Of particular importance for the success of GEO are the relationships that the GEO Secretariat establishes with major

international coordination committees (CEOS, IGOS-P, GCOS, WCRP, IGBP and GBIF). In this respect, a major decision was taken at the CEOS Plenary in London in November 2005, affirming the strong support CEOS will provide for the realization of the GEOSS 10-Year Implementation Plan. To this end, CEOS will act as “the space agency forum and the primary source of space-borne Earth observations for GEO”. The concrete mechanisms and working steps which have been taken immediately to implement that decision, including the new role of the CEOS Strategic Implementation Team (SIT) and the re-orientation of CEOS Working Groups to ensure maximum support to GEOSS, are seen as very encouraging. Ensuring continuity of existing space observations as well as preparing new space missions (such as GPM-Global Precipitation Mission and Landsat follow-on mission) will be at the heart of the CEOS-GEO cooperation.

At the GEO-II Plenary on 14-15 December 2005 in Geneva, attended by some 250 participants, the 2006 draft Work Plan was approved as a living document subject to finalization in early 2006 in particular as regard the assignment of individual tasks to specific GEO organizations. The GEO Secretariat will work with SIT during this period to achieve a detailed description of the tasks (including deliverables and timelines) which will be implemented by GEO Members. This will be a real opportunity to demonstrate the efficiency of the GEO-CEOS cooperation.

Major progress has been made in advancing GEO activities in 2005 and paving the way for an efficient implementation of GEOSS in 2006. Continuous and increasing support is provided by GEO Members and Participating Organizations. We expect CEOS to play a key role as the focal point for the provision of high quality space Earth observations and thus ensuring the realization of GEO objectives to “improve monitoring of the state of the Earth, increase understanding of Earth processes and enhance prediction of the behaviour of the Earth system”. ■



IGOS Brochure

MEXT/JAXA published an updated IGOS Brochure in November 2005 on behalf of CEOS/IGOS.

Further information can be obtained at:
<http://www.igospartners.org>

2004 CEOS Annual Report

published in November 2005
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) publishes CEOS Annual Report every year as its contribution to the work of CEOS.



The Working Group on Calibration and Validation (WGCV)

Dr. Stephen G. Ungar, NASA/GSFC (USA), WGCV Chairman

Dr. Petya K. E. Campbell, JCET/UMBC (USA); Technical Secretariat, WGCV

WGCV held its 24th Plenary meeting in conjunction with the 16th Infrared and Visible Optical Sensors (IVOS) meeting in November 2005 at ESRIN, Frascati, Italy. Our hosts, Dr. Stephen Briggs and Dr. Michael Rast (European Space Agency), provided excellent facilities for a very productive meeting. WGCV commends the hosts for the efficient organization, which turned WGCV-24 into a very special venue, enjoyed by all participants. During WGCV-24 the group finalized a white paper, outlining the strategy of WGCV for calibration and validation of long term global satellite observations, entitled "Data Quality Guidelines for Satellite Sensor Observations Relevant to GEOS: Calibration and Validation Issues". The paper was presented to the 19th CEOS Plenary. The goals of the white paper are to: 1) establish common approaches to validation, calibration and data exchange formats; and 2) ensure effective cooperative use of all CEOS member space assets in addressing important global scale problems.

The next WGCV 25th Plenary will be held in Budapest, Hungary, May 9-12, contemporaneously with the WGISS Plenary. Joint WGISS/WGCV sessions are being planned to coordinate the contributions of both groups to existing (e.g. WTF) and new joint activities in support of meeting CEOS SIT prioritized GEOSS objectives.

The WGCV Microwave Sensors Subgroup has a new chair - Christopher Buck (ESA/ESTEC), who has succeeded Manuel Martin-Neira. The new chair Christopher Buck plans to review the ongoing activities of the member agencies and revitalize the work of the group.

The following six WGCV recommendations, accepted at the 19th CEOS Plenary, will enable WGCV to contribute significantly to CEOS directed GEOSS activities:

1. CEOS members producing land cover maps should include CEOS Land Validation Core Sites and either use the FAO/UNEP Land Cover Classification System (LCCS) or relate their legends to the FAO/UNEP LCCS.

2. CEOS participating space agencies should provide all internal quality metrics (e.g. Terrain Height Error Data) and external validation information for each of their products in a manner readily accessible through the Internet. Participating space agencies are also encouraged to provide a moderated "Known Issues" forum/website (e.g. MODIS quality assessment at:

http://landweb.nascom.nasa.gov/cgi-bin/QA_WWW/newPage.cgi?fileName=terra_issues).

3. Subsidiary products (such as orthorectified SAR amplitude mosaics and water body masks for SRTM) produced by participating space agencies should be made available as OGC-compliant data layers (WMS/WCS/WFS formats) for use in understanding and interpreting the data and for



WGCV-24 hosted by ESA/ESRIN in Frascati, Italy (November 7-11, 2005)

quality control of orthorectification and geocoding of any space borne dataset. The EO Data Portal project, ICEDS, will provide a demonstration of the utility of vector data derived from SRTM and its intercomparison with other public domain coastline and water body datasets.

4. CEOS agencies involved with SAR measurements are encouraged to use an established international site within the Amazon Rainforest (at UL: -5.03, -65.67; LR -9.12, -69.64 deg) as one of their radiometric calibration standards. CEOS agencies are further encouraged to support efforts by the WGCV SAR subgroup to establish and maintain a common man made calibration site for use by different SAR missions.

5. CEOS agencies should ensure that all satellite pre-flight calibration activities include a characterization of all appropriate sub-system components as well as an "end to end" system calibration. CEOS agencies should use SI traceable "benchmark" radiometric reference targets viewable by space based EO sensors to unequivocally quantify and remove biases between optical sensors. ESA will continue development of a Cal/Val Portal addressing the common format and content for information exchange relating to calibration and validation procedures.

6. All member space agencies should consider using validated space-based DEMs for georadiometric processing of EO data products. Quantitative evaluation of space borne DEM products should be performed and published as part of any future web infrastructure for validation. ■



The Working Group on Information Systems and Services (WGISS)

Mr. Ivan Petiteville

ESA/ESRIN (Italy), WGISS Chairman

WGISS held its 20th meeting in conjunction with its two Sub-Groups, Technology & Services and Projects & Applications in Kyiv, Ukraine, 12-16 September 2005. Approximately 30 representatives attended the combined Working Group and Sub-Group sessions.

Our hosts, Dr Oleg Fedorov, Head of Directorate for Space Programs and Scientific Research, National Space Agency of Ukraine (NSAU), and his highly dedicated staff, provided an excellent venue. In addition the participants were exposed to a cultural tour of Kyiv (the most beautiful town of the world according to Dr Fedorov !), and Ukrainian culinary delights. WGISS-20 was the last meeting chaired by John Faundeen (USGS). John's actions have contributed significantly to the WGISS involvement in major international initiatives like GEO.

Since the previous WGISS-19 meeting, significant progress and achievements have been reported on several WGISS activities by both sub-groups. In the session on the CEOP WGISS Test Facility project (to support the CEOP science community in the frame of the IGOS Water Cycle activities) we had a great presentation of CEOP by the Professor Koike (University of Tokyo).

NSAU organized a workshop on the State of the Art in Information Services and Earth Observation Related Research in Ukraine, giving an impressive overview of the local activities.

During the WGISS-20 Plenary, Liaison reports were presented involving International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), Geo Spatial Data Infrastructure (GSDI), ICSU Committee on Data (CODATA), Consultative Committee for Space Data Systems (CCSDS), Open Geo-spatial Consortium (OGC), International Society of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS), International Standards Organizations (ISO), Global Map Project, Climate and Meteorology and CEOS's Working Group on Education, Training and Capacity Building (WGEdu).

Dr. Charles Barton (Chair, Electronic Geophysical Year (eGY) International Committee - President, International Association of Geomagnetism and Aeronomy) proposed that WGISS consider participation in the eGY during his presentation to the group.

These liaisons allow WGISS to interact with and to better understand activities affecting Earth Observation areas of interest.



WGISS-20 Participants

Several discussions took place on the potential contribution of WGISS to GEO.

In the last year, there have been three leadership changes at the Task Team level as the terms of office expired for Bernhard Buckl from DLR as the Data Services Task Team Chair, Yonsook Enloe from NASA as the GRID Task Team Chair and Stu Doescher from USGS as the Archive Task Team Chair. Shinobu Kawahito from JAXA will now lead the Data Services Task Team, Dr. Li Guoqing from RSGS will lead the GRID Task Team and Kengo Aizawa from JAXA will lead the Archive Task Team.

WGISS-21 will be hosted by both EOGEO Hungary and HUNAGI (Budapest, 8-12 May 2006). ■

Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency (GISTDA) - as a CEOS New Full Member -

Dr. Darasri Dowreang, GISTDA (Thailand)

Dr. Pakorn Apaphant, GISTDA (Thailand)

Earth Observation technology considerably gains higher and higher momentum in almost every aspect of human being particularly in this millennium. Its significance is therefore of the utmost interest of the Royal Thai Government.

In the year 2000, the Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency, GISTDA, was established as a public organization under the Ministry of Science and Technology to take care of activities related to EO and relevant technologies for the

country. Remote sensing data acquired from GISTDA ground receiving station is being processed to high level products for distribution and research while long-term data are systematically archived. Currently GISTDA provides various types of products acquired from leading EO satellites to users worldwide. At the national level, the data have been used to serve several purposes. E-Delivery service is often utilized to support near real time activities.

GISTDA always realizes the importance of interoperability. It closely coordinates with

the organizations responsible for standardization at both national and international levels to appropriately set up common standards. As a core agency responsible for National Spatial Data Infrastructure Implementation, GISTDA is installing a data clearing house for geo-informatics for the nation.

Knowledge transfer and capacity building has been highly active at GISTDA as well. Several training courses are organized and offered to its domestic and international users. Collaborative programs, such as research,

Working Group on Education, Training and Capacity Building (WGEdu)

Ms. Yolanda Berenguer

UNESCO (France), WGEdu Chair

Sergio Camacho presented an overview of the 2005 activities of WGEdu to the 19th Plenary Meeting of CEOS. The Education Portal, which has been operational since early 2005, now features a simplified template for CEOS Agencies and Associates to provide meta data on educational materials. Plenary participants were invited to enrich the Portal's database by supplying information on their institutions' resources. The Portal (<http://wgedu.ceos.org>) is hosted by Peking University and the data content is maintained and coordinated by EUMETSAT and Peking University.

The draft Terms of Reference (ToRs) of WGEdu were presented for endorsement by Plenary. The proposed ToRs take into consideration the new focus of CEOS and reflect the intention of WGEdu to participate in and contribute to the GEOSS ten-year Implementation Plan. CEOS Plenary endorsed the general principles of the WGEdu ToRs and recommended that an assessment of the structure, duties and responsibilities of the three CEOS Working Groups be carried out by SIT Chair for better alignment of activities. This would further harmonize the ToRs of the three Working Groups, taking into account the targets of the CEOS Implementation Plan for Space-Based Observations for GEOSS.

The ToRs of the three Working Groups are to be finalized in February 2006.

The African Advisory Group (AAG), represented by Soulaye Wade (Vice-Chair), addressed the Plenary and reported the Group's interaction with the WGEdu and its participation in capacity building efforts in 2005, which included a training course in Kenya on the use of EO data for environmental assessment maps and three-day and two-week training courses in Uganda on the use of EO data in disaster assessment and monitoring. The AAG was created in 2003 in Stellenbosch, South Africa during the CEOS WSSD Module 1 (Education, Training and Capacity Building) workshop organized jointly with the WGEdu. The close coordination and joint actions of the WGEdu and WSSD Follow-up Modules, especially in training, capacity building and outreach, were emphasized both by Sergio Camacho and Gordon Bridge (WSSD Team Leader). In this context, Plenary participants were also briefed on the joint WGEdu/WSSD response to the implementation of the GEOSS two-, three- and ten-year Implementation Plan work targets.

Plenary was also informed that Ms. Renee Leduc Clarke (NOAA) had been nominated as the CEOS representative to the GEO

Capacity Building and Outreach Committee.

Lastly, Sergio Camacho proposed that Yolanda Berenguer (UNESCO) step up as Chair of the WGEdu and that Renee Leduc Clarke (NOAA) and Maurizio Fea (ESA) be appointed as Vice-Chairs. The 19th Plenary participants endorsed the proposal and the CEOS Chair thanked Sergio Camacho for his service as Chair of WGEdu. ■



Left to right: Sergio Camacho (UNOOOSA), Yolanda Berenguer (UNESCO), Colin Hicks (BNSC), Renee Leduc Clarke (NOAA), Gordon Bridge (EUMETSAT, WSSD Follow-up Team Leader)

academic exchanges and trainings are accomplished through several local universities. Research funds are annually allocated to several selected proposals.

Recently, Thailand is taking a serious step towards EO through development of the First Thai Earth Observation Satellite (THEOS). After the new window of opportunity has been widely open, GISTDA has been working actively to fulfil its goal. The new satellite instrumentation is designed and developed such that most future user requirements can be fulfilled. The development of this satellite and its associated systems is now well progressing with a number of important milestones already achieved. It is highly expected that THEOS will be ready for launch in 2007.

GISTDA always recognizes the value of international coordination and cooperation. It has entered into a number of international cooperation with regards to space related activities. The country is a member of the GEO and currently serves as one of the Executive Committee members. GISTDA recently has become a member of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS). Since accepted as CEOS associate member in 2002, GISTDA has actively participated in Meetings and related activities, especially for WGISS. GISTDA very much appreciates CEOS for giving a full support and endorsing the change in its member status. As a new full member of this prestigious community, GISTDA stands ready to commit with its strong intention to actively participate

in CEOS related activities and to contribute towards the community in the best possible way. ■



GISTDA Engineers and THEOS Instruments

Words from the CEOS New Chair

Dr. Conrado F. Varotto
CEOS Chairman Nov 2005-Nov 2006
CONAE (Argentina)



I take great pleasure in addressing you as the new Chair of CEOS for the period 2005-2006. Let me assure that the National Commission on Space Activities (CONAE) of Argentina is proud of adding its efforts to the challenge that has been posed on us as CEOS works its way into the era of GEOSS implementation.

I would like to thank my predecessor, Dr. Colin Hicks, and his staff, who have guided the process of change during the mandate of BNSC. Under his leadership, the Task Force set up to evaluate the situation of CEOS and its next steps into the future has done an impressive job in preparing the compelling proposal that was approved in the 19th Plenary, in London.

As Chair agency, CONAE looks forward to working towards taking the recommendations of the Task Force into reality. There is a long way ahead of us, which will require renewed efforts from all CEOS members and associates in order

to strengthen CEOS structure and allow it to develop within GEO as the forum for the coordination of space agencies activities.

As has been seen during the elaboration of GEO Work Plan, there is plenty of opportunity to take advantage of CEOS experience and coordination role to implement the tasks identified. Ensuring the capacity of CEOS to deliver will be a continuing effort for which the support of CEOS Working Groups and subsidiary bodies is essential. In this respect, the Strategic Implementation Team (SIT), while continuing its role in the interaction with IGOS and its Themes, has been assigned the leadership for the elaboration and coordination of a CEOS Implementation Plan for GEOSS, for which a schedule of work is already underway.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the excellent job done by JAXA during its two-year period as SIT Chair.

The strong involvement of their team in leading the activities of both the SIT as well as the Task Force has secured a sustained role of SIT, which we are sure will be very well continued by ESA and NOAA as the new Chair and Vice-Chair.

Also, I would like to highlight the significant contribution of the Secretariat, which provides for the continuity of the work between Plenaries. We have seen during the past years its excellent and hard work in finding a path for CEOS to achieve a strengthened role in the international arena, and we hope to continue it during the year ahead.

2006 is a year of transition, which will require renewed commitments from all of us to secure the role of CEOS. The participation of CEOS agencies in this process will be vital in achieving this goal and we look forward to working with all of you in this process. ■

Contributions for future issues of the CEOS Newsletter from the CEOS Members and Associates, and subscriptions to the CEOS Newsletter, please contact CEOS Japan Secretariat : ceos-jpn@jaxa.jp, or misawa@restec.or.jp <http://www.ceos.org/pages/pub.html#newsletter>

Meeting Calendar

As of January 2006

Activities	2005				2006									
	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
CEOS Plenary	▲ 15-16 19th Plenary BNSC, London, UK						△ CEOS Principals Meeting Geneva						△ 20th Plenary CONAE, Buenos Aires	
WSSD Follow-up Team														
CEOS SIT (Strategic Implementation Team)	▲ 14 SIT-17 BNSC, London				▲ 21-22 SIT-18 ESA / ESRIN, Frascati							▲ 19-20 SIT-19 Scripps, La Jolla, USA		
CEOS WGISS (Working Group on Information Systems & Services)							▲ 8-12 WGISS-21 EOGEO & HUNAGI, Budapest, Hungary					△ WGISS-22 NASA, Annapolis USA		
CEOS WGCV (Working Group on Calibration and Validation)	▲ 8-11, WGCV-24 ▲ 7-8, WGCV-IVOS ESA / ESRIN, Frascati						▲ 8-12 WGCV-25 EOGEO & HUNAGI, Budapest, Hungary							
CEOS WGEdu (Working Group on Education, Training, and Capacity Building)							△ WG Edu-7							
IGOS Partners	▲ 17 IGOS-P12bis BNSC, London			26-3/3 ▲ CEOP / IGWCO UNESCO, Paris		▲ 24-25 Cryo Workshop JAMSTEC, Yokohama	▲ 23, IGOS-P13 ▲ 22, Theme Leader Meeting ▲ 24, Geohazards Meeting WMO, Geneva					△ IGWCO Capacity Build. Indonesia		
Others	▲ 1-4 CGMS Tokyo	▲ 28-12/9 COP-11 SBSTA, Montreal, Canada					▲ 1-12 CSD-14 New York					▲ 2-6 IAF Valencia	▲ 6-17 COP-12 Kenya	
	GEO-II, 14-15 ▲ GEO-ExCom, 13 ▲ Geneva		▲ 9-11 GCOS Meeting Geneva			▲ 20-22 Clic Asia Japan								

▲ : determined △ : to be determined (Date, Host organization/Location) CEOS-related meetings are open only to designated participants.

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