

**Switzerland's Perspective on the Earth Observation Summit
31 July 2003, Washington D. C.**

José Romero, PhD

Senior Scientific Adviser, Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape

Gerhard Müller

Deputy Director, Federal Office of Meteorology and Climatology (MeteoSwiss)

- First of all we would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating the US Secretary of Energy, Mr. Abraham, and the US Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Evans, for organising this Summit on Earth Observation. The Summit is an important follow-up step of the agreement reached by Heads of State and Government at the G8 Summit in Evian
- We would like to thank you, Excellencies, for the invitation to participate in this Summit, here in Washington D. C.
- Switzerland is convinced that our understanding of the physical, chemical and biological processes influencing nature and humankind must be improved. These processes take place in terrestrial and oceanic ecosystems as well as in the atmosphere. An improved understanding will allow us to better develop our societies according to the criteria of sustainability
- The unique way to a better understanding is based on research and makes use of a systematic and integrated long-term monitoring as well as of state-of-the-art data analysis and modelling techniques. Where scientific uncertainty limits our knowledge, the precautionary principle should guide decision making
- We consider that this Summit will be a success
 - if it shares the worldwide efforts currently done through a number of initiatives to improve environmental research and systematic observation
 - if it strengthens the Integrated Global Observing Strategy (IGOS) Partnership and its implementation measures
 - if it opens the way for future negotiations in support of the integrated earth observation systems
- International cooperation on earth observations matters is a key element of success in this challenging task. We are convinced that this Summit will contribute to enhance this cooperation
- Switzerland is prepared to continue its effort in favour of the global observing systems and we reaffirm here our commitments to earth observation at the national level as well as at the international level
- The Swiss efforts include the Integrated Global Observing Strategy Partnership, as well as other initiatives including those involved in climate change. Special focus is put on the Global Climate Observing System as well as the World Climate Research

Programme, the Global Atmosphere Watch and the Voluntary Cooperation Programme under the umbrella of the World Meteorological Organization.

- Regional and UN bodies play an outstanding role in assessing and monitoring the state of the environment. We think here of the United Nations Environment Programme, with its project of an Intergovernmental Panel on Global Environmental Change, or the European Environment Agency (EEA). EEA has produced the first environmental assessment covering the whole European region, the so-called Kiev Assessment 2003. It is important that we take into account on-going efforts
- We would like to reaffirm, in particular, our commitment to the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security initiative, the result of a cooperation between the European Space Agency of which Switzerland is a member and the European Commission
- We know that human activities always will have negative impacts on ecosystems and on the atmosphere; earth observation has to monitor these impacts with the aim of helping policymakers eliminating the source of these effects; we think in particular of the emissions of greenhouse gases that are conducive to climate change
- At the same time, we recognise that the monitoring the state of our planet through earth observation helps improving policy making for sustainable development and the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
- We welcome the opportunity to agree on a number of environmental parameters and indicators to better assess the state of our planet in the framework of an international cooperation on earth observation
- We support sharing the information derived from earth observation with all countries in particular with developing countries, and to make this information available to the society in a transparent manner
- Looking at the outcome of this Summit, we would like to stress that Switzerland does not see this Summit as a forum where it will endorse new and additional legal commitments to be implemented neither at the national nor at the international level
- We would like to emphasize that the actions we consider and recommend here have to be implemented by the States according to their national sovereign decisions and requirements
- Finally, we would like to express our wishes for a successful Summit and we can assure you, Excellencies and distinguished delegates, that we will contribute to this goal.

Thank you for your attention.