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EARTH OBSERVATION SYMPOSIUM (B1)
International Cooperation in Earth Observation Missions (1)

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2016 ACTIVITIES OF THE CEOS

Abstract

The Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS) was established in September 1984 in response to a recommendation from a Panel of Experts on Remote Sensing from Space that was set up under the aegis of the G7 Economic Summit of Industrial Nations Working Group on Growth, Technology and Employment. This panel recognized the multidisciplinary nature of space-based Earth observations and the value of coordinating international Earth observation efforts to benefit society. Accordingly, the original function of CEOS was to coordinate and harmonize Earth observations to make it easier for the user community to access and utilize data. CEOS initially focused on interoperability, common data formats, the intercalibration of instruments, and common validation and intercomparison of products.

Since the inception of CEOS, the circumstances surrounding the collection and use of space-based Earth observations have changed. The number of Earth-observing satellites has vastly increased. As of January 2016, CEOS Agencies operate over 130 Earth observing space missions. Onboard instruments are more complex, and are capable of collecting new types of data in ever-growing volumes. The user community has expanded and become more diverse, as different data types become available and new applications for Earth observations are developed. Users have become more organized, forming several international bodies that coordinate and levy Earth observation requirements. In response to this changing environment, CEOS has also evolved, becoming more complex, and expanding the number and scope of its activities. In addition to its original charge, CEOS now focuses on validated requirements levied by external organizations, works closely with other satellite coordinating bodies (e.g., the Coordination Group for Meteorological Satellites [CGMS]), and continues its role as the primary forum for international coordination of space-based Earth observations. CEOS has played an influential role in the establishment and ongoing development of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS). Indeed, CEOS coordinates the GEOSS space segment.

In 2016, CEOS will have a particular focus on coordinating space agencies to support implementation of the three big global agendas from 2016: the Global Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Climate Agreement.

The current chair of CEOS, or his representative, will provide an update on key 2016 CEOS activities.