

A Week in Washington

I am just back from the GEO Plenary in Washington. We had a really good week; several things stand out

Firstly, we were able to take a delegation of 7 companies to participate. Generally, the feedback from those who were there was good and the whole event was noticeably better than in previous years; especially the side events which were much better organised and well-attended. Thank you to the GEO Secretariat for making this possible.

Secondly, we participated to the meeting between the GEO ExComm and the commercial sector. Massimo Comparini (eGEOS and EARSC director) represented EARSC in the meeting alongside Airbus, DigitalGlobe, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Harris, ESRI, Acclimatise and LocatelT. It was a good discussion and opens the way towards further and better co-operation between companies and GEO. I think EARSC can play a key role especially towards ensuring access to SME's which can otherwise find it difficult.

Thirdly, Monica presented our work on maturity indicators and on SDG's in 2 separate meetings. There was a lot of interest in both and now we look to see how we can sustain the work in partnership with GEO.

Fourthly, we (EARSC) were the co-organiser along with NOAA, USGS and ESA of a 2 day workshop on "Demonstrating the Value of Earth Observations". This was very well-attended and very well-appreciated. It brought together key experts from around the world to discuss different methods of assessing the value whether by economic means or by story-telling. Over the 2 days some 60 analysts discussed their approaches with a lot of insights emerging. A proceedings will be published and the group will continue with a meeting envisaged in Europe in around 12 to 18 months time. In the meantime we shall examine how links to GEO can be enhanced especially with regard to communications and outreach.

Fifthly, there were numerous informal meetings and discussions on many topics and many new contacts were made. The week becomes increasingly important as a networking opportunity as well as the chance to discuss specific topics with experts from around the world. Next year will be in Tokyo; we shall be there.