

Marc Paganini / European Space Agency

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Distinguished delegates, Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to express my gratitude to the CBD secretariat for giving me the opportunity to make an intervention on behalf of the European Space Agency.

I would like, first of all, to congratulate GEO-BON for the excellent work done in helping Parties developing their biodiversity observing systems, and to acknowledge the excellent work done by WCMC in producing such an exhaustive analysis on the use of EO data for monitoring biodiversity changes and tracking progress towards the Aichi targets.

In the recent years Space Agencies have become more and more committed in helping the CBD Parties at large, in improving their capacity to use EO data for monitoring biodiversity trends.

Access to high resolution data (typically below 30m) has often been highlighted as a key limitation by Parties. In 2008, after more than 30 years of Landsat exploitation, the US Department of interior decided to open its Landsat archive at no charge at all. This resulted in explosive growth of data use and in significant cost savings for environmental applications.

The success of the opening of the Landsat data archive has had major implications on the decisions of other Space Agencies. Free and open access to all taxpayer-funded satellites has become a "de facto" common practice amongst space agencies. This is the case for Landsat 8 that has been launched in February by NASA. Another good example is the free open data policy of the Brazilian Space Agency with their CBERS data.

This will soon be the case also for the Sentinel satellites of the European Copernicus program jointly managed by the European Commission and my agency. We are in the process of approving a free, full and open data policy for the Sentinel data. It is the subject of a Commission Delegated Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council, that will be reviewed next month.

The Sentinel series of the Copernicus program, together with the freely available data from other space agencies, will bring unprecedented observations for the biodiversity community. I would like to bring your attention to the Sentinel 2 constellation, which principal objective is the monitoring of terrestrial ecosystems. With its exceptional 5-day revisiting, 10m spatial resolution, 290km swath and its systematic acquisition of all land surfaces and costal areas, Sentinel 2 is expected to satisfy largely the biodiversity community.

With the COPERNICUS program, Europe is also committed to provide the biodiversity community with long-term continuity of observations. In 5 years, 10 years, 20 years from now, you will be able to receive the same type of observations. It is also a goal of United States to ensure the continuity of the Landsat mission on the long term. The lack of data continuity has always been a barrier for Parties to

15  
12:04  
14/10/13

invest in EO technology. Having such a guarantee on continuity of observations is a strong incentive for Parties to invest in Space.

Although there are many EO products available from the space agencies, they are not all to be considered as "ready for use" by the biodiversity community. There is a need for some additional "purpose oriented" processing in order to have products that directly meet the needs of the biodiversity community. In this context, the further definition of a limited number of essential biodiversity variables would allow Space Agencies to both prioritize the primary observations as well as the additional processing required. Having a limited and well specified set of EBVs is a necessity considering the limited human and financial resources we all have. In this context, I would like to acknowledge the excellent work done by GEO-BON in compiling these EBVs.

To conclude, I would like to emphasise that with the adoption of open and free data policies, the establishment of easy data access mechanisms, the development of "fit for purpose" EO products for biodiversity monitoring, the Space Agencies and the RS community at large have produced an excellent foundation for a wide uptake of the EO data by the Parties. But in order to meet the needs of the Strategic plan and to use EO data operationally in the tracking progress of the Aichi targets, much work is still to be done in particular in further defining the EBVs and their use in the context of the biodiversity indicators.

This is WHERE GEO-BON can really help. This is WHY we need GEO-BON.

I thank you for your attention.