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EARTH OBSERVATION: A STAKE FOR THE PLANET'S FUTURE

On July 31, 2003, Claudie Haigneré, the French Research and New Technology Minister, along with representatives from 30 States and a dozen international organizations, attended the Earth Observation Summit held by the US State Department in Washington, D.C. Referring to the meetings in Johannesburg (in 2002) and Evian (G8 in 2003), Claudie Haigneré insisted on the urgency to take solutions that would perpetuate the observation systems and the political commitment of France in this field. "Supporting countries from the South is also a major stake," added the French Minister. "Sharing knowledge and know-how is one of the most durable ways of having societies control their own development." Underlining that Europe has very early on been aware of this requirement in line with a real political responsibility regarding our fellow citizens, Claudie Haigneré expressed her desire that the GMES initiative (Global Monitoring Environmental System) of the European Union and the European Space Agency (ESA), convey "the European contribution to this global initiative in regards to Earth Observation". By making a joint statement, the participants highlighted the necessity to keep improving the coordination of national, regional and international strategies in order to monitor the condition of the Earth and better understand it to better protect it. Underlining their political commitment, the States expressed their involvement and support to developing countries with a particular focus on data sharing issues. National representatives decided to create a work group in charge of designing a 10-year implementation plan that will be introduced to the political level at the next ministerial meetings in Japan and Europe.
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