

International cooperation

The Plan of Implementation adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 recognized that it was necessary to "improve water resource management and scientific understanding of the water cycle through cooperation in joint observation and research, and encourage and promote knowledge sharing, and provide capacity-building and the transfer of technology, as mutually agreed, including remote-sensing and satellite technologies, particularly to developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition, for this purpose." (WSSD Paragraph 28).

At the Third World Water Forum in Kyoto in 2003, the ministerial conference declared, "We will further encourage scientific research on predicting and monitoring the global water cycle, including the effect of climate change, and develop information systems that enable the sharing of such valuable data worldwide." A Group of 8 (G8) Action Plan for Water agreed in Evian, France in 2003 to promote "coordination of mechanisms for information sharing and monitoring."

The First Earth Observation Summit held in Washington, DC, in July 31, 2003, affirmed the need for timely, quality controlled, long-term, global information as a basis for sound decision-making. It also recognized the need to support improved coordination of strategies and systems for observations of the Earth and identification of measures to minimize data gaps. "Improving global water resource management and understanding of the water cycle" was recognized as vitally important social issues and potential benefits by the Subgroup on User Requirements and Outreach under the ad hoc Group on Earth Observations (GEO), which is preparing a 10-year Implementation Plan for a comprehensive, coordinated, and sustained Earth observation system. The Integrated Earth Observation Strategy (IGOS) is needed to understand and monitor the Earth system and to assess human impacts with cooperation among many programs, agencies, or governments. The IGOS-Partnership (IGOS-P) was established to address the user requirements and explore the collaboration and integration strategy. The IGOS-P currently has several themes, including one on the water cycle. Space agencies, such as NASA, JAXA and ESA, UN organizations such as UNESCO, WMO, and research organizations such as WCRP, IGBP and other international organizations have joined as partners in the IGOS Water Theme. The Water Theme will be led by the WCRP, the WMO and the CEOS. The activities of the GWCRI will be part of the Japanese implementation of the Water Theme.

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