

**CONCLUSIONS BY THE BELGIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE EU COUNCIL
OF THE HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE “SPACE FOR THE AFRICAN CITIZEN” ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2010**

Over time, innovations and services based on space systems have gradually become indispensable to many aspects of the daily life of citizens, institutions and enterprises throughout the world. In Africa, some lead countries are developing their own space related capabilities and programmes, and are setting up capabilities to manage these programmes. Yet, because of competing development priorities, Africa, in general, is still far from fully maximizing the benefits from space as an asset for its development.

The conference aimed to better understand the potential benefits of space for development policies as well as to better understand the ambitions and expectations of African stakeholders.

Thanks to this conference, the Belgian Presidency has

- learned about the contribution that space technologies and applications bring to a global and sustainable development of the African continent, specifically by contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; and recognised that fostering the access to space systems can increase Africa’s role as a global player;
- noted that African space capabilities would reinforce science and technology education; boost innovation and contribute to economic development and spur on the sustainability of the local service industry;
- noted that, currently, the African continent is host to numerous European initiatives using satellite based data and that these initiatives are determined independently; noted also that several activities are taking place under the drive of other space nations (US, Japan, China, Korea, Russia, Brazil *etc.*)
- recognised the continuing need to expand partnerships with the African Union Commission, the Regional Economic Groupings and the African nations and to build upon existing initiatives and ambitions in order to enable these actors to have the necessary human, technical and financial resources to allow them to acquire as well as to exploit relevant space systems; recognised also the importance to support the efforts of African stakeholders in establishing an institutional and policy framework for space programmes;
- been informed that satellite communications offer a fast and efficient solution for providing broadband access in Africa and for providing support numerous applications ; and been informed about the potential value added of EGNOS for air transport safety, economic development in Africa and intercontinental exchanges;
- been informed about the progresses of the GMES/Africa initiative, which represents a step in the development of a common vision and community of action on Earth observation activities in Africa, with respect, notably, to the sustainable management of natural resources and the preservation of the environment; recognised the importance that the decisions to implement the priorities of the GMES/ Africa action plan be taken without delay and that rapid steps be taken to implement associated objectives;

The Belgian presidency took note and welcomed that the European Commission, the European Space Agency and EUMETSAT indicated their readiness to offer the benefit of their expertise and experience and programmes to further assist African institutions on space related projects.

The Belgian presidency insisted on the importance of the collaboration between Africa and the EU on space. Such collaboration will have an impact in a wide range of areas across the whole EU-Africa cooperation framework. It must build upon a dialogue that, more than technical, is of a political nature.

The Belgian Presidency encourages the Member States to examine the opportunities offered by the EU Africa partnership on space and to further contribute to the activities of the Union related to its objectives.