

Statement Kingdom of the Netherlands regarding agenda item 9 (Space and sustainable development)

Delivered by: Mr. A. Visser, Dutch Authority for Digital Infrastructure, The Netherlands.

Dear Mr. Chairman,

The Netherlands wishes to take this opportunity to underline the indispensable role of earth observation and remote sensing in advancing sustainable development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Climate change is a significant driver behind many of our current challenges. The need for swift action is clear: we must reduce the speed of climate change through mitigation and limit its impacts through adaptation. Greenhouse gas emissions are the primary cause of climate change, and their effects are becoming more serious every year. We are witnessing more frequent and intense floods, droughts, wildfires, and a continuous loss of biodiversity. These environmental crises have dire implications for our prosperity and well-being. To illustrate, in the first half of 2023 alone, the insured costs of climate damage amounted to €46 billion worldwide. This figure underscores the urgent need for comprehensive action.

The Netherlands is committed to addressing these challenges. We have made significant commitments at global, European, and national levels to implement necessary measures and to report on their impact. However, to do this effectively and efficiently, we need detailed data on our atmosphere, water, and land. In this regard, The Netherlands believes that remote sensing data should be universally accessible and freely available, because we consider this essential to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Furthermore, satellite-based applications in developing countries can contribute greatly to the accomplishment of specific SDGs. For example, the Netherlands has initiated a programme focused on enhancing food security, providing smallholder farmers and pastoralists with satellite-based information and financial services. From our work on this programme we learned that three crucial aspects must be considered when implementing such programmes. Firstly, digital inclusion is paramount to ensure that everyone has access to these services. Secondly, actionable information should be provided, particularly for those who are illiterate or need translation into local languages. Thirdly, careful attention must be devoted to safeguarding data privacy.

Given the severity of the climate crisis, the demand for satellite-based digital services in critical sectors such as agriculture and food is ever increasing. Satellite applications have the potential to enhance farmers' resilience to climate change impacts. Additionally, digital services can effectively disseminate essential information on public health measures to remote areas. Therefore, the Netherlands calls on all member States to work together to unlock the full potential of satellite-based applications for sustainable development.

In conclusion, the challenges we face are immense, but with collaborative efforts and the right tools, we can make significant strides in mitigating climate change and promoting sustainability. Looking ahead, supported by a comprehensive national long-term space agenda, the Netherlands stands ready to play its role in space to achieve these goals.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.