Symposium on Remote Sensing for Resources Development and Environmental Management / Enschede / August 1986
 ISBN 90 6191 674 7

C.P.C.M.Oomen
President of the Netherlands' Remote Sensing Board

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased that in Brazil ISPRS decided to have this year's Symposium of Commission Seven in Holland.

1986 is a very special year for all people in this country occupied in the remote sensing field. Consequently we are glad to be the host of this symposium.

The point is that, following a decision of our government, we this year started a 5 years programme for further development of remote sensing.
Let me take the opportunity to give you a rough idea of what happened and what we expect to happen.

Remote sensing in Holland already has some history. It started some fifteen years ago. The government then initiated a working community for research of remote sensing applications with a limited budget. During the 7 years of its existence this community built up a certain amount of knowledge regarding the relations between object properties and remotely sensed data.
The research activities also resulted in a number of operational methods for earth observation to be used in coastal zone managements, agriculture, public works and environmental control.

At the end of this 7 years' period 4 departments decided to continue the research mainly focussed on operational use of remote sensing for their own interests.
In addition the department of Education and Sciences financed some special projects.
The operations were supported by the Netherlands' Remote Sensing Board.
Highlights of this period were the development of airborne sensors, digital data processing techniques and the establishment of a remote sensing infrastructure.

The choosen modest conception, however, caused some bottle-necks.
Firstly the limited budget (less than 2 mln guilders a year), then the incomplete organization structure, the absence of a long-term policy and also the scarce relationship with industry.

In order to find a way out of these problems and as a consequence of the Dutch space policy it was decided to execute a National Remote Sensing Programme. This programme has a budget of 30 mln guilders, spread over a 5 years' period, starting in 1986.

The main objectives of the programme are:
- transfer from research to operational use;
- commercialization of operational applications;
- stimulation of research focussed on operational use;
- stimulation of basic research;
- development of technology;
- improvement of infrastructure.

The budget for the national programme is financed by 5 governmental departments, which have a seat in the renewed Netherlands' Remote Sensing Board.

Through contributions to projects Dutch industries take care of additional finances.

They have two seats in the board.
As you will have noticed we did not change the name of the Remote Sensing Board, although there were rather some changes.
We also took care of a well fit infrastructure within each participating department or group.
The board is assisted by a Programme Bureau to take care of financial control, project contracting, coordination, etc., etc.

During the execution of the national programme the main priorities are focussed on the operational implementation of the use of earth observation techniques and subsequently commercialisation.
International aims are:
- remote sensing applications in the third world
- preparation for the European Space Agency's ERS-1 programme.

More details of the national programme will be given later on during this symposium by the Programme manager, mr. Bunnik.

Thanks to the developments I just now described Holland is at the beginning of a promising remote sensing period.
I expect that the results of this Symposium will further stimulate development in our country.

Ladies and gentlemen please let me wish you a successful and pleasant Symposium.

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