

**U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez
Global Earth Observation Summit**

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Brussels, Belgium**

(Remarks As Prepared for Delivery)

Good morning and thank you for this opportunity to speak with you today. I am honored to be with such a distinguished group of world leaders, scientists, policy makers and academics. I would also like to offer a very special thank you to the European Commission for hosting this important and historic meeting.

I know you just heard from Minister Kadiman of Indonesia.

I want him to know that President Bush and the United States stand firmly committed to helping Indonesia and all the other victims of the tsunami.

We all saw the tremendous power of nature through the tsunami. Our hearts go out to all the victims and their families.

The United States Government, American citizens and American corporations are providing an amazing level of support to the victims of this terrible tragedy.

Just last week, President Bush boosted the government's initial commitment of \$350 million and announced that he is seeking another \$600 million from Congress. Donations from private corporations are estimated at more than \$700 million.

U.S. relief workers have been on the ground from the very beginning, providing food assistance, shelter and psychological support. They've focused on debris clean-up as well as health and sanitation concerns.

And touching on another area of concern for all of us, they've been on the ground protecting women and children from human-trafficking.

Our military continues to work round the clock to deliver aid to countless people in need. Nearly 3,500 troops remain on the ground. To date, our military personnel have delivered over 10 million pounds of food, treated almost 2,500 patients and provided well over 400,000 gallons of fresh water.

- America's response makes me proud.

Last month, President Bush announced a plan to develop a tsunami detection and warning system for the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

Once completed, this effort will help protect all nations that rise up from these two great seas. Combined with the on-going U.N. effort to develop a similar system in the Indian Ocean, we are casting a safety net across the seas to give citizens ample warning and time to respond to a tsunami.

This is truly a multi-national effort with multi-national benefits. The Tsunami Monitoring System is the perfect example of the power of integrated observations working together to make people safer.

The tsunami tragedy highlights the importance of this summit and the need to move towards an integrated system.

I don't think I am overstating it when I say that I believe this integrated observing system will be one of those rare technologies that will fundamentally change the way we live, the way we make policy decisions, and the way we manage scarce and precious resources.

Our population is projected to nearly double over the coming decades, bringing increased demands for food, clean water, energy and safe and healthy habitats on our natural resources.

The United States is making the commitment to move earth observation to the next level to benefit this next generation.

This is one of President Bush's environmental priorities.

And today, I am pleased to present you with our government's plan for an Integrated U.S. Earth Observation system. We've worked very hard on this plan.

It's modeled after the international framework, and we are committed to working with all nations to move forward and make it a reality.

The type of data this system would transmit will be invaluable to all of our nations.

- In addition to the all important goal of reducing loss of life and property from disasters, this system would allow for more accurate forecasting to predict hurricanes and other disasters. It would help us to better protect and monitor our ocean resources, understand our climate and guard our agricultural resources.

To put it simply, we would each have the pulse of the entire globe.

Just imagine a world where we could accurately provide farmers with data to protect their crops or predict areas sensitive for forest fires.

Forecasters could predict the weather months in advance and scientists could zero in on our climate with amazing accuracy.

The economic benefits would be enormous.

For instance, studies have shown that for the United States, forecasting the weather with just one degree Fahrenheit more accuracy (roughly one half degree Celsius), we could save at least \$1 billion each year in electricity costs.

Weather and climate sensitive industries account for one-third of our nation's GDP. That's about \$3 trillion dollars.

In the U.S., we've already seen the benefit of more accurate hurricane watches and warnings. It has saved lives and prevented nearly \$2 billion in yearly damage costs.

While we may not be able to control when nature decides to flex its incredible power, we can control our ability to warn citizens and keep them out of harm's way. We can better protect our citizens, our natural resources, and our economies.

I am proud that gathered in this room is one of the most diverse collections of nations in the history of the world working together towards a singular goal. It's a powerful testament to the work that is underway.

Let me close with this. Two months ago, we saw that the forces of nature know no political boundaries. Likewise, I believe there are some actions that can only be accomplished by also transcending political borders. The integrated earth observation system is one of those.

The goals and promises of this system are both great and noble. The health and prosperity of future generations will be determined by our success in making this system a reality.

The Bush Administration is proud to join you in this venture and we look forward to working with you as we move forward.

Thank you.