

From Our Members



Report on Asia GIS 2003 Conference

Wuhan, China from 16-18 October 2003

By Prof. Dr Jianya Gong, Chair of WG VI/2, ISPRS

The Asia GIS 2003 Conference was held in Wuhan, China from 16-18 October 2003. It was organised by the State Key Laboratory of Information Engineering in Surveying, Mapping and Remote Sensing (LIESMARS) at Wuhan University, GIS Association of China, Chinese Professional GIS Association, National Natural Science Foundation of China, International Society of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing – Commission II, International Geographical Union – Geographical Information Science

The Opening Ceremony was chaired by Prof. Li Deren, Director of LIESMARS and Academician of both Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and Chinese Academy of Engineering (CAE). Prof. Li Qingquan, Vice President of Wuhan University delivered the welcoming speech. Prof. Zhou Chuangbing, Director of the Department of Science and Technology of Wuhan University delivered the welcoming and congratulatory speech on behalf of Prof. Xu Guanhua. Mr. Cai Shuming, Vice Chair of Political Consultative Conference of Hubei Province delivered a welcoming speech as well. Prof. Anthony Gar-On Yeh from the University of Hong Kong notified the participants on the work of the Preparatory Committee of the Asia GIS Association and the formation of the Asia GIS Association during the Conference.



Three keynote speeches were delivered. One was by Prof. Li Deren on "From 2D GIS to 3D GIS for CyberCity", another was by Prof. Manfred Ehlers of Vechta University, Germany on "New Development in the Integration of GIS and Remote Sensing: Challenges and Promises", and the last speech was by Prof. Di Liping from

Commission, International Society of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing – WG IV/2, State Key Lab of Resources and Environmental Information System Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), National Engineering Research Center for Satellite Positioning System, State Research Center for Engineering Technology in Remote Sensing Chinese Academy of Sciences and Institute of Remote Sensing and GIS at Peking University. The Conference is hosted by LIESMAR.

George Mason University, USA, on "NASA's Earth Science Data Systems". The Keynote Session was chaired by Prof. Ryoosuke Shibasaki of the University of Tokyo, Japan.

A total of more than 100 participants from over 10 countries/regions, such as USA, Canada, Germany, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Iran, Hong Kong SAR China, Tapei China and Macao SAR China participated in the Conference. Officials from the Hubei provincial government, Wuhan University and various institutions of Wuhan University as well as a number of staff members and research students at LIESMARS attended the conference. Prof. Xu Guanhua, Minister of Science and Technology of China and Gu Shengzu, Vice Provincial Governor of Hubei Province sent congratulatory letters for the conference respectively.

A total of 75 papers were received and 55 of them were scheduled into 15 technical sessions for presentation in the following parallel sessions of the Conference:

- GIS Theory (3 sessions)
- GIS Method and Technology (4 sessions)
- GIS Application (3 sessions)
- Remote Sensing (1 session)
- 3D GIS and Virtual Reality (2 sessions)
- Web GIS (1 session)
- LBS and Mobile GIS (1 session)
- Geospatial Information Web Service (1 session)

Professors Chen Jun, Chong-Hwa Park, Ahris Yaakup, Chen Xiaoyong, Chih-Hong Sun, Zhang Xuehu, Kanako Muramatsu, Li Bin, Zhou Chenghu, Tang Liang, Di Liping, Shi Wenzhong, Zhou Qiming, Li Zhilin and Liu Yaolin chaired these sessions.

In addition to these technical sessions, a technical tour was also organised to visit LIESMARS, School of Remote Sensing Information Engineering, School of Resources and Environmental Science and Wuhan WHU Geo Information Engineering Technology Co. Ltd.. The Closing Ceremony was chaired by Prof. Gong Jianya, Deputy Director of LIESMARS and Prof. Anthony Gar-On Yeh of the University of Hong Kong gave a Closing Speech on "Development and

Applications of GIS in Asia". This was followed by the Inaugural Meetings of the Asia GIS Association.

This conference has provided an invaluable forum for the exchange of ideas and development amongst GIS scholars, researchers, and professionals in Asia. It has led to the formation of the Asia GIS Association. The next Asia GIS Conference will be held in Seoul in 2005.

Report on AFRICAGIS 2003 Conference "Meeting The Information Needs of NEPAD"

Dakar, Senegal from 3-7 November 2003

By Dr Tsehaie Woldai, Secretary General AARSE

The AFRICAGIS 2003 Conference "Meeting the Information Needs of NEPAD" (3-7 November 2003) held at the Hôtel Méridien Président, Dakar, Senegal (see ANNEX 4), was organised by Centre de Suivi Ecologique (CSE), Senegal and sponsored by the African Association of Remote Sensing of the Environment (AARSE), Program on Environmental Information Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa (EIS Africa), the African Organisation for Cartography and Remote Sensing (AOCRS) supported by ESRI, FAO, Digital Globe, GEOSPACE International, MAPS geosystems, UNESCO, UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA-

resources, the underlying geodetic reference frame, and spatial data infrastructure. The objective was to provide a platform for building synergy among various on-going or proposed initiatives, all of which aim at providing information support for the implementation of NEPAD.

The conference format in general included: opening session and 14 invited keynote addresses and 137 papers into 11 plenary and 24 technical sessions. It also included 3 Pre-conference Workshops and 32 exhibitions.

Workshops: Francophone Awareness Workshop on Geoinformation Tools (organisers: UNECA and EIS Africa), Africa Environment Information Network (organisers: UNEP and DEWA) and The Use of Available Global Landsat Data Sets for Meeting the Information Needs of NEPAD (organised by UNOOSA).

Exhibitions: Intergraph, SAMBUS (Ghana), ESRI (USA), GEOSPACE (South Africa), MAPS Geosystems (United Arab Emirates), EIS-AFRICA, UNFAO, USGS (USA), Hewlett Packard (USA), CSE (Senegal), DTGC (Senegal), UCAD (Senegal), DMG (Senegal), DGPRES (Senegal), DPN (Senegal), RCMRD (Kenya), CNTIG (Ivory Coast), CERSGIS (Ghana), African Institute of South Africa, IGB (Burkina Faso), BSA (Mauritanie), Clark Lab (USA), GIMS (South Africa), Airborne Laser Solutions (South Africa), Centre Régional AGRHYMET (Niger), ComputaMaps (South Africa), ISTAR (France), SCOT (France), ITC (The Netherlands), ST21.

The focus of this year's conference was very much on NEPAD. Our Senegalese partners worked very hard to place the event at a very high political level, lining up some heavyweights behind the programme. The Opening Ceremony was held under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister of Senegal, His Excellency Mr. Idrissa Seck followed by His Excellency the Minister of Environment and Sanitation Mr. Modou Diagne Fada. Their speeches indeed underscored the importance of the meeting and the sig-



Conference session.

SEA), UNEP, UNFPA, USAID, UNOOSA, WRI, World Bank InfoDev Program, the US State Department and the Royal Netherlands Embassy. 306 participants gathered at the Conference Centre from 50 countries, with more than 60% of the participants from 32 African countries and the rest from Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North America. From outside Africa, the highest attendees were from the USA (38) and France (36).

The Conference sessions brought together some of the major Geoinformation initiatives being implemented in Africa covering the oceans, land cover, environment, water



Exhibitions during the conference.

nificance being attached to Geoinformation technologies by the Senegalese Government. The American Ambassador followed the speech of the two Ministers to Senegal who gave an excellent reflection of the status quo in Geoinformation technology in Africa in French. Several Ambassadors were present during the opening sessions (including the Dutch Ambassador to Senegal), which were officially highlighted in the Senegalese Press and Television. The opening address was followed by the inauguration of the posters and exhibitions.

The sessions focussed on four sub-themes followed by Panel discussions:

Sub-theme 1: Between Poverty and Prosperity - The New Development Agenda for Africa

This sub-theme reviewed the main issues and challenges of development in Africa as identified by the Rio (1992) World Summit on Environment and Development, and as articulated by Africa's leaders within the framework of NEPAD. The focus was on those NEPAD components that relate to environmental assets, as well as the human and natural resources, upon which Africa could create a prosperous future. Issues regarding the development challenges and the harsh realities in Africa were treated from a policy and political perspective.

Sub-theme 2: From Rio to Dakar – The Promise of Information Technology?

This sub-theme revisited the first Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and re-evaluated the promising role of information and communications technologies in

sustainable development. Chapter 40 of Agenda 21 (from the Summit) dealt entirely with this, and gave a lot of impetus to the development of Geoinformation and its application to environment and development issues.

Sub-theme 3: Geography and the Environment — Harnessing Knowledge for Action and Change

The central question addressed by this sub-theme was: what opportunities do current Geoinformation technologies (remote sensing, geographic information systems, global positioning systems, locations services, etc.) present in documenting, characterising and quantifying environmental and natural resource assets for development in Africa? Emphasis in the presentations was placed on how to leverage knowledge, and highlight the paradigm shifts and commitments necessary for the application of Geoinformation to have practical relevance to issues of environmental governance and justice, transparency in the management and exploitation of resources, poverty reduction, and sustainable development in Africa. The audience benefited from best practices in current knowledge management practices and experiences as they apply to resource allocation and utilisation, as well as experiences relating to local/indigenous knowledge management practices.

Sub-theme 4: Access to Information for the NEPAD: Challenges and a strategy for action

This sub-theme highlighted various initiatives in response to identified needs for harmonised information on resources to support sustainable development in Africa.



Report on 'Land Open Science Conference'

Morelia, Mexico from 2-5 December 2003

By Gérard Begni, Second Vice-President ISPRS Council 2000-2004,

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Earth System Science Partnership

The 'Land Open Science Conference' that took place in Morelia, Mexico from 02-05 December 2003, is an unique and outstanding event that should capture the full attention of ISPRS, since its objective was to refine the plans of a forthcoming

international scientific programme that should make an intensive use of remote sensing systems and products. Proactive links should be created between ISPRS and the future project leaders.

The general framework of that Conference is the evolution from IGBP to IGBP II and the ESSP ("Earth System Science Enterprise", partly set up during the Amsterdam Conference in 2001) that brings together the four international scientific programmes addressing Global Change under the ICSU umbrella – which creates natural links to ISPRS. ESSP will give birth in turn to thematic (food, water, carbon) and regional integrated projects and initiatives, as shown hereunder. The Conference was kindly hosted by the Research Centre on Ecosystems, National Autonomous University of Mexico.

The precise title of the Conference was "Integrated Research on Coupled Human Environmental Systems". Its

objective was to refine the Draft Science Plan that had been prepared for two years by some twelve members of a transition team co-chaired by Dennis Ojima and Emilio Moran. It has to be presented to the Steering Committees of the IGBP and IHDP programmes. Once the plan adopted, a Steering committee will have to start implementing it. This programme should be a follow-on of GCTE (Global Change and Terrestrial Ecosystems) and LUCC (land Use and Cover Change), which will be active up to end of 2005.

The objective of the project (and hence of the conference) is to bring together the scientific communities that address global change issues under the land use cover change, terrestrial ecosystems and land aquatic ecosystems aspects. It emphasises interaction couplings between anthropic, biological and environmental systems evolution within the global system sustainability perspective. This implies to solve the difficult issue of interactions between environmental changes and their impacts on ecosystems on one hand, decisions and practices related to land management on the other hand.

The scientific plan includes three main themes, each of them being made of several questions:

Theme 1: Causes and Nature of Land System Change

Question 1.1 – How does the human dimensions of global change affect regional and local human societies and their land use practices?

Question 1.2 – How do changes in land management decisions and practices impact ecosystems?

Question 1.3 – How do the biophysical dimensions of global change affect ecosystems?

Question 1.4 – What are the combined impacts of human and biophysical change on ecosystems?

Theme 2: Consequences of Land System Change

Question 2.1 – How do changes in ecosystem structure and functioning affect the delivery of ecosystem services?

Question 2.2 – What are the consequences for human well being of changes in ecosystem services?

Question 2.3 – What is the role of changes in ecosystem services in land use decision making?

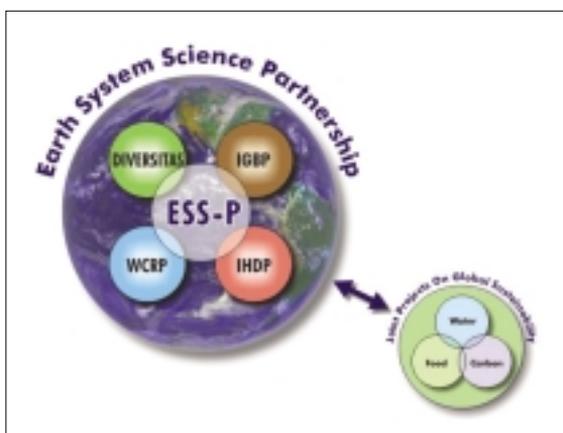


Figure 1: ESSP and the three joint projects on global sustainability (Source: IGBP web-site).

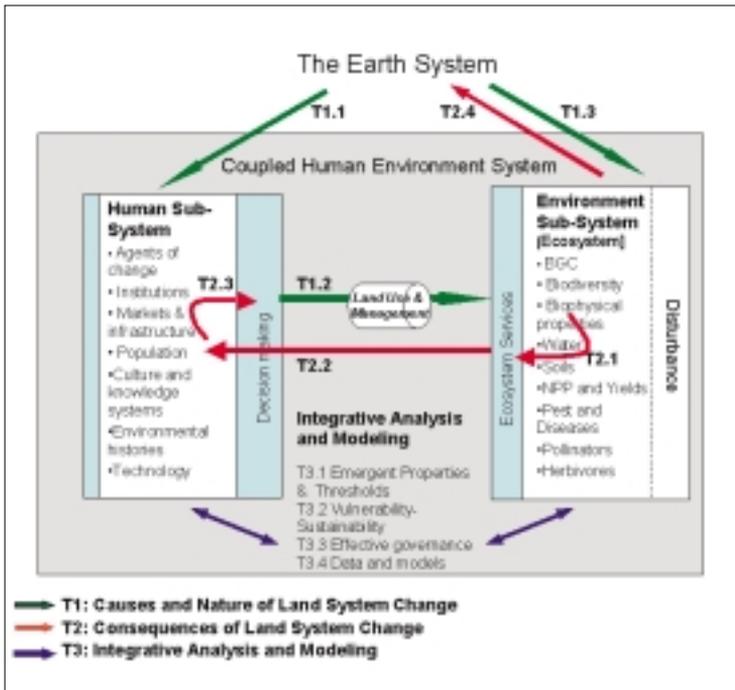


Figure 2: General flowchart of the Global Land Project (Courtesy: Dennis Ojima).

Question 2.4 – What is the feedback from changes in ecosystem function and services to the Earth system?

Theme 3: Integrative Analysis and Modelling of Land Sustainability.

Question 3.1 – What are the dynamics of land systems that lead to emergent properties or thresholds that change the structure and function of the system?

Question 3.2 – How does the vulnerability of land systems to hazards and disturbances vary with changes in human and environment interactions?

Question 1.3 – Which institutions and policies enhance adaptation towards land sustainability and why?

Question 1.4 – How can data and models at different scales and complexities of analysis improve understanding and enhance decision making and governance?

The above diagram shows how these questions link the major components of the Earth system.

The Morelia Conference was indeed a major step in that work in progress that should raise the utmost interest of the ISPRS members worldwide.

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Announcement for U.S. Commercial Remote Sensing

13 - 14 September 2004, Embassy Suites - Denver, CO, USA

Industry leaders and national scope demand side representatives will gather to focus on solutions that commercial remotely sensed data can supply. This event comes at a vital time in satellite and aerial imaging technology and the information systems that support them. Relationships amongst supply and demand sides, technical partnerships,

investors, and value adding resellers will be explored with the goal of a strong economic future for this thriving industry.

For more information, see the web-site: www.srinstitute.com/CG117
