

GSDI AND IGS GLOBAL NEWS

News from the GSDI Association and the International Geospatial Society

Vol. 2, No. 8, 2012 – December 2012

From the President



It has been a very satisfying year for the GSDI Association. We enjoyed a rewarding GSDI 13 Conference in Québec City, Canada in May, and our volunteer committees continue to do great work. The discussions promoted by our Legal and Socioeconomic Committee members are continuing to help shape policy debates underway in different countries. The international projects supported through our Societal Impacts Committee's Small Grants Program are making a difference in terms of capacity-building in emerging nations. GSDI's regional and global newsletters (like this one) produced through our Outreach and Membership Committee, continue to communicate best practices and news of interest to our colleagues around the world.

We are now in the midst of planning GSDI 14, to take place in Africa next November, and are contacting a new and wider range of potential sponsors to support the next round of projects to be supported by our highly successful Small Grants Program.

On behalf of the GSDI Association, I want to thank everyone for their continued support of GSDI's vision of building a world where everyone can readily discover, access and apply geographic information to improve their daily lives. I wish you all the best at this festive time of year, and I look forward to meeting and working with old and new friends in 2013.

Dr David Coleman, President, Global Spatial Data Infrastructure Association
"The GSDI Association: Advancing a location enabled world"

From the President-Elect



Looking back at 2012 we can be very satisfied that the Association responded well to the many challenges that this changing world and the challenging economic climate has presented. The good work of the Executive Team, led by Harlan Onsrud, with the support of the Board, has ensured that the Association is well run. The leadership of our President, and those members active in our many Committees, has continued to shape and sharpen thinking on many topics important to the Geospatial World.

A review of the year shows that the importance of geospatial information and the expectations that a growing number of political leaders, business managers and ordinary people have for it, has reached new heights. On every continent of the world the use of geospatial information continues to grow, there are few people whose lives and livelihoods have not been influenced by it.

In 2012 geospatial information found its way into more classrooms, more planning offices, more emergency response centres, onto more mobile platforms, more desktops than ever before. Geospatial Information was spoken about at Rio+20 and its importance and benefits recognised globally from the Arctic SDI to Zimbabwe.

Looking forward to 2013, be assured that GSDI can expect another successful and exciting year. There will be more challenges and many changes, but we know that the commitment of the Association's members will lead to positive responses to these. I look forward to seeing you at GSDI 14 or wherever our crossing paths may take us.

Dave Lovell, GSDI Association President-Elect
Secretary General and Executive Director, EuroGeographics



ASSOCIATION NEWS

GSDI 14 Conference Preparations

Preparations continue for the joint **GSDI 14 World Conference** and **AfricaGIS 2013 Conference** scheduled to be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in early November 2013 in partnership with GSDI Association, EIS-Africa, the International Geospatial Society, and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

AfricaGIS is the largest regularly occurring GIS conference in Africa with participants from the whole continent. The GSDI World Conference moves to sites across the globe to offer geospatial specialists from all parts of the world opportunities to better exchange ideas and learn from peers in building spatial data infrastructure. For past conferences, see: <http://www.gsdi.org/gsdiConferences>.

The conference program includes opening and closing plenary sessions with keynote speakers, plenary sessions focused on the conference theme, technical paper sessions in multiple tracks, plus pre-conference and post-conference workshops freely open to all registrants. The program also includes a poster exhibit and competition, an exhibition area highlighting agency initiatives and corporate product and service offerings, and numerous organized round table discussions to allow people from regions around the globe or with common interests to present, discuss, and share issues, experiences and plans.

The selected theme of the conference is "**Spatial Enablement in Support of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction**". The pressing needs of African nations, their citizens, and the needs of economically disadvantaged nations generally are a particular emphasis of the conference and include:

- sustainable development,
- economic development,
- business intelligence and business geographics,
- disaster prevention, warning, management, response, and recovery,
- alleviation of poverty and crime,
- lessening the digital divide including access to information technologies,
- ensuring food security,
- support of transportation, health and communication systems, and
- facilitating land ownership.

Substantial reduction in registration fees will be available for local participants, members of EIS-Africa and members of the International Geospatial Society who are from low income per capita nations. Substantial

reductions in Exhibit and Sponsorship fees will be available for GSDI Association member organisations..

Consult the web site at <http://gsdi.org/gsdi14> as the Call for Papers and details of the program, facilities and sponsorship opportunities become available. Come prepared to engage, learn and enjoy! More news on the conference in future issues!

GSDI COMMITTEE NEWS

To keep abreast of what is happening in SDI and related fields around the globe, be sure to check out the various newsletters downloadable from the GSDI website (<http://www.gsdi.org/newsletters>). These include the **GSDI Regional Newsletters** for Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America & Caribbean; the **GSDI & IGS Global News** (covering GSDI Association and IGS Member activities), **FGDC Newsletter** (USA SDI news), EuroGeographics and **EUROGI Newsletters** (covering Europe), **EIS-Africa** (environmental news from Africa), **SALB Newsletter** (Second Administrative Level Boundaries from the UNGIWG project) and, now, the **UN-SPIDER Newsletter** (the UN Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response, published by UNOOSA – UN Office for Outer Space Affairs).

Outreach & Membership Committee

UN ECA Workshop on Legal & Policy Issues

Committee vice-Chairs, **Roger Longhorn** and **Joep Crompvoets**, were in Ethiopia in December, at the invitation of GSDI Member **UN Economic Commission for Africa (UN ECA)** to participate in the "*Workshop on Legal & Policy Issues for African SDI*". They were joined by **Laila Aslesen**, Kartverket-Norwegian Mapping Authority, a member of the GSDI Legal & Socioeconomic Committee, and **Tesfaye Korme**, Director, GIS and Remote Sensing, from the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) in Kenya, another GSDI Association Member. The meeting was organised by Andre Nonguierma, UN ECA GIS Officer and GSDI Association Board Member, who also serves on the GSDI 14 Conference local organizing committee in Ethiopia.

The experts were invited to respond to a background paper on legal and policy issues for geospatial information prepared by L&SE Committee member, **Kevin Pomfret**, who is also Director of the Centre for Spatial Law & Policy in Washington, D.C., USA. The 3-day workshop examined issues for developing a legal and policy framework suited to continental Africa and individual African states.



The meeting took place at UN ECA headquarters in Addis Ababa from 11-13 December 2012, following preparation of a draft background document, commissioned by UN ECA prior to the meeting. An important objective for UNECA is to support Member States to harmonize national policies in various sectors to support integration efforts, including in the information sector. In past years, UN ECA has continued to put in place policies, resources and structures to make available geo-enabled information and communication technologies that are easily accessible and used by decision makers and the community in a coordinated way.

UN ECA believes that setting up an enabling legal and regulatory environment will foster adoption of appropriate mechanisms for the cooperative production, management, dissemination and use of geoinformation resources at regional (ARSDI - African Regional SDI) and national levels (NSDI) in the continent.

The meeting was attended by a dozen selected experts from Australia, Belgium, Ethiopia, Norway, South Africa, United States, African regional institutions, and UN ECA. The invited experts were asked to present brief perspectives on the subject of legal and policy frameworks for SDI, based on current developments in their sector and/or country/region. The presentations were discussed and reviewed for relevance, coherence and complementarities in relation to the African situation and international status.

The draft African SDI policy and legal framework strategy report is being prepared under the auspices of the UN ECA's Committee on Development Information Science and Technology (CODIST) and, in the future, will be presented to and discussed with officials of the African Union, which represents all African states at the policy level. One of the three current CODIST Sub-committees focuses on Geoinformation, and the current Chair of that Sub-committee, Dr Derek Clarke, from South Africa, was one of the invited experts, who also provided insight into conditions in African states regarding the issues to be faced, which were of great value to the visiting experts from other regions of the world. For more information on CODIST and CODIST-II, visit:

<http://repository.uneca.org/codist/>

GSDI 14 Preparations

While in Ethiopia, Longhorn and Cromptvoets also visited the conference facility of the Africa Union in Addis Ababa, the most likely site for the GSDI 14 Global Conference, accompanied by **Dr Ephrem Gebremariam**, from the Local Organising Committee for GSDI 14 and AfricaGIS, to see first-hand the excellent facilities that are available in Addis Ababa for the combined Conferences

in November 2013. Watch the EIS-Africa and GSDI web sites for more details as plans are firmed up over the next few weeks.

Visit to Ethiopian Mapping Agency

During the visit to Ethiopia, Longhorn, Cromptvoest and **Dr Derek Clarke**, Chief Director, National Geospatial Information (NGI), South Africa, were also invited to meet with senior staff from the Ethiopian Mapping Agency (EMA) (<http://www.ema.gov.et/>) to discuss SDI developments within Ethiopia and Africa. The EMA staff were interested especially to learn more about the experiences to date in regard to the INSPIRE Directive implementation across Europe, while realizing that the political, technological and economic situation within Ethiopia was quite different – and much more challenging!

CODIST Geoinformation Subcommittee

Dr Clarke is also Chair of the Subcommittee on Geoinformation of CODIST, the UN ECA **Committee on Development Information, Science and Technology**, which is currently involved in preparing the “Guidelines for Best Practices for the Acquisition, Storage, Maintenance and Dissemination of Fundamental Geospatial Datasets (Mapping Africa for Africa)” documentation. Anyone wishing to know more about this document or contributions to it, contact Derek at DClarke [at] ruraldevelopment.gov.za.

The remit of the CODIST sub-theme on Geoinformation is stated as:

“Geo-information, innovation and industrial development: The objective of the subtheme is to explore and share experiences as regards the extent to which GIS innovations have affected industrial development in Africa. This could include the effects of the geospatial technology and the use of space based technology innovations in achieving the continent's goals in economic transformation and sustainable and accelerated industrial development, such as benefits of GIS in spatial depicting of creative industries and marketing; mapping of ICT infrastructures; data, applications; and service delivery. This will also explore strategies to enhance collaboration between GIS and the industrial sector, the use of GIS as a decision-support tool for industrial development as well as exploring the potential of technological development and transfer to support the ecological industry.”

Information on the individual sub-themes is found at:

<http://repository.uneca.org/codist/?q=node/22>.



The Outreach & Membership Committee also manages the **GSDI Group on LinkedIn**, which has added seven new members in the past month, for a total of 227 members today. If you are not already a member of this group, please join today – and tell your friends! Visit <http://www.linkedin.com> to join, then find GSDI in the ‘Groups’ option, to join the group.

Legal & Socioeconomic Committee

Legal & Socioeconomic Committee member (and former Chair), **Dr Gabor Remetey-Fülöpp** (HUNAGI) is preparing a poster related to GEOSS and GSDI 14-for the **AricaExpo** to be held in Budapest, based on information provided by Dr Ganiyu I. Agbaje, fnis, Director, Mission Planning & Data Management, NGDI Coordinator, National Space Research & Development Agency (NASRDA), Nigeria. NASRDA are also full members of the GSDI Association, of which there are four in Africa. Dr Agbaje announces that the **AfriGEOSS** plan for 2013 will be launched shortly. Learn more about AfriGEOSS in our newsletter section on international projects.

Technical Committee

Technical Committee Chair, **Eric van Praag**, took part in the V GeoSUR Meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 14 November 2012, where he participated, along with Board member **Santiago Borerro**, in the first **GeoSUR Innovation Award**, made to the project "Create a Seamless Integrated 1:250,000 Digital Map of Mesoamerica", presented by the National Geographic Institute of El Salvador. See more news later in this issue.

Note: The Technical Committee is also responsible for updating of the **GSDI SDI Cookbook**, a wiki maintained at: www.gsdi docs.org/GSDIWiki/index.php/Main_Page.

Societal Impacts Committee

The Societal Impacts Committee administers the GSDI Small Grants Program, from which the following report arises.

GSDI Small Grants Project Translates GSDI SDI Cookbook into Albanian

Translation, adapting and dissemination of the book “SDI Cookbook 2009 in Albanian” was realized with the support of the GSDO Association Small Grant Program, which financed the project “Increasing the understanding of Spatial Data Infrastructure within the Albanian geo society by promoting and distributing SDI Cookbook 2009 in Albanian language”. The project was conducted by the South-East European Research Association on Geo Sciences, and led by Prof.dr. Bashkim Idrizi.

The Albanian translation was distributed to key stakeholders in Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo via the internet, as well published on their web site (www.geo-see.org) and mentioned on FaceBook and LinkedIn social and professional networks. Prof Idrizi announced that the translation of the 2012 updated version of the SDI Cookbook will be available later in 2013.

Training Opportunity in Chinese Taipei in 2013

Societal Impacts Committee vice-Chair **Jeremy Shen**, Director of the Information Center at the Min. of Interior in Chinese Taipei, wants to remind readers of the sponsorship opportunity to attend the 2013 ICLPST (International Center for Land Policy Studies and Training) training Seminar on Geographical Information Systems and Land Management in Taipei next year. Each selected participant receives a round-trip air ticket, allowance and lodging expenses during the training period.

For those interested in this excellent training opportunity in Taipei, view the guidelines below:

1. Candidates must be an individual member of the International Geospatial Society (IGS) or must be affiliated with an organization that is a member of the GSDI Association.
2. Candidates must be proficient in both spoken and written English in order to be able to follow lectures and instructions conducted in English.
3. Candidates must be persons who are presently working as an administrator, planner or project analyst in areas such as land use and management, urban planning, land surveying, spatial data infrastructure, geographic information systems, etc.
4. Candidates must be under the age of 55.

For more details, please watch for the formal announcement on the GSDI Association’s website early next year (www.gsdi.org).

Consider joining the IGS by visiting the web site at <http://www.igeoss.org/> and look at the **Benefits of Joining the IGS** on the GSDI and IGS web site at: <http://www.igeoss.org/BenefitsOfJoining>.

GSDI Small Grants - URISA GISCorps Support

For information on the support from the URISA GISCorps volunteers on behalf of the GSDI Small Grants awards, and other URISA GISCorps activities, visit the GISCorps Ongoing Projects website at:

http://www.giscorps.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=96&Itemid=62



New Small Grants Funders Needed!

The GSDI Association Board and Members are seeking funding to help ensure that the Small Grants Program can be continued in 2013 and for the future. Anyone who can help with future financial support, please contact the Association President, Prof David Coleman, or Executive Director, Prof Harlan Onsrud.

A working group has been formed and a new information leaflet defined, to be used for fund raising (see the GSDI web site). This was finalised in October and fund raising actions are now underway, seeking contributions from both the industry and government agencies, plus major cooperation aid funding bodies, academic and research institutions – anyone wishing to offer support for this very worthwhile and highly visible GSDI Association activity. Watch this space for future reports on our success!

To see the final reports and for more information on the Small Grants Program visit our web site at <http://www.gsdi.org/sic1>. Those wishing to make donations to the Small Grants Program in any amount will now find a 'Donate' button on the web pages!

As always, we express the Association's grateful thanks for the past support of the US Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) and current support from the URISA GISCorps for making the grants programme possible.

THE INTERNATIONAL GEOSPATIAL SOCIETY (IGS)

The International Geospatial Society (IGS) is the individual membership arm of the GSDI Association whose members have geospatial, SDI, GIS or related professional or specialist interests. The Society enhances communications globally among individuals that are actively involved in promoting, developing, or advancing spatial data infrastructure and related concepts. The IGS web site is at <http://www.igeoss.org>.

IGS Member News

The first version(s) of the document(s) "**120 Theses**", listing published and accessible (downloadable) MSc and PhD theses, are now available in the GSDI Geographic Information Knowledge Network (GIKnet). One document (31 pages) covers 57 theses in English, and the other covers 63 theses published in Spanish (208 pages). The Spanish document includes full abstracts of all theses, plus download links. The English document includes abstracts for some theses (not all) plus direct download links or links to the university or research institute sites from which the documents can be accessed.

To download the documents from the links below, you must be a registered user of the **GIKnet**. Registration is free and readers are encouraged to register at: <http://www.giknet.org/join.php>

If already a member or having joined GIKnet, after signing in, you can access the documents from these links:

- "120 Theses - English":
<http://www.giknet.org/depot/index.php?docid=78>
- "120 Theses - Spanish":
<http://www.giknet.org/depot/index.php?docid=80>

Our thanks to Mabel Alvarez, President of the International Geospatial Society (IGS) for organising this initiative and getting this important list of research results on to the GIKnet.

IGS Reminders

Subscriptions to GIM International

As a member benefit of IGS, you may receive a free subscription of GIM International. GIM International carries GSDI news, including IGS news, in a monthly column. If you want to stay up to date with this column and read up on other developments in Geomatics, please follow this link and subscribe if you are not already receiving a hard copy of the magazine: <http://www.gim-international.com/GSDI>.

Subscription to SDI Magazine

SDI Magazine is a specialist, free, online e-zine, focusing principally on SDI issues, as opposed to general geomatics topics. Subscription is free (visit www.sdimag.com) and GSDI Association and IGS Members are encouraged to subscribe. The magazine regularly carries news from both the Association and IGS, as well as updates on what is happening with regard to SDI developments around the globe.

Participation in GIKNet

IGS members are also reminded that information is uploaded in GIKnet in the Society Web Forum:

- Topics of general interest (English)
<http://www.giknet.org/forum/post.php?topic=41>
- Topics of general interest (Spanish)
<http://www.giknet.org/forum/post.php?topic=42>
- Task 5. Promote the work of IGS members as a network sharing information, knowledge and



publications among IGS members
<http://www.giknet.org/forum/post.php?topic=12>

Members are invited to actively participate in the Society Web Forum, as a means of sharing news.

LinkedIn IGS Sub-Group

If you have not already signed up for the IGS sub-group on LinkedIn (see prior Newsletters), please do so ASAP! To date, we have over 200 members in IGS – yet only 27 have joined the LinkedIn group. If you are already a member of the GSDI group, then you can request to join from the *Subgroups* page by clicking “Groups” at the top of your home page. Then click the parent group's name (GSDI). Under the “More” dropdown menu, select *Subgroups*. Then click “Join this subgroup.” You can view the status of your membership from the Your Groups page at: <http://www.linkedin.com/myGroups>.

Joining IGS

Remember that individuals in low and very low income nations can apply to join the International Geospatial Society (IGS) by providing specific information of value to the global community in lieu of annual cash dues. The listing of low and very-low income nations may be found at <http://www.gsdi.org/RankingTable>.

To join for free, simply add your professional profile to the growing interconnected network of geospatial specialists across the globe on the Geographic Information Knowledge Network (GIKNet) at <http://giknet.org> and then apply for membership in IGS at <http://www.igeoss.org/join>.

To maintain your free membership, simply update your professional profile each year on or about December or January. You have the ability to view, edit, or delete your individual profile at any time.

Members who joined IGS via this route, i.e. without paying the annual members fee, are reminded to update their information annually, or lose their membership of IGS.

Help us reach our goal of 1000 IGS Members by November 2013 – get your friends to join today!

IGS Members – submit your news, please, so that we can learn more about what our membership is doing! There are nearly 200 of you out there now, so please communicate with us. News can be sent by e-mail either to IGS President Mabel Álvarez, who can be contacted via the IGS web site, or directly to me, Roger Longhorn, Editor GSDI & IGS News at roger@alum.mit.edu.

ASSOCIATION & MEMBER NEWS

Several GSDI and/or IGS Members are represented on the **Permanent Committee on GIS Infrastructure for Asia and the Pacific (PCGIAP)**. At the meeting of the 19th UN Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific (UNRCC-AP), 29 October to 1 November, in Bangkok, Thailand, the following resolution was adopted:

19th PCGIAP Resolution (2) on Data Sharing and Integration for Disaster Management:

Recognizing that the Asia-Pacific region is prone to many natural hazards and devastating disasters, and that geospatial information plays a very important role in making timely information available to support and respond to emergency situations,

Recalling that the Rio+20 outcome document urged governments and organizations to commit to disaster risk reduction in order to enhance the resilience of cities and communities to disasters, according to their own circumstances and capacities,

Also recalling that the Rio+20 outcome document specifically recognized the ‘importance of comprehensive hazard and risk assessments, and knowledge- and information-sharing, including reliable geospatial information’,

Noting that one of the issues identified by the UN-GGIM Inventory of Issues included the sharing of geospatial information between government agencies in an official and sustainable manner,

Mindful of the existing national, regional and global projects and activities relevant to data sharing for disaster management,

Mindful also that implementing any solution to improve data and information sharing for disaster management needs to be based on an understanding of different user requirements, and recognition of the variability of spatial data infrastructures and their content between member States,

Recommends that PCGIAP undertakes

- a) *Initial research on existing national and international geo-portals for the sharing of data and information related to disaster management in order to identify the different types of user requirements associated with different hazards types, different phases of the disaster management activity (e.g. risk assessment; preparedness planning; rescue and recovery), and how this reflects on data requirements;*



- b) *A phased approach to developing a standards-based sub-regional pilot(s) to support data sharing for disaster management to demonstrate the federation of national data, metadata and web services to a regional level;*
- c) *Initial design and implementation of a regional geo-portal for disaster management with an objective to have in place a sub-regional portal as a minimum outcome in the next 3 years.*

CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Don't forget to check out the GSDI Association's **Capacity Building Resources** web pages at <http://www.gsdi.org/sic3> to view some of the videos relating to SDI implementation provided by our members. If you have any videos to contribute, please notify us by contacting Harlan Onsrud, Executive Director (Onsrud (at) spatial.maine.edu) or the editor, Roger Longhorn (ral@alum.mit.edu).

ARTICLE OF THE MONTH

In lieu of our usual 'Article of the Month', re-published from **GIM International** magazine, in this issue, during a month in which the Association and many of its members seem to have had an African focus, we use this section of the newsletter to better inform our readers and members on the goals and aspirations of the **AfriGEOSS** initiative, which involves all four of the GSDI Association African member organisations.

AfriGEOSS is proposing the following initial actions in order to realize its objectives:

1) **Engage with appropriate regional agencies and training centres.**

Collaboration on establishing or strengthening regional capacity building networks has already taken place through the GEO Capacity Building Committee - which from January 2012 has been integrated into the new Institutions and Development Board - and the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS) Working Group on Capacity Building and Data Democracy.

These mechanisms complement the ability of the GEOSS Common Infrastructure (GCI) to provide end users with access to data, information, products and services. They recognize that the provision of education and training programmes focusing on the development of open-source software and open systems, and the development of acquisition and dissemination mechanisms, need to take into account the challenges of limited bandwidth in many developing countries.

The UN Economic Commission for Africa (**UNECA**), the Kenya-based Regional Centre for Monitoring of Resources for Development (**RCMRD**) and the Environmental Information System (**EIS-Africa**), each with extensive experience in geospatial activities (and all members of the GSDI Association), will assist **AfriGEOSS**. They will use their networks to ensure that effective and well-coordinated education and training activities are established, and they will support the creation of networks amongst other relevant agencies.



A number of existing regional training centres will play significant roles in GEOSS regional coordination. They include the African Centre of Meteorological Information for Development (**ACMAD**, Niger), the Regional Centre for Training in Aerospace Surveys (**RECTAS**, Nigeria), the Regional Centre for Training and Application in Agrometeorology and Operational Hydrology (Centre Regional de Formation et d'Application en Agrométéorologie et Hydrologie Opérationnelle – **AGRHYMET**, Niger), the African Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education (**CSSTE**, Morocco), the African Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education (**CSSTE**, Nigeria). These institutions will use their existing regional networks, infrastructures and programmes to promote GEOSS.

2) **Identify coordinated infrastructure pilot projects that promote societal benefits.**

Proposed priorities are ground stations to support a coordinated data acquisition strategy for Africa, the African Resources and Environmental Management Constellation (**ARMC**), and AfricaGeoSat-1, among others.



- **Coordinated data acquisition strategy for Africa.**

The ability to downlink data directly for processing will strongly support the development of timely downstream applications, products and services. This will substantially expand access to, and the use and application of, Earth observation data for policy- and decision-making. Such services will provide significant societal benefits, particularly in the areas of disasters (fires and floods), disease outbreaks and natural resources management. Several ground stations already exist, but because they are not interoperable their full potential for supporting research, applications and human capital development has not been realised. To remedy this situation, GEO can provide a coordination mechanism for promoting interoperability involving interfaces, common file formats, common dissemination standards, etc. The first step will be to engage the ground stations in Kenya (Malindi), Egypt (NARSS), South Africa (SANSa), Nigeria (NARSDA), Gabon and Algeria (ASAL). Implementing this strategy will complement the data policy of the African Resources and Environmental Management Constellation (ARMC).

- **African Resources and Environmental Management Constellation (ARMC).**

The ARM constellation initiative will provide Africa with timely, free, open and unrestricted access to medium to high resolution data over Africa for natural resources management applications. The countries involved (currently Algeria, Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa) are collaborating on sustaining and expanding indigenous human capital to support space programmes in Africa.

- **AfricaGeoSat-1 Project.**

The AfricaGeoSat-1 Core Team as outlined in the GEO 2012-2015 Work Plan will work on promoting the AfricaGeoSat-1 project (for a dedicated African geostationary imaging space system) to regional agencies and key role players across Africa. It will also finalize the technical specifications of the space system by consolidating requirements (e.g. for capacity building). The project's scope also covers identifying synergies with existing and planned systems and linking AfricaGeoSat-1 unique applications with on-going activities (e.g. in forestry, agriculture and water management).

- **African Monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable Development (AMESD) and Monitoring of Environment and Security in Africa (MESA).**

AMESD has improved access to Earth observation data, established operational information services and strengthened political and policy frameworks for environmental monitoring and sustainable management of natural resources. MESA is expected to be funded by the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) and will start this year. It will ensure that there is continuity in the work done at the conclusion of AMESD.

3) **Identify coordinated pilot projects that promote societal benefits.**

Proposed priorities are agriculture and food security, forestry, renewable energy (biomass and solar), health and water. For example:

- **Bio-Energy Atlas for Africa.**

This project aims to develop a Bio-Energy Atlas for Africa to provide information on the quantity, distribution, uses and quality of biomass.

- **GEO Forest Carbon Tracking (FCT) and Global Forest Observations Initiatives (GFOI).**

An operational global network of national forest monitoring systems is needed to, inter alia, support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+). Three African countries, namely Cameroon, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo, are currently serving as "National Demonstrators".

- **The Meningitis Risk and Information Technology project (MERIT).**

This collaborative effort of the World Health Organization (WHO) and members of the environmental, public health and epidemiological communities focuses on the Sub-Saharan region of Africa.

4) **Promote data democracy and data sharing.**

GEO is involved in the reconfiguration of the CEOS Working Group on Capacity Building and Data Democracy (WGCBD), which will be fully aligned with the GEO 2012-2015 Work Plan (Institutions and Development chapter). The intention is to engage African agencies in implementing GEO's Data Democracy and Data Sharing tasks. These tasks will improve access to data by strengthening the understanding of individuals and institutions of technology limitations, proper dissemination methods and relevant software tools. They will emphasize the development of open-source software and open systems. They will encourage academic institutions to collaborate, and they will also



support education and training for various existing programmes.

5) **Organize sessions on GEO and GEOSS at premier African conferences.**

Relevant events for promoting GEO and GEOSS include those organized by the African Association of Remote Sensing for the Environment (AARSE), AfricaGIS and other forums. Current plans include holding a session on AfriGEOSS and a Plenary presentation at AARSE 2012 in Morocco. The focus will be on encouraging African countries to become GEO Members and to actively participate in GEO tasks.

6) **Organize regional workshops.**

These workshops will focus on coordinating and strengthening existing regional capacities. The aim is to provide support for regional agencies to conduct workshops that will identify priority societal benefit areas and that can demonstrate how regional coordination can be enhanced to ensure active participation in implementing GEOSS and building **AfriGEOSS**. These two-day workshops are planned to be held during the July – November 2012 period. The focus will be on existing regional activities and priorities, discussions on the GEO Work Plan and GEOSS, and the identification of areas for coordination via pilot projects.

Making AfriGEOSS a Reality

With the **AfriGEOSS** concept now in place, African governments and organizations should start considering actions to supplement the initial funding from South Africa. Active participation in GEO activities will expose African experts to global collaborations and improve their access to data and open-software tools for applications development. This will generate huge benefits to society, help to sustain existing capacities, bring in new knowledge and, most importantly, provide a large return on investment.

THE GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION KNOWLEDGE NETWORK (GIKNET)

The aim of the Geographic Information Knowledge Network (**GIKNet**) is to enhance communication and freely share knowledge among professionals in the global geographic information community. The GIKNet Community Registry permits individuals, government agencies, NGOs, companies and other institutions to record and publish details about themselves and submit relevant documents to the Spatial Documents Depot, which provides a search facility for locating information and documents submitted by GIKNetwork members. A comprehensive list of GI/SDI related discussion lists can

be accessed from a single reference page. Access the GIKNetwork at this link: <http://www.giknet.org/>.

The main categories under which documents can be referenced in the GIKNetwork include: GI Science: Education & Training; GI Science: Research; and SDI/GIS: Practice and Applications. The network is promoted on the Association's e-mail lists and the LinkedIn GSDI Group. All members of the GSDI Association and IGS are encouraged to sign up for GIKNetwork and to submit documents relevant to any aspect of SDI development and deployment, globally.

PARTICIPATION IN GLOBAL SDI PROJECTS

UN GGIM

Past-president of GSDI and Board member, **Dr Abbas Rajabifard**, provides this short report on preparations for the **2nd UNGGIM Forum**, which he will attend on behalf of GSDI Association. The Second High Level Forum on UN Global Geospatial Information Management (GGIM) will be held in Doha, Qatar from 4-6 February, 2013 at the Qatar National Convention Centre.

The Forum will bring together government representatives from United Nations Member States as well as International Geospatial Information Societies and other Industries and stakeholders from non-governmental organizations, academia and the private sector to address and discuss critical and cutting-edge issues on global geospatial information management. The Forum seeks to promote greater usage of growing sources of geospatial information and best practices.

The activities will begin on Sunday, 3 February, 2013 with An 'Exchange Forum with the Geospatial Industry'. The International Geospatial Information Societies (JBGIS) with input from all members including GSDI Association and with collaboration with UN Cartographic Section will conduct this Exchange Forum. GSDI Association will be represented by Prof Abbas Rajabifard (Past President of GSDI) at this Forum and will chair a session and present at this Forum.

The High Level Forum starts on Monday, 4 February, 2013, with an Opening Ceremony and Ministerial Segment, followed by five technical sessions over the next three days. Bringing all stakeholders together, the Forum will address current critical matters such as: the importance of and drivers for building a sustainable national geospatial information system; future trends in geospatial information, including growing the information base and promoting its greater use; developing an effective global geodetic reference framework and leveraging location-based services; geospatial information and sustainable development



(Rio+20); and challenges in developing core global reference datasets. Each of the sessions will consist of a keynote presentation, panel presentations and discussion with the audience. Additional information will continually be available at <http://ggim.un.org/>.

Each of the sessions will consist of a keynote presentation, panel presentations and discussion with the audience. Similar to the First High Level Forum, an Exchange Forum with the Geospatial Industry will be held on 3 February 2013, one day prior to the Second High Level Forum.

GeoSUR Regional SDI Award



GSDI Board members **Eric van Praag** and **Santiago Borrero** announced that the first edition of the **GeoSUR Award**, for 2012, was awarded during the V GeoSUR Meeting that took place on 14 November in Buenos Aires, Argentina, under the aegis of the 44th PAIGH Board of Directors Meeting.

The GeoSUR Innovation Award was provided to the Project to "Create a Seamless Integrated 1:250,000 Digital Map of Mesoamerica", presented by the National Geographic Institute of El Salvador. The GeoSUR Relevance Award was provided to the Peru Ministry of Environment Map Service, presented by the Office of Land Planning of the Vice-Ministry of Strategic Development of Natural Resources of the Ministry of Environment. For more information, visit www.geosur.info/geosur/ and www.ipgh.org.

GEOSS - AfriGEOSS: An Initiative to Reinforce Earth Observation in Africa

The Group on Earth Observations (**GEO**) launched the **AfriGEOSS** initiative in May 2012, which aims to coordinate the implementation of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (**GEOSS**) and related Earth observation activities in Africa. Supported by the

GEO Secretariat and recognized by the Executive Committee, the initiative seeks to identify the challenges and put in place measures to enhance Africa's participation in, and contribution to, GEOSS. This participation will contribute to the continent's efforts to bridge the digital divide and to build a knowledge-based economy using GEO networks and the GEOSS infrastructure.

The GEO partnership currently includes 22 Member states and four Participating Organisations from Africa. As the number of African Members has reached a critical threshold in recent years, this is an appropriate moment to assess the progress they have made thus far in implementing and using GEOSS and other Earth observation and environmental management initiatives. Therefore, **AfriGEOSS** is dedicated to linking GEO's current activities with Africa's existing capacities and initiatives in order to enhance capacity for producing, managing and using Earth observations.

The objectives of **AfriGEOSS** include:

- to coordinate and bring together relevant stakeholders, institutions and agencies across Africa that are involved in GEO and other Earth observation activities;
- to provide a platform for countries to participate in GEO and to contribute to GEOSS, and assist them in establishing national and regional coordinating mechanisms;
- to assist in promoting knowledge sharing and global collaborations;
- to identify challenges, gaps and opportunities for African contributions to GEO and GEOSS;
- to leverage existing capacities and planned assets and resources; and
- to develop an appropriate strategy and participatory model for achieving the above goals.

Find out more about **AfriGEOSS** here:

http://www.earthobservations.org/art_019_002.shtml

GSDI INVOLVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

GSDI Member organisations, members of the GSDI Association Committees, Council and Board, and IGS members are involved in the many other regional and global initiatives on an on-going basis:

- Digital Earth (International Society for Digital Earth) – visit www.digitalearth-isde.org
- Eye on Earth – visit www.eyeonearth.org



- Group on Earth Observations (GEO) building the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) – see www.earthobservations.org/ag_partorg.shtml
 - EuroGEOSS – GEOSS Project funded by the European Union – see www.eurogeoss.eu/default.aspx
 - UNESCO IOC – Marine/Coastal Spatial Data Infrastructure development – visit www.iode.org.
 - UNSDI – UN-GGIM (UN Global Geospatial Information Management) – visit ggim.un.org.
 - UNSDI – UNGIWG (UN GI Working Group) – visit www.ungiwg.org
 - UNESCO IOC – Marine/Coastal Spatial Data Infrastructure development – visit www.iode.org.
- UNSDI – UNGIWG (UN GI Working Group) – visit www.ungiwg.org

GSDI DISCUSSION FORUMS UPDATES

To see the latest news from the different e-mail forums maintained by the GSDI Committees (4) and the regional SDI Newsletters (5), visit the web site at <http://www.gsdi.org/discussionlists>, choose the forum of interest and select the 'Archives' option. All discussion lists are open to anyone who is interested in participating, and joining instructions are at the web site above.

For more information on any of these items, visit the **GSDI Association** web site at <http://www.gsdi.org>.

GSDI AND IGS GLOBAL NEWS - News from the [GSDI Association](http://www.gsdi.org) and the [International Geospatial Society](http://www.igs.org) – is published by the GSDI Association, edited by Roger Longhorn, vice-Chair, Communications, of the GSDI Outreach and Membership Committee. The Editor may be contacted at ral@alum.mit.edu. Please feel free to submit your news to the Editor, relevant to GSDI and IGS Member news or SDI initiatives at any level.

