



**The 7th International Conference of the African Association
of Remote Sensing of the Environment (AARSE)
On
*Earth Observation and Geoinformation for Governance in Africa***

THE ACCRA DECLARATION

Delegates from 40 countries present at the 7th International AARSE Conference held in Accra from 27th to 30th October 2008:

Recognizing that accurate geospatial information (GI) is an essential pre-requisite for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG);

Noting the importance of space products in the attainment of the MDG and other development objectives articulated in the action plans of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and NEPAD;

Recognizing the successful commencement of the biennial African Space Leadership Forum on Space Sciences and Technology;

Recognizing the importance of Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) and noting that a number of African countries are members of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO).

Recognizing the importance of the Lisbon Declaration on “GMES and Africa”

Noting that Nigeria, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco and South Africa have acquired their own Earth Observation (EO) satellites and others are in the pipeline;

Recognising the need for human, organizational and institutional capacity in Earth Observation and Geoinformation Science for development;

Further recognizing the work of the African Association of Remote Sensing of the Environment (AARSE) and the Environmental Information System–Africa (EIS-Africa) over the past 16 years as major points of contact and facilitators of Earth Observation and GI activities in Africa;

Recognising the effectiveness and impact of GeonetCast;

Hereby welcome the initiative of China and Brazil to facilitate the provision of CBERS data for the African continent and

Further welcome the GEO-Africa initiative while encouraging stakeholders to explore links to existing initiatives in Africa (such as ARM);

Advocate the use of GeonetCast to disseminate EO data and products to the User community in Africa and to facilitate distance learning;



And

Further declare and call on African Governments and the African Union (AU) to:

1. Promote the establishment of a Secretariat for the realisation of African Space Agency and its programmes through the establishment of a Scientific and Technical Working Group that will collaborate with the AU's Steering Committee on Science and Technology (S&T) to:
 - (a) Review existing related initiatives and programmes;
 - (b) Formulate strategy and plan(s) of action that can assist Africa to utilize SST to improve its socio-economic development;
2. Encourage the utilization and realization of the African Resources Management (ARM) constellation.
3. Strengthen coordination between different initiatives in Earth Observations and geospatial information to enhance the impact of each initiative and the overall impact.
4. Engage actively at all levels of GEO activities and the GEOSS implementation plan and for countries to initiate programmes within their national and regional development plans in support of integrated and coordinated Earth Observations.
5. Support the work of the Steering Board for GMES-Africa and ascertain the consultancy by African Earth Observation experts
6. Encourage national and regional centers for geoinformatics in Africa to actively engage in EO monitoring for human security and stability, and to facilitate links to international programs such as GMES (Global Monitoring for Environment and Security) and AMESD (African Monitoring for Environment and Sustainable Development).
7. Support African based conferences and workshops for initiating and developing appropriate solutions to the Continent's national and regional development.
8. Strengthen and harmonize human resource development across Africa in the fields of EO and GI Sciences by supporting organizations such as AARSE and EIS-Africa as well as existing and new regional training programmes at tertiary institutions.

Accra, October 30, 2008