

GEOSS Interoperability and Application to Water Security & Governance (24-26 October 2008)

This three-day AARSE2008 pre-conference workshop focused on human capacity building for the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) and provided the latest update on the implementation of the GEOSS information infrastructure. Special attention was on how to develop operational end-user applications and actively work with end-users for informed decision making for Water Security and Governance.

The workshop was opened by Tsehaie Woldai who introduced Her Excellency Mrs. Cecilia Dapaah (MP), the Hon. Minister of Water Resources, Works and Housing. In her opening address to the GEOSS workshop, the Minister, commended the organizers for choosing the highly relevant theme of water. The need to develop strategies for an effective Earth Observation based assessment and monitoring system for the sustainable and integrated management of water resources in Africa, taking into account in-continent applied research capacity could not be over-emphasized. An effective strategy for the development and sustainability of human resources, infrastructure and institutional capacity within Africa would need to be drawn up. Ghana had taken significant steps towards integrated water resource management (IWRM) with the creation of the Water Resources Commission (WRC) in 1996 in which all main stakeholder groups and sectors involved in water resources are represented. The Minister expressed her hope that the efforts made by GEO and its partners be sustained in a way that will make African professionals and policy makers self-sufficient and proficient in the use of geo-based technologies and products for the effective management of the most valuable, but also very vulnerable resource: water.



Accra Workshop Participants take a picture break.

The Workshop provided a forum for discussing the development and operational issues of Water Security and Governance for Africa. The GEOSS workshop was organised in association with AARSE, IEEE, ICEO, ISPRS, ITC, OGC, 52N, and the University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

Over 60 people from various parts of Africa attended the workshop. The participants were well balanced (in terms of countries they represented), of high calibre (who

knew their profession well), highly motivated and engaging. The three ITC members (Chris Mannaerts, Ben Mathuis and Rob Lemmens) who gave outstanding lectures and hands-on-exercises conducted most of the lectures, which were praised highly by the participants. In addition, the course offered by INPE must also be applauded. The overall evaluation was very good to excellent.

The venue for the pre-conference workshop was at ALISA Hotel, Accra, Ghana. During the last day the group was divided into 6 sub-groups who actively discussed the role of GEO, GEOS, GEONETCast and open source software tools. For the initiative to be successful and sustainable, affordability, accessibility and availability was suggested to be considered by the participants. Capacity building in the form of short application oriented course is deemed necessary to warrant its success.