

## Welcome by the Secretary General



On behalf of the organizers, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 5<sup>th</sup> African Association of Remote Sensing of the Environment (AARSE) Conference in Nairobi, Kenya also promoted as Nairobi 2004. The Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) has spared no effort to ensure the success of the Conference. I would like to comment the Centre for arranging and supporting this conference. With your contribution and participation, there is no doubt that NAIROBI 2004 will be interesting and rewarding. AARSE would like to thank the co-sponsors of the conference, namely: the Government of Kenya, United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), International Institute for Geo-information Science and Earth Observation (ITC - The Netherlands), JICA (Japan), MAPS Geosystems (Dubai), EIS- Africa, NEPAD Secretariat, Pan African START Secretariat (Kenya), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Resources Centre (WRI - USA), including the various organizations that arranged the pre-conference Workshops.

In this conference, many papers on geo-information will be presented and discussed. Among them are: the current development status of Geo-information technologies (Remote Sensing, GIS, GPS and ICT); its application in the assessing and management of agriculture and forestry, soil, geology, water resources, biodiversity, rural and urban, coastal and marine resources, disasters, climate change and variability; environmental database development and management; GIS and predictive modelling; development of geo-spatial data infrastructure; education and training in geo-information sciences and earth observation and national, regional and international policies on space technology development and application will be addressed during these four days event. Although the theme of the Conference **"Geoinformation Sciences in Support of Africa's Development"** is of universal importance, it is particularly relevant to Africa where the wide application of Geo-information technologies in various fields has its potential to improve the quality of life of all residing in this continent.

In response to the first call for papers, no less than 250 Abstracts were received by the deadline, this eventually reaching almost 300. From these diverse and quality responses, the NAIROBI 2004 Technical Committee compiled a program of oral presentations and Poster sessions that promise to make this Conference the primary Remote Sensing event in Africa since the last Abuja 4<sup>th</sup> AARSE Conference in 2000. Their effort deserves our sincere appreciation. Special thanks to the many International members of the Technical Committee who made an invaluable contribution to the tedious task. Participants from around 40 countries are expected to be present in this conference supporting once again the truly international character of AARSE's conferences.

To ensure that the Conference is a success in all its aspects, the LOC has devoted a great deal of thought, time and energy in its planning, not only in deciding on the excellent facilities, the technical program and the scientific exhibit, but also in the social activities.

On behalf of the Council and all attendees, I want to express my sincere gratitude to our Kenyan colleagues especially, the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) for organizing this conference with dedication, to the Government of Kenya, which has fully supported this conference and to UNEP for their continuous support of AARSE's activities and for allowing the Conference to be held in their premises.

We trust, that you will find the Conference enlightening and worthwhile and that you will have the most enjoyable time in Kenya.

Tsehaie Woldai  
Secretary General, AARSE