

REPORT

The User and the GEOSS Architecture II - Applications for Africa,

29 – 30 October 2005

Dr. Tsehaie Woldai

The 2 days pre-conference scientific workshop organized at CSIR International Convention Centre, Tshwane (Pretoria), focused on the Global Earth Observation System of Systems architecture and how it can meet user needs in Africa. The workshop provided a forum for addressing the benefits and challenges of advanced global information system implementation for societal benefits with specific emphasis on Africa. It was organized by IEEE-GRSS, AARSE, AfricaGIS 2005, OGC, ISPRS, University of Johannesburg, NASA and AESS.

The workshop was attended by 60 participants. On the first day, welcome and opening was done by representative from Department of Science and Technology, official host of the event and the introduction and objectives was outlined by the co-chairman of the workshop, Dr Jay Pearlman. This was followed by Dr Bob Scholes of South Africa who introduced GEOSS and its implication for Africa. The user prospective of GEOSS was highlighted by means of case studies (on water/drought disaster management applications) presented by various African speakers with major highlights on the GEOSS Architecture given by Mr. Peter Colhan, Geo Secretariat and on South Africa's Earth Observation Strategy by Dr.Imraan Saloojee, Dept Science and Technology, South Africa. The first day was closed with a cocktail reception.

The second day workshop presentation focused on Water/Drought Applications and GEOSS Architecture and Open Interoperability issues. Two GEOSS breakout sessions were conducted in five groups; the first part aiming to identify gaps and problems in the GEOSS by discussing the issues such as: What do users need from GEOSS for their applications? What are the priorities? What are the particular problems in Africa? What training is required? While the second part dealt with the way forward and user recommendations for GEOSS.