

SYMPOSIUM

CAPE TOWN 2000

“INFORMATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”

Third Symposium of the African Association of Remote Sensing of the Environment (AARSE) and 28th International Symposium on Remote Sensing of Environment

**LORD CHARLES HOTEL, Cape Town, South Africa
27 - 31 March 2000**

A symposium under the motto CAPE TOWN 2000 'Information for Sustainable Development' was held in Cape Town, South Africa from the 27 - 31 March 2000. The five day event marking the 3rd Symposium of the African Association of Remote Sensing of the Environment (AARSE) and the 28th International Symposium on Remote Sensing of Environment (ISRSE) was organized by the South African CSIR Satellite Application Centre and supported by: Carl Duisberg Gesellschaft e.V. (CDG) - Germany, EUMETSAT, European Space Agency (ESA), GVM, Joint Research Centre - European Consortium, International Society of Photogrammetry & Remote Sensing (ISPRS), NASA - National Aeronautics and Space Administration, NOAA, Norsk Romsenter - Norwegian Space Centre, South African Airways, SPACE IMAGING, University of Cape Town, South Africa, UNEP, USGS, and the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs

The objectives of the conference among other were:

- To provide a forum for scientists, researchers, decision-makers, educational institutions and other organizations to report on their activities and projects.
- To examine the policy issues in, and strategies for effective development and applications of remote sensing and GIS and its effective linkage with national development as well as how these technologies can be legitimized as critical success factor for sustainable development.
- To deliberate on joint technology development and sharing of knowledge across professional, sectoral and national boundaries.
- To deliberate on how to facilitate the involvement and investment of private sector in the development of remote sensing and GIS in Africa and elsewhere

Notwithstanding the main theme of the conference being on 'Information for Sustainable Development', the conference provided a unique opportunity to address the fundamental issues under which space data and its applications can be made to lead to beneficial and sustainable development and management of environmental and natural resources.

In his opening introductory message, Dr. Willem Botha, Organizing Chairman of the Symposium emphasized the importance that South Africa give to this Symposium and in particular to the impact that space information can lead to sustainable development in South Africa and the continent in general. He thanked to the international members of the Technical Committee for their invaluable contribution to the 'onerous task'. He emphasized the high quality and diversity of the contributions. Dr. Willem Botha also emphasized the role of CSIR Satellite Application Centre in organizing the Symposium and thanked AARSE and ISRSE including the supporting organizations for their effort and cooperation.

The next speaker, Dr. Geoff Garrett, the President of CSIR, South Africa, welcomed the participants to the Symposium. He also gave an elaborate view on the activities of CSIR in promoting space technology in Africa and outlined his government commitment to the Symposium and thanked the wider international participation to the conference.

His Excellency Dr. Ben Ngubane, Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology of South Africa did the official opening of the Symposium. In his address to the conference delegates, Dr. Ngubane acknowledged the role of the South African Satellite Application Centre (CSIR) and its role in organizing such important Symposium. He also reiterated the relevance of the symposium 'Information for Sustainable Development' for south Africa and all Africans and praised the boost it has received by the joint the 3rd African Association of Remote Sensing of the Environment (AARSE) and the 28th International Symposium on Remote Sensing of the Environment effort to support this important event as well as the support given by other sponsoring organizations to the Symposium and workshops. Dr. Ngubane continued that South Africa is 'grappling with many environmental impact issues - such as:

- The quality water supply for South Africa's people, whereby in many parts of South Africa it is reaching the limits of available capacity.
- The rapid denudation of land as a result of human settlement and domestic animals, which creates erosion and loss of topsoil, with long term effects on the ability of the land to support its growing population.
- The devastating effects of natural disasters like fires and floods in Cape Town and the surrounding countries as witnessed in the past couple of months.

Dr. Ngubane reminded the participants local issues and typical disaster patterns in South Africa that need to be addressed through the evolving technologies of satellite remote sensing. He briefly mentioned the impact of urbanization (urban population doubling every 14 years in South Africa), erosion, soil degradation and siltation (involving one medium-sized dam per year), atmospheric pollution, rapid depletion of the marine resources, drought, flash floods, locust plagues, etc. as the major environmental problem facing his country. Further, he emphasized the importance of remote sensing and GIS in the pursuance of goals in natural resources mapping and environmental assessment in Africa. With these remarks, Dr. Ngubane declared the Symposium open.

The opening speech was quickly followed by the keynote addresses of:

1. Dr. Tillmann Mohr, Director General, EUMETSAT
2. Dr. Ghassem Asrar, Associate Administrator, NASA
3. Dr. Claudio Mastracci, Director of Applications Programmes, ESA, and
4. Dr. Gregory W. Withee, assistant Administrator for Satellite and Information Services, NOAA.

The keynote speakers in general outlined policy statements of their organizations, status of ongoing activities in satellite remote sensing within their organizations and the emerging space technological opportunities for developed and developing countries.

Dr. Geoff Garrett, the President of CSIR, SOUTH AFRICA, chaired the opening ceremony. The opening session was reported by the country mass media.

The conference, which was held in LORD CHARLES HOTEL, Cape Town, attracted more than 370 delegates, representing 44 countries in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, Middle East, North and South America. More than 134 oral and 150 poster presentations

covering various topics accompanied by more than 20 exhibitions were presented during the conference. These included:

ORAL PRESENTATIONS	POSTER PRESENTATIONS
1. Global change (12)	1. Global change (12)
2. Geological Applications (5)	2. Remote sensing in Africa (8)
3. Status of Environmental remote sensing in Africa (8)	3. Supporting environmental treaties & agreements (2)
4. Integrated global observation strategy (4)	4. Geological applications (14)
5. Agriculture & Forestry crop statistics & farming (11)	5. Disaster management (9)
6. Disaster management (13)	6. Water resources management (9)
7. Water resources management (7)	7. Agriculture & forestry (40)
8. Marine and coastal environ. & resources (17)	8. Marine and coastal environm. Resources (14)
9. Urban & regional planning (12)	9. Urban and regional planning (17)
10. Agriculture and forestry, natural vegetation & rangeland management (4)	10. Emerging and supporting technologies (25)
11. Agriculture & Forestry: radar application (4)	
12. Global mapp. Agendas in a digital world (5)	
13. Emerging & supporting technologies (16)	
14. Marine & coastal environment and resources: radar applications (4)	
15. Special session Eumetsat (4)	
16. Commercial data sources for public and private issues (4)	
17. Supporting environmental treaties & agreements (4)	

Exhibitors at the Symposium:	
1. NASA's Earth Science Enterprise (ESE)	11. Radarsat International
2. NASA Airborne Science Program	12. Kongsberg Spacetec
3. NASA Commercial Remote Sensing Program	13. CSIR and ARC Partnership, South Africa
4. Integraph Systems/ACC Systems - South Africa	14. APPLANIX Corporation
5. International GPS Service / Jet Propulsion Laboratory	15. GIMS (pty) Limited
6. Stora Enso Forest Consulting Ltd. - Finland	16. CSIR Satellite Application Centre, South Africa
7. Research Systems International (UK) Limited	17. 19 th ISPRS Conference "Geoinformation for All"
8. TerraMare Environmental Data Systems & Earth Resource Mapping (ER Mapper)	18. Space Imaging Africa
9. ESA - ESRIN	19. PCI Geomatics
10. CLARK Labs. (formerly known as The Idrisi Project)	20. HyVista Corporation (HVC)

During the Symposium week, a special sessions on the African Association of Remote Sensing of the Environment (AARSE) and the International Society of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS) was held. In this session, the Secretary General of AARSE, Dr. T. Woldai discussed issues regarding AARSE since its second conference in Abidjan. A brief history of the Association, development so far, progress and constraints in its organizational function was discussed and suggestions towards the improvement of the Association in future highlighted by participants was noted. Similar Africans participation in the ISPRS activities was also discussed by Prof. Dr. H. Ruther, Treasurer of ISPRS.

The panel discussion on: "Remote sensing from space provide information for sustainable development" in the last day of the Symposium offered an invigorating discussions

between the participants to the conference and the panelist (7 in total). This was the most sensational part of the conference and an immediate evaluation taken after the Symposium proved to highlight the importance of such panel in future similar activities.

The Chairman of the Symposium Dr. Willem Botha, in his closing address thanked the Organizing and Scientific committee and special word of appreciation among all was given to the various organizations supporting the Symposium including the secretariat which have done an excellent job.