



EIS

Editorial

Dear Reader,

First, I would like begin with some tragic news regarding one our colleagues from Zimbabwe. Mr Reuben Mavima formerly with SADC RRSU and Zimbabwe University died a few weeks ago. He was responsible for much of the good work in the field of Spatial Data Infrastructure development particularly in SADC. EIS-AFRICA worked closely with him on several occasions and he will be solely missed by the Geo-information community in Africa. Our thoughts go out to his family and friends.

EIS-AFRICA and the HSRC would like to remind you that the survey of Fundamental Datasets in Africa has begun in earnest. Our partners OSFAC, RCMRD, CSE, RECTAS and CEDARE will be contacting you shortly to administer a questionnaire that will be used as the instrument to determine data gaps on the conti-

nent. It is vital that all geospatial data holders and custodians participate in this survey. Please contact me sgovender@eis-africa.org for more information on how you can support this activity.

Back to this month's newsletter, as you will read, we have continued to bring to you a diversity of African sourced articles that encompass issues around broader developmental debates. We believe that Geospatial Information is a key building block in addressing issues such as poverty, sustainable development and disaster management etc. We hope these articles stimulate you to develop GI and EI systems that address Africa's priority needs.

Sives Govender

Africa's Potential to Overcome Poverty

Africa's potential to overcome poverty has been unveiled by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in its latest report.

UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner is optimistic that Poverty in Africa can be made history if the region's wealth of natural resources is effectively, fairly and sustainably harnessed.

Speaking when he officially launched the Africa Environment Out Look AEO2, the new head of the UNEP says despite the potential that Africa has there are still outstanding issues like rapid rates of deforestation, high levels of land degradation, wasteful water use in agriculture and climate change remain and need to be urgently addressed.

Steiner noted that natural resources are at the heart of economic activities.

The report entitled 'Our Environment, Our Wealth', stress that Africa is currently only using a fraction of its natural wealth potential.

"There is need for Africa to move from being a major exporter of primary resources to being one with a vibrant industrial and manufacturing base," says Steiner.

He also called for 'added value' to the primary commodities exported by African states.

Other challenges are emerging. These range from genetically modified organisms and the costs of alien invasive species up to a switch of chemical manufacturing from the developed to the developing world, says the Africa Environment Outlook-2.

However many African countries are now parties to a wide range of international environment treaties and new cooperative agreements are being born covering shared river and ecosystems like the Limpopo up to the management of the Congo basin's globally important forests.

Meanwhile initiatives like the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) promise to propel the region and its people onto a more prosperous path that balances economic, social and environmental concerns.

Several African countries, like the Gambia and Zambia, are mainstreaming the environment in their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and other countries are starting to use tax and other market

Upcoming Events

Environmental Education Association of Southern Africa 2006 Conference, Harare, Zimbabwe, 14-18 August 2006. The 24th year of the EEASA conference promises to offer all of the regular presentations and workshop styles of past conferences. Paper presentations, workshops, field trips, round table discussions and formulation of recommendations for regional actions in line with the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) will be offered. A market place will be available for displays. The conference will feature a special open day for young people with both the presentations and the displays focusing on the participation of the youth in EE.

The sub-themes for presentations at the EEASA 2006 conference will be:

- * Organising for Action in EE
- * Environmental Policy in Practice
- * Industrial Initiatives for the Environment
- * Challenge of Sustainable Development
- * Working Towards Best Practices in EE
- * Translating UNDESD into Action

For more information, see: www.action.co.zw

International Disaster Reduction Conference, Davos, Switzerland, 27 August—1 September 2006. For more information see <http://www.davos2006.ch/>

ISPRS Commission VIII Symposium, Haifa, Israel, 3—7 September 2006. For more information, see <http://www.commission8.isprs.org>.

ISPRS Commission III Symposium: “Photogrammetric Computer Vision”, Bonn, Germany, 20—22 September 2006. For more information, see <http://www.commission3.isprs.org>.

International Water Management Institute (IWMI) is organizing an **International Workshop on Global Irrigated Area Mapping (GIAM)** during September 25-27, 2006 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Please register on-line (preferred) at: <http://www.iwmidsp.org/iwmi/giam-workshop/>.

Call for papers for the planned **2nd Gi4DM** which will take place in Goa, India from 25—26 September 2006. Deadline for submission of abstracts is 31 January 2006. For more information, see: <http://www.eis-africa.org>.

IFPRI Commission V Symposium: “Image Engineering & Vision Metrology”, Dresden, Germany, 25—27 September 2005. For more information, see <http://www.commission5.isprs.org>.

IFPRI Commission IV Symposium: “Geospatial Databases for Sustainable Development”, Goa, India, 27—30 September 2006. For more information, see <http://www.commission4.isprs.org>.

First Eastern Africa ESRI User Conference (EAUC), Nairobi, Kenya, 5 - 6 October 2006. Oakar Services Ltd, ESRI's Eastern Africa Distributor invites you to join current and potential users of ESRI software and members of the regional spatial data community at the very 1st Eastern Africa ESRI User Conference. **2-4/10/06 Pre-conference Program** will include (a) ESRI Instructor-led GIS training sessions (b) Pre-conference seminar *GIS in Law Enforcement & Homeland Security*. The EAUC will feature paper presentations, a user poster display, commercial exhibitions, technical workshops and also an inspiring Student Assistantship Program. Paper Abstracts are now invited on any of the following tracks: (a) Environment & Natural Resources (b) Planning, Land Management & Economic Development (c) GIS Science, Technology & Education, Business Services (d) Transportation, Utilities & Public Works (e) Health & Public Safety. **Abstract submission deadline is 30 June.** For full conference details, contact eauc@esriea.co.ke

SARETI: African Health Research Ethics Symposium 2006. The South African Research Ethics Training Initiative (SARETI) is an Africa-based research ethics training programme funded by the Fogarty International Center of the US National Institutes of Health. SARETI is currently in its fourth year of programme activity, with several Masters-level and fellowship students close to completing their degrees and training. In October this year, SARETI plans to host the first African Health Research Ethics Symposium (AHRES). The meeting will be held from Wed 11th to Fri 13th October 2006 at the Meridien Hotel in Dakar, Senegal. The medium of the meeting will be in English. We invite expressions of interest for the submission of papers and presentations at this SARETI symposium. The focus of AHRES will be the presentation of new research and scholarship on ethical issues in research in Africa, or by African researchers and scholars. Preference will be

Africa's Potential to Overcome Poverty (cont.)

mechanisms to conserve ecosystems like forests.

Achim Steiner, UNEP's Executive Director, said today: "The report challenges the myth that Africa is poor. Indeed, it points out that its vast natural wealth can, if sensitively, sustainably and creatively managed, be the basis for an African renaissance—a renaissance that meets and goes beyond the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals. But this is not inevitable and, as the AEO-2 points out, African nations face stark choices".

"If policies remain unchanged, political will found wanting and sufficient funding proves to be elusive, then Africa may take a far more unsustainable track that will see an erosion of its nature-based wealth and a slide into ever deeper poverty," he added.

"Such a track will have disturbing consequences not just for many of the 800 million people here but for the rest of the world. Nevertheless, I am convinced that we are fast reaching a watershed in Africa's response and that the pieces of a sustainable jigsaw puzzle are being steadily put into place" said Mr Steiner.

"Governments are signaling an increased willingness to cooperate and to engage over a wide range of pressing regional and global issues. The economic importance of the environment is increasingly recognized by Africa's leaders as an instrument for development, for livelihoods, for peace and for stability. I sincerely believe we have a real opportunity to take this impetus a long way," he concluded.

The AEO-2, compiled on behalf of AMCEN with funding from UNEP and the governments of Belgium, Luxembourg and Norway, is the work of researchers and scientists from across the region.

Untapped Potential

From freshwaters to forests and from minerals to the marine environment, the region is only realizing a fraction of its nature-based economic potential says the AEO-2, which is sub-titled *Our Environment, Our Wealth*.

The report says, for example, that the potential for tourism based around nature and cultural sites is huge but relatively untapped.

"Africa has numerous tourist attractions, yet it contributes only four per cent annually to the multi billion dollar global tourism industry," it notes.

Similar arguments are made in terms of food in a region with "sufficient land resources to produce enough to feed its people and yet one in three is presently undernourished".

The report also overturns the popular view that Africa is short of water, rather it underlines how little of it is utilized for irrigation, drinking water and power generation.

Africa's renewable freshwater resource is, at close to 4,000 cubic km per year, about 10 per cent of the global freshwater resource and closely matches Africa's share of the world population.

Yet in 2005 only about five per cent of the development potential is being used for 'industry, tourism and hydro-power,' notes the report.

It points out that Africa "is a mining giant" producing nearly 80 per cent of the world's platinum, more than 40 per cent of the globe's diamonds and more than a fifth of its gold and cobalt. Yet its industrial base is insignificant".

The report argues that, in the case of minerals as well as areas like forest products, there is a pressing need to 'add value to natural resources".

"There is a need for Africa to move from being a major exporter of primary resources to being one" with a vibrant industrial and manufacturing base.

The AEO-2 assesses the state of the environment and draws plausible scenarios as to the likely impacts of different policies over the coming decades.

The kinds of tough choices facing African leaders, business and civil society are most clear cut in the scenarios on Freshwater and Land.

Land

If food production in Africa is driven purely by Market Forces, the level of land degradation is likely to rise to between 25,000 and 35,000 hectares a year under a worst case scenario.

This rapid intensification of farming will hit forests in particular with forest cover declining 'drastically' during the 2005 to 2025 period.

Under a more promising scenario,

dubbed The Great Transition, agricultural land expands by 10 per cent between 2005 and 2025.

Under this scenario much of this comes not from greater exploitation of existing agricultural land but as a result of putting government-held lands into production.

Revised tax systems also promote good land use with a switch towards agriculture tailored to local climatic, geographical, demographic and cultural factors.

Land degradation declines to 0.1 million hectares a year by 2015 with restoration programmes leading, from about the same year, to an increase in forest cover.

Freshwater

Under a worse case scenario, competition for water will rise as industrial expansion grows with the losers likely to be the general public.

Industrial growth in the region is likely to be as a result of developed world companies shifting factories, such as chemical plants, into developing parts of the world such as Africa and in particular North and South Africa.

The new industries will generate employment but will take up to 16 per cent of supplies putting increasing pressure on underground water supplies, says the report.

Water prices for domestic consumers could soar in many African cities forcing people to buy cheaper but more polluted sources.

Under this scenario over a third of Africans in future will not have adequate access to water.

Under the more optimistic scenario, industries are required to meet proper pollution control standards and, although industrial use of water climbs to just under a fifth of total water use, discharges do not pollute lakes or rivers.

Increases in industrial demand are balanced by water efficiency gains in agriculture through, for example, the adoption of drip as opposed to spray systems.

Currently agriculture in Africa accounts for up to 90 per cent of water use. Under the Great Transitions scenario it declines to under 60 per cent as a result of governments introducing

Africa's Potential to Overcome Poverty (cont.)

and encouraging tariffs and modern water saving irrigation systems.

However, the availability of greater quantities of clean and safe drinking water allied to rising living standards and incomes generated by industrial growth will probably result in higher public use if not 'over use' in growing urban areas.

Thus the proportion of Africa's citizens without access to adequate water supplies under this scenario will be 26 per cent by 2050 from a total population then of 1.5 billion.

It indicates that to meet and maintain the internationally agreed development goals will require even greater efforts in areas of consumer awareness and water efficiency in homes and cities.

Emerging Issues

Alien invasive species from toads to trees are among the emerging issues facing Africa says AEO-2.

Experts have pinpointed large numbers of life forms, deliberately or accidentally introduced into Africa, which are poisoning cattle, damaging water supplies, carrying infections and affecting tourism.

The highest numbers of alien species are estimated to be found in South Africa followed by Mauritius, Swaziland, Algeria, Madagascar and Kenya.

Their impacts may equate to hundreds of millions of dollars in damage annually and may also be contributing to the undermining of economic progress and the delivery of the MDGs.

Black wattle, a tree introduced into

South Africa about 150 years ago to provide bark products, is undermining river banks and harming wildlife in the Cape Floral Kingdom, one of the world's great biodiversity hot spots.

Since 1995, the South African government has removed and destroyed some five billion black wattle trees. The annual bill for manual and chemical control of all alien species in the Cape Floral Kingdom is around \$40 million.

Meanwhile stockpiles of obsolete and hazardous chemicals, a switch of chemical production from developed to developing countries and gaps in the safe handling of toxic substances are becoming another new area of concern.

The issue is underscored in a study of wetlands in Senegal where agricultural and industrial chemical pollution has more than halved fish catches in some places.

The AEO-2 call for a raft of measures to be put in place to ensure Africa maximizes the benefits of any chemical industrialization.

These include improved risk assessments, monitoring, effective waste management, labeling of products to enable sound consumer choice and emergency response systems.

The recommendations echo those proposed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 and that were agreed by environment ministers under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management at UNEP's Special Session of its Governing Council/Global Ministerial Envi-

ronment Forum in Dubai earlier in the year.

The third emerging issue focuses on how the region is responding to the promises and potential pitfalls of gene modified plants.

The report notes that nearly 20 African countries are now growing or field testing GMOs from Morocco and Egypt to Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa across to Benin, Cameroon and Mali in West Africa.

The report accepts that such high tech crops could help in the war against famine and hunger and thus play a part in meeting internationally agreed development goals.

But there are worries that such crops may be seen as 'silver bullets' deflecting attention from more fundamental issues of hunger like poor food distribution systems, the inability of the poor to get access to crop lands and environmental mismanagement.

There is also concern that too few African countries have the scientific, legal, risk assessment and administrative structures in place to deal with this new generation of crops.

A multi million dollar capacity building project, being undertaken by UNEP and funded by the Global Environment Facility, aims to bridge these gaps so that 100 developing countries, including over 30 African ones, have the necessary skills and laws needed to accept or reject GMOs.

Submitted by Carlyn Hambuba

Commission pledges €30m for key roads in Tanzania

The European Commission has approved €30 million for the final stage of a major road upgrading programme in Tanzania. The programme will improve connections between Dar-es-Salaam and Tanzania's second city, Mwanza. The upgrading will reduce transport costs on East Africa's central corridor, so more people have access to markets and trade links in the

region. The programme builds on more than €170 million that the EU has invested in Tanzania's roads since 2002, and is part of a wider strategy to build infrastructure links that connect countries throughout Africa.

More information

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressRel>

easesAction.do?reference=IP/06/826&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en

Source: CTA Brussels Office Newsletter

Interesting sites

With support from the governments of Sweden and the United Kingdom, the World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER) has developed a website that allows users to create “what if” simulation analyses for five different African countries. Each country microsimulation model provides users with the poverty, distribution, and budgetary impacts of their

policy choices and compares the simulation results with the current state or the base scenario.

See http://models.wider.unu.edu/africa_web/

Source: *IFPRI-LCSP Newsletter Vol. 6, No. 7*

It appears that the giants at Google have done it (again). EIS-Africa readers interested in software which actually puts human development indicators to good graphical use are advised to visit www.gapminder.org or proceed directly to a moving graph visualising world development at <http://tools.google.com/gapminder/>

One Planet, Many People: Atlas of Our Changing Environment

One Planet, Many People: Atlas of Our Changing Environment provides a comprehensive, visual presentation of scientifically verifiable information about changes in the global environment, shown through state-of-the-art remote sensing technology. A collection of 405 Powerpoint slides divided into Regional and Thematic sets covering 11 contemporary and dynamic themes

* Introduction to the Planet, People and Planet, Atmosphere, Coastal Areas,

Urban Areas, Water and Lakes, Forests, Cropland, Grassland, Tundra and

Polar Areas and Extreme Events *

and 6 geographical regions * Africa, Asia

and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America, North America and Polar Regions *

can now be downloaded free of charge at

<http://www.na.unep.net/OnePlanetManyPeople/powerpoints.html>.

This presentation of environmental hotspots and issues is based primarily on satellite imagery taken over 30 years showing how human actions and geophysical activities have changed various parts of the world. Examples include the shrinking ice in the Arctic, melting

glaciers, growth of cities like Las Vegas, forest loss in the Amazon, and the decline of the Aral Sea and Lake Chad. Satellite images found in the 334-page hard-bound Atlas are packaged in this Powerpoint presentation format to facilitate the use of imagery by environmental policy makers, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academics, teachers and citizens interested in using this material to visually demonstrate the changes resulting from natural processes and human-induced activities.

Source: *Dr Ashbindu Singh*

Use of Solar Energy Stressed

Tanzanians have been urged to resort to the use of solar energy in a bid to cope with the ever spiralling fuel and electricity costs.

Mwakapugi said that in recognition of the importance of solar energy in the country, the government scrapped VAT and import duties on all equipment's that use solar energy in the country.

Mwakapugi regretted that the country was experiencing acute shortage of electricity due to lower water levels in the hydro-electric

power generating dams. He said solar energy had the benefit of being environmentally friendly.

There was, he noted, a general trend to emphasise the use of energy sources that are environmental and user friendly.

Despite being initially expensive, the officer said solar energy was cheap in the long run.

He said the Ministry of Energy and Minerals had been working together with non-governmental or-

ganisations in supporting projects involving solar energy.

He said his Ministry would continue to give support to all organisations that are taking part in creating awareness on the use of the energy.

Source: *The Guardian, Tanzania*

Brazil and Ghana Sign Accord for Creation of EMBRAPA Africa

The first Regional Office of the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA) will soon open in Accra, Ghana. Brazil and Ghana recently signed an agreement for the creation of EMBRAPA Africa, which will engage in technical assistance and training, and in the development of human resources, under the auspices of the Brazilian Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Food Supply.

“For its importance in the fight against hunger and poverty, we

decided to establish, in Accra, the first office of EMBRAPA in Africa. The partnership also aims to act in another field of strategic importance: energy alternatives, a field of strong social impact as it generates income and employment, reduces emission of pollutants, and decreases dependency of imported fuels.” explained Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, president of Brazil.

This bilateral cooperation between Ghana and Brazil will focus on technology transfer in

the area of tropical agriculture, including grains, vegetables, fruits, pastures, and livestock. Read more at

http://www.embrapa.br/noticias/banco_de_noticias/folder.2006/foldernoticia.2006-07-03.1126368809/noticia.2006-07-10.8962230062/mostra_noticia

Source: *Crop Biotech Update*
14 July 2006

African action plan pushes satellites for development

Scientists from 17 countries in sub-Saharan Africa have come up with a plan of action for applying satellite technology to a wide range of development issues.

Among the applications is telemedicine, in which large hospitals are connected via satellite to remote clinics where terrestrial communication systems are non-existent or damaged.

The scientists drafted the plan at a workshop held on 26-30 June in Lusaka, Zambia and sponsored by the UN and the European Space Agency.

Alice Lee, head of the UN Programme on Space Applications, told SciDev.Net that telemedicine would benefit patients at clinics that do not have adequate or specialised staff, are remote or do not offer specialised health services.

Doctors in remote clinics could send digital images and blood

test results to a larger hospital, which could make a diagnosis and relay the results back to the clinic.

A telemedicine project at Tygerberg Children's Hospital near Cape Town, South Africa has been running since 1996 but most other African nations have none.

Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) — such as the United States' Global Positioning System or Russia's GLONASS — can also be used to improve mapping relevant to issues such as deforestation, disease control, agriculture, climate and conservation.

Opening the meeting, Zambia's vice president Lupando Mwape said the technology could help reduce agricultural production costs and maximise crop yields and farmers' incomes.

The action plan stresses the need for international, regional

and national cooperation in setting up the technology and assessing how to use it to meet the needs of the region.

The plan also calls on scientists to explain to policymakers in their countries how GNSS technologies can be applied.

Alexandre Steciw, senior advisor to the Galileo Joint Undertaking (the GNSS for Europe that will be operational in 2008) told the workshop that the European Development Fund was ready to fund the plans if African economic blocs — such as the Southern African Development Community and the Economic Community of West African States — submit coordinated proposals.

Source: *SciDev.net*

UNEP Says Africa Needs to Harness Natural Wealth

"The Africa Environment Outlook-2", a report of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) forwards the idea that if Africa can use and manage its wealth of natural resources well, poverty need not be a major issue in the region. Achim Steiner, UNEP's Executive Director, said "The report challenges the myth that Africa is poor. Indeed, it points out that its vast natural wealth can, if sensitively, sustainably and creatively managed, be the basis for an African renaissance—a renaissance that meets and goes beyond the

internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals. But this is not inevitable and, as the AE0-2 points out, African nations face stark choices".

The region still has to address problems related to deforestation, land degradation, wasteful water use in agriculture, and climate change. Steiner adds that countries need to change policies, strengthen political will, and provide enough funding to meet challenges.

The report assesses the state of the environment and draws possible scenarios based on

likely impacts of different policies over the coming decades. It dwells on the key priorities of the region and the policy options and actions needed to enhance investment, economic growth, and reduce poverty.

Read the full report at <http://www.unep.org>.

*Source: Crop Biotech Update
7 July 2006*

Nema Asks for Sh6.2 Billion

Kenya requires Sh6.2 billion to control environmental degradation, the National Environment Management Authority (Nema) has announced.

The Nema acting chairperson, Dorcas Otieno, who launched a five-year strategic plan yesterday, said the money would be used to tackle pollution, deforestation and slum problems.

She said they would source for funding internally and externally through the Government and development partners.

"We appeal for the support of our development partners and the private sectors to assist us financially in the implementation of the programme," Otieno said.

She was speaking at Nema headquarters, where she was accompanied by representatives from the Ministry of Envi-

ronment, the European Union, the United Nations Development Programme and the British Department for International Development.

Otieno said there was urgent need to integrate environmental concerns into national development through the involvement of policy makers.

It is estimated that by year 2025, Kenya's population will have reached 60 million, reducing renewable surface water from 650 cubic metres per capita to 250 cubic metres.

The plan seeks to enforce the 1999 Environmental Management Coordination Act, in order to restore the deteriorating environment.

It will also involve universal compliance for completion of environmental impact assessments and environmental au-

ditions.

Otieno said Nema was planning to decentralise its activities from urban areas to create more awareness on environmental conservation.

Source: The Standard Online

Upcoming Events (cont.)

given to scholars or fellows of Fogarty International bioethics programmes. We will have several distinguished keynote speakers, each of whom will have expertise in African research ethics and developing country issues more generally. The remainder of the programme will be scholarly and research papers on aspects of research ethics in Africa. Although the focus will be on Africa, interested delegates from other countries will be welcome to apply to contribute. Interested colleagues are invited to Email Ms Debbie Marais maraisd@ukzn.ac.za to be kept on the mailing list as the programme develops. You may also indicate whether you would be interested in delivering a paper, and provide a 20-line abstract of your intended topic. For more information, see: <http://shsph.up.ac.za/sareti/sareti.htm>

6th African Association of Remote Sensing of the Environment (AARSE) Conference, Cairo, Egypt, 30 October—2 November 2006. Theme: Earth Observation & Geoinformation Sciences in Support of Africa's Development. For further information, visit <http://www.narss.sci.eg/aarse2006>. For information concerning AARSE go to: <http://www.itc.nl/~aarse/>. The AARSE conference is the largest gathering of remote sensing and GIS users in Africa. The conference is a premier forum in Africa which brings together scientists, practitioners, educators, developers and vendors and policy and decision makers to discuss advancements (Latest developments), applications, capacity building and promotion of geo-information technologies in sustainable development of Africa. It is a forum in which participants learn and exchange ideas on the latest advancements in the technologies and their applications in different fields. Strategies for promotion and use of the technologies in Africa are also discussed. **The last date to submit an abstract is 15 April 2006.** More than 1000 participants are expected under one umbrella.

International Symposium on Agricultural Innovation Systems in Africa, Kampala, Uganda, November 2006. Researchers and practitioners are invited to submit abstracts on good practice in studying and enhancing innovation in agricultural research, development, and education. Papers need not be directly linked to agriculture and natural resource management. Contributions are also sought for an interactive marketplace in the form of posters, videos, slides, photographs, websites, maps, group interactions, participatory theatre, and other lively ways of showing how work on innovation systems is being conducted in Africa and elsewhere. The deadline for submissions is August 15, 2006. For more information, see http://www.ciat.cgiar.org/africa/eri_symposium06_fulltext.htm

Young Scientists' Global Change Conference 2006, Beijing, China, 2—8 November 2006. Applications: http://www.start.org/links/announce_oppo/YSC_Application%205.doc. Wherever possible, those having papers/posters accepted will have their full costs (including travel and accommodation) covered.

2ND ArcGIS WEST AFRICA USER CONFERENCE (AWAUC 2006), 8th – 9th November, 2006, La Palm Royal Beach Hotel, Accra, Ghana. *"Unlocking the power of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for attaining development goals in West Africa"* is the theme for this year's ArcGIS user conference for West Africa. This conference provides the ArcGIS user as well as those unfamiliar with the benefits of GIS, an opportunity to meet GIS professionals and peers to focus on the growing use of GIS in the West African sub region. Paper and Poster Presentations would cover industry and application areas highlighting three sub-themes:

GeoSpatial Information: A foundation for Sustainable Environment

Driving the business forward: Unlocking GIS for Services Planning

Meeting our millennium challenge goals: Transport, Agriculture, *et al*

Technical workshops, map gallery, raffle draw and more available, visit www.sambus.com to learn more about the conference.

The **Global Spatial Data Infrastructure Association** is pleased to invite the global spatial data community to attend their 9th international conference in Santiago, Chile. The primary sessions will occur Monday through Friday November 6-10, 2006. Continuing with their organizational goal of fostering spatial data infrastructure developments in support of important worldwide needs, the theme of GSDI-9 is "Spatial Information: Tool for Reducing Poverty." The conference will be held at the Diego Portales Convention Center in the heart of the lovely city of Santiago. The program promises to be the most exciting and best yet. For further information, see: www.gsdi9.cl

ESSP Open Science Conference, 9—12 November 2006, Beijing, China. Call for contributions: We invite scientists, policy makers, practitioners, scholars, members of the private sector and journalists to participate in the ESSP Open Science Conference and to submit online abstracts (poster or parallel session presentations) through the OSC website (http://www.essp.org/ESSP2006/CallPapers_index.html). Please note that this call for contributions will primarily be for poster presentations, and that poster sessions will be an integral part of the Conference. Poster sessions will also relate directly to OSC parallel sessions. A list of the session titles and their keywords/brief descriptions can be found on the online submission form and on the Conference website (see web link above). Please note that we cannot accept late submissions (deadline: 01

Upcoming events (cont.)

May 2006) and that abstracts should not exceed 250 words. Thank you for your interest in the ESSP OSC.

2nd Annual International conference of the African Science Academy Development Initiative (ASADI) on “Prioritizing Food Security Policies for Health and Development in Africa”, hosted by the Cameroon Academy of Science in Yaoundé Cameroon, November 12–16, 2006. The second meeting would consist of a first day of joint and executive sessions involving the Network of African Science Academies (NASAC) and the Board on African Science Academy Development (BASAD); a 2-day public launch and scientific event focusing on the use of science and technology in improving policy decision-making related to food security for health and development in Africa and a 2-day learning collaborative involving African science academy leaders and staff, including a 1-day session involving media representatives from each African country. Resources held by the US National Academies have been set aside under the African Science Academy Development Initiative (ASADI) for an annual Africa-US joint symposium and learning collaborative over the ten years of the project. The goals for this annual event are to raise the visibility of science academies in Africa and to promote their potential role in informing government decision making in a variety of areas, to establish and build long-term partnerships among the US National Academies and African academies of science, to strengthen African partnerships, and to provide a venue for specific training opportunities for African science academies. For more information, see <http://www.assaf.co.za>.

2nd Space and Society Conference “Space Options for the 21st Century”, ESTEC, Noordwijk, The Netherlands from 27 February – 1 March 2007. The first announcement and call for papers can be found on the European Space Agency's Conference Web site: <http://www.congrex.nl/06a12/>

The National Organising Committee of the World Environmental Education Congress 2007, is pleased to announce that the **Fourth World Environmental Education Congress (WEEC 2007)** is due to take place in South Africa from Monday, 2 - Friday, 6 July 2007 at The International Convention Centre in Durban. For further information, visit the WEEC 2007 website on www.weec2007.com for future updates and online registration for delegates and potential presenters.

Geo-spatial Catalogue of Fundamental Data Sets for Africa project

The Human Sciences Research Council together with EIS-AFRIC is conducting a continental survey on the fundamental data sets for Africa. The project has already been introduced in a previous newsletter and this is only an update of progress.

Catalogue Phase

Together with the UNECA, the project participants agreed on using the “ArcCatalog” software for the capture of metadata. In instances where national collaborators do not have the software, the sub-regional partners have agreed on capturing the data. A questionnaire and guidelines as well as the translation thereof to French have been completed.

Guidelines for conducting gap analysis of the data is being developed. Thirty one international agencies have been contacted so far to obtain information from them. On the continental level 28 national partners have been contracted to assist with the survey. For the remaining countries, contacts still have to be established. In the next few weeks questionnaires will be sent out to national contacts to conduct the survey. Data gathering has to be completed by the end of August.

Land-cover Phase

Another phase of this project is the Land-cover phase. An initial e-mail contact list containing 540 e-mail addresses has been compiled. Of these e-mails 180 came back as incorrect addresses. Therefore from the remaining e-mail addresses we are expecting ±200 responses. The deadline for responding was 1 July 2007. From these responses a regional experts list will be drawn up and individuals selected to attend the workshop in South Africa.

Submitted by Gina Weir-Smith



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***A network for the co-operative
management of environmental information***

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August Newsletter

Any contributions, which are welcomed, must reach us by 23 August 2006. Contributions can be sent to svorster@eis-africa.org.

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Comments welcome

If you have comments regarding the content of this edition of EIS NEWS, please contact EIS-AFRICA at the following address: svorster@eis-africa.org

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LandSat Imagery for Africa

The United States Government has provided many gigabytes of freely available LandSat imagery for Africa. EIS-AFRICA will shortly be receiving the complete MSS, TM, and ETM+ Orthorectified data sets for Africa. We hope to compliment the distribution of these data-sets to partners on the African continent. So please check postings on our website that will indicate when these data-sets will become available for distribution.
