

Date

Monday 16 July 2007

Title of session

Plenary: Dissolving Borders - From National Mapping to Regional and Global SDI's?

Name of presenter/chair

Chair: Mohammed Al Zaffin, Director, GIS Centre, DUBAI Municipality, UAE

Speakers: Jean Dotse, Past Director of Surveys, Ghana; Dozie Ezigbalike, Chief, Geo-Information Systems Section, UN Economic Commission for Africa; Wilber Ottichilo, Director General, Regional Centre for Mapping for Regional Development, Kenya; Fraser Taylor, Chair International Steering Committee for Global Mapping

Rapporteurs

David Lovell, EuroGeographics and Yvette Ragozins, Land Registry (Great Britain)

Geospatial information is vital to many situations. Nationally produced GI is often inconsistent with neighbouring country's and so fails to meet the needs of sustainable development. Africa has a vision for spatial data to permeate every aspect of society and for it to be consistent across the continent.

The Africa Union seeks to promote political, social, economic and educational integration and perhaps a borderless Africa. Some National Mapping Agencies (NMA's) in Africa have digital databases but this is inadequate as a basis for a Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) because there is no uniform continental spatial reference framework.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) has established the African Geodetic Reference Frame (AFREF) to form the basis of a regional SDI. Once this is completed, cross border and regional projects will be carried out with ease. This will be the beginning of dissolving borders across countries.

AFREF will establish a continental reference system as a basis for national reference networks consisting of permanent GNSS base stations so that users are never more than 500km from a base station. This will support a variety of applications e.g. surveying, air and marine navigation and will lead to the definition of a refined geoid model for Africa.

At present, in addition to capacity building, a quarterly newsletter and website have been

<p>established. <a href="http://geoinfo.uneca.org/afref">http://geoinfo.uneca.org/afref</a></p> <p>It is intended that the SDI being established in Africa will be an important contribution to the Global Map project which is building a 1:1 million digital map of the world. Currently 172 nations and regions are actively participating. For further information see <a href="http://www.iscgm.org">www.iscgm.org</a></p>	
Questions	Answers
<p>1. Maria Alendra McBride-Perez asked the panel what the impact on national and international security would be and whether this had any implications for the current controversy between USA and Russia over the Strategic Defence Initiative</p>	<p>Current technology challenges traditional thinking on security - what one person believes should remain confidential another may make freely available. Technology can be harnessed for the benefits of society but we must recognise that others may use technology to harm it.</p> <p>This should not stop us using it for the many benefits it offers.</p>
<p>2. A point raised during discussion emphasised the need for adequate funding to support the important work of AFREF. However, despite good donor involvement, little funding is available for developing infrastructures and concern was shown for the future of the Africover project.</p> <p><a href="http://www.africover.org">www.africover.org</a></p>	<p>It is recognised that despite having a clear idea of what needs to be done it is difficult to make progress without adequate co-ordinated funding. The approach being taken is to encourage the involvement of member countries through advocacy, stakeholder meetings and by seeking donations of equipment and the sharing of resources between countries that have the capacity to provide help e.g. training to those countries that have the greatest need.</p>