

Dakar Declaration

On the development of Land Cover Spatial data infrastructure in West and Central Africa

We, the African experts and leaders of sub-regional and regional organizations participating in the workshop on a Global Land Cover Network (GLCN), being jointly organized by FAO and UNEP from 10 to 14 November 2003 in Dakar, Senegal,

Considering the implications of the Millennium Development Goals for Africa, and the resources required for the attainment of these objectives, in particular an accurate knowledge of the extent and spatial distribution of the natural resources, and the impact of the current development policies on these resources;

Taking into consideration the reaffirmation of the key Millennium Development Goals by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in particular those relating to poverty eradication, and the intrinsic content of the Johannesburg's Plan of Implementation, and its component on "Sustainable Development for Africa" focussing on food security and the implementation of NEPAD objectives;

Convinced that meeting these objectives presupposes the availability of sources of reliable of up-to-date information on the state of the natural resources and a production and management capacity of this information at national and regional levels ;

Referring to the mandates of the African Organisation of Cartographie and Remote Sensing (AOCRS) and the Network for the Cooperative Management of Environmental Information in Africa (EIS-AFRICA) as Pan African organizations active in promoting a widely use of cartography, Remote Sensing and Geoinformation Science for the sustainable development of Africa;

Observing the low level support of the national institutions devoted to the development and application of Geoinformation Science in the majority of West-African and Central Africa countries, resulting in a gap in the appropriation of the related technological tools by the concerned institutions in these two sub-regions, particularly in the development of spatial data infrastructure (SDI);

Noting in addition, and regrettably in West Africa and Central Africa a lack of implementation of the AFRICOVER Project, providing multipurpose Land cover spatial databases on one hand, and the development of a community of users trained for a coordinated management of these land resources datasets;

Appreciating the positive effects of the Africover Project in Eastern Africa in the form of availability of a Land cover asset at national and sub-regional levels, and related operational management mechanism linking the concerned countries;

Sensitized on the significant potential contribution of the FAO / UNEP's Global Land Cover Network (GLCN) to Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) development in Africa, in the spirit of Committee on Development Information (CODI) promoted by the United Nations' Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA);

Aware of the fact that the GLCN initiative is a great opportunity for West Africa and Central Africa to build their capacity in standardized Land Cover data production and management;

Noting with satisfaction that the GLCN initiative is not intended to replace existing networks or environment-related systems, including among others the Thematic Program Network 4 (TPN 4) on Ecological monitoring, natural resources mapping, Remote Sensing and Early warning systems launched by the CCD, and the Desertification information systems (SID SISEI) promoted by the Observatory of Sahara and Sahel (OSS), but rather to complement them by focussing on Land Cover;

Willing therefore to take this opportunity to fill the gap of West Africa and Eastern Africa in the availability and management of standardized Land Cover datasets, basis for efficient planning, sustainable management and responsible monitoring and evaluation of the use of the natural resources at national and sub-regional levels;

Welcome the GLCN initiative and commit themselves to supporting its successful implementation in Western and Central Africa;

Recommend that the concerned States and their regional and sub-regional institutions, in particular CENSAD, CILSS, UEMOA, ECOWAS, CEMAC, ADIE,

- ✓ initiate the required actions, in relation with FAO and UNEP, in order to benefit from this initiative whose economic, political and social effects are already visible in Eastern Africa ;
- ✓ take this opportunity to pave the way for developing full spatial data infrastructures at national and sub-regional levels ;

Express their gratitude to FAO and UNEP for this fortunate initiative, and acknowledge the government of Italy who, over half a decade funded the Africover project, and the government of The Netherlands who contributed to the expansion of the Africover success by agreeing to finance the spreading of the LCCS into other parts of Africa and beyond; request their availability to respond positively to the proposals that will be received from the West and Central African states and their regional and sub-regional institutions;

Thank especially the organizers of the Dakar workshop and the trainers: John Latham, Timo Maukonen, Antonio Di Gregorio, Paolo Sarfatti, Craig Von Hagen, for the efficiency of their strategy and the success of the meeting from both the awareness raising and the training point of view.

Endorsed by consensus

Dakar, 14 November 2003