

Opening

Dear colleagues and friends,

welcome to this Symposium, organized in Cotonou (Benin) from December 6, 1999 to December 10, 1999. It's scheduled just in the Luigi Solaini 10th Anniversary and it's dedicated to his memory, remembering that he was the ISPRS President in the period 1968 – 1972.

This Symposium, chaired by the AARSE Delegate of the Benin, Mr. Vincent Joseph Mama, and the ISPRS Treasurer and Delegate for Africa and Middle East, Prof. Heinz Ruther, deals with the topics of Education and Communication (Networking).

Its motto is "Promoting Space Technology Transfer and Geomatics Education in Africa" or, in the French language, "Promotion du Transfert de Technologies Spatiales et la Formation en Geomatique en Afrique", with the aim to overcome the language barriers.

This Symposium offers to the ISPRS WG VI/3 "International Cooperation and Technology Transfer", according to its Terms of Reference, the great occasion to serve ISPRS, as Cooperating Working Group, by means of an international meeting in Africa too.

Furthermore the OEEPE, by means of its partners, RECTAS, ITC, GDTA, EU Delegation in Lagos, and the SELPER, by means of the ISPRS WG VI/1 "Education" (chaired by Dr. Tania Maria Sausen – Brazil) join the same Symposium positively.

Indeed they respectively organize a Seminar on Development Support Project, in the last day, and an One - day Educational Tutorial, on Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing, GIS and Geomatics, whose topics are particularly devoted to Africa.

Finally the whole ISPRS is very grateful to the UN-OOSA for having provided a large financial support to be devoted in the organization of the Symposium, whilst the University of Parma (Italy) offered the printing of the Proceedings of the Symposium itself.

The Symposium, held in conjunction with the National Centre for Remote Sensing, CENATEL, a well known center of advanced and applied studies in the equatorial region of Africa, is the first ISPRS event ever held in Benin and one of the first in the continent.

It aims to advance expertise related to ISPRS and Geomatics in Africa by bringing together African and international

experts in an African context and through the discussion of technology transfer and education issues. The specific objectives of the symposium are:

1. Assessment of the situation of education in Africa
2. Establishment of effective and sustainable education and training networks in Africa towards improved education
3. Remote learning and computer assisted education
4. Identification of support structures for education and networking in Africa
5. Informing educators and practitioners on latest developments in relevant disciplines
6. Investigation of opportunities for joint projects
7. Strengthening of links between Francophone and Anglophone African Geomatics experts and institutions.

I sincerely hope that everybody may return home, after the symposium, better than his departure. Finally let me recall that the last meeting of the ISPRS WG VI/3 will be held, in the first week of February of a next year, in Ljubljana (Slovenia).

Closure

Dear colleagues and friends,

after one week of hard work, interesting discussion and nice events, now this symposium is finishing.

Firstly let me recall the very strong figure of Prof. Luigi Solaini, the spirit of his life, on both scientific and human points of view, and the lesson that he gave us.

Successively let me thank again Mr. Vincent Joseph Mama, our local host, especially for his warm hospitality and his engagement in the preparation of this symposium, recognizing all the difficulties he must overcome.

Finally I'm sure that the symposium has been fruitful and positive for all of you, recognizing the importance of the international cooperation and technology transfer.

I hope to meet you again in Ljubljana and in Amsterdam. Thanks a lot again, ciao.