

**Compte-rendu of the WG VI/3
Luigi Solaini 10th Anniversary
Memorial Meeting in Cotonou
Luigi Mussio, WG VI/3 Chairperson**

The rescheduling of the ISPRS TC VI Mid Term Symposium (Bandung – Indonesia, April 15 – 17, '99 and April 12 – 14, '99 for a preliminary Workshop and some Tutorials) imposed some modifications to the ISPRS WG VI/3 program of activities.

Unfortunately the ISPRS Council, during an ISPRS Joint Meeting of the Council and TCP's, canceled the already approved ISPRS WG VI/3 Meeting (Cape Town – South Africa, February 1 – 5, '99), because in contrast with some ISPRS Guidelines.

Anyway the Council members know each other for a long time and are very nice people. Thus they understood very well the importance to give a sign in Africa, by means of the ISPRS WG VI/3 "International Cooperation and Technology Transfer" activities.

Therefore the ISPRS WG VI/3 attended the 2nd Regional Conference of the African Association of Remote Sensing of the Environment (Abidjan – Cote d'Ivoire, October 4 – 10, '98), presenting its activities and looking forward to future opportunities.

The topic "Lesson of Experience and the Way Forward" was strongly related to the ISPRS TC VI and, in particular, to the ISPRS WG VI/3 Terms of Reference: Foster relationship with Regional Member organizations. Thus even if the time was very short, a symbol was marked.

At that Conference, a new ISPRS WG VI/3 meeting in Africa was planned by the end of 1999. Consequentially a Symposium in Cotonou (Benin – Western Equatorial Africa) was scheduled, organized and prepared from December 6, 1999 to December 10, 1999.

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, dealt with the topics of Education and Communication (Networking).

Its motto was "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 offered 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) joined the same Symposium positively.

Indeed they respectively organized 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 were 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, was the first ISPRS event ever held in Benin and one of the first in the continent.

It aimed 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 were:

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.

Therefore people were kindly invited to spread out information, as much as possible, considering that everybody could be the unique one to have got it in his / her country, or region. The whole ISPRS was sincerely grateful, for the important and essential cooperation.

Finally the ISPRS WG VI/3 "International Cooperation and Technology Transfer" staff sincerely hoped to meet and welcome people in Cotonou (Benin), recognizing that everybody could play a very, very important role for the success of the Symposium.

The country of Benin is one of the best places to have a meeting in Africa, because of its long tradition of peace and democracy. Moreover the people of Benin is considered one of the most capable to offer real, concrete and sincere hospitality in Africa.

The country of Benin is placed in the Western Equatorial Africa, among Nigeria, Niger, Burkina Faso and Togo, going anticlockwise from east to west. For its position, it presents a constant weather, relatively warm, with a very long dry season, just in occasion of the Symposium.

Cotonou, placed on the Atlantic Ocean, is the biggest city of Benin. It's the economic and cultural capital of the country, where the national and international institutions are located. Furthermore it's a very international city, where many people of different origin could be met.

Cotonou is provided by modern infrastructure, including an international and intercontinental airport; it presents every kind of shops, African and European restaurants, cinemas and some other various and different attractive touristic places, often open all night.

The position of the Benin, its history, culture and tradition represent an ideal place to encourage the meeting of people of different origin, coming from both Africa and the developing countries, where a special attention was paid in the overcoming of the language barriers.

Last but not least, remembering very well that people, in developing countries (especially if they lived in some other continents or subcontinents), had financial troubles, informal and/or indirect contributions by everybody were always highly appreciated.

The program of the Symposium foresaw 8 technical sessions, including the key – note lectures, 2 special sessions for a panel discussion and the business session, the opening session and

the closure. A poster session was also set up, considering it an open space where all contribution were welcome.

The key – note lectures involve both theoretical and practical aspects of Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and GIS. Indeed the Chance and the Challenge of Data Processing versus Geomatics and a Talk on Geomatics / Remote Sensing Education in Africa were exposed.

Three technical sessions belonged to the important topics of Education, in the English (n. 1) and French (n. 2) languages. Different concrete experiences were presented, analyzed and compared, going very, very deeply in the difficult paths of Communication and Networking in Africa.

Three technical sessions belonged to the interesting topics of Remote Sensing and GIS for Africa, in the English (n. 2) and French (n. 1) languages. The new technologies were utilized, taking into account powerful tools, whilst the longstanding experiences completed this presentation suitably.

The One – day Educational Tutorial on Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing, GIS and Geomatics was particularly devoted to Africa. It offered the great and real occasion to do International Cooperation, Transferring useful Technologies positively and growing together lecturers and students.

The last day Seminar presented a successful example of sustainable knowledge transfer on Geoinformatics in Africa. It reflected on activities and achievements during the Support Project period and confirmed the requirements for effective and sustainable education programs in the future.

Going deeply into the program, concrete experiences of Education, concerning Spatial Techniques, Surveying and Geomatics, were done in Algeria, Nigeria, Camerouns and Botswana, both involving traditional education and computer assisted teaching.

Furthermore important contributions to the education in Africa were given by some European institutions, especially from France. An essential contribution was supplied by the pattern and process of GIS and spatial/temporal statistics in public health education.

Finally education experiences were obviously achieved also in some other continents, e.g. in South America and Central Asia, which were relevant too, because done in developing countries. More information, concerning the single presentation, are available in the proceedings.

Analogously real examples of Technology Transfer came, at continental and national level, both from international and national institutions. They were always interested in positively solving the problems of Africa positively, working on the themes of Remote Sensing and GIS.

Continental applications involved Remote Sensing tools for environmental aspects, including the environmental impact assessment, the establishment of a reliable and durable GIS, challenges and opportunities offered by low cost small satellites for earth observation.

At the regional and local level, examples came from the crop growth modeling, the study of the ecosystems, Internet atlas of natural and agronomic resources and the impacts of mining on the environment, respectively in Mali, Guinea, Niger, Benin, Nigeria and Zambia.

The Symposium is dedicated to the memory of Professor Luigi Solaini, on the occasion of his 10th anniversary. He belonged to the famous school of Professor Gino Cassinis, which was active in the field of Photogrammetry, in Milan (Italy), since the 1930s until the 1970s.

Professor Luigi Solaini was teacher of Surveying and Photogrammetry at the University of Pisa (Italy) and at the Polytechnic (TU) of Milan, from the 1940s to the 1970s. For a long period he was also the Director of the Institute of Geodesy, Surveying and Photogrammetry at TU Milan.

The scientific work of Professor Luigi Solaini enhanced the mathematical and statistical foundations of the survey and mapping disciplines. He served as President of ISPRS in the period 1968 – 1972. Furthermore he was elected as an Honorary Member of ISPRS.

Professor Luigi Solaini was President of the OEEPE, according to the national rotation of this charge, and first Italian national delegate. In this role, he promoted several international projects and participated in them by means of the above quoted Institute in Milan.

He had many students, co-workers and assistants, whose the majority is still active and very well introduced in the world of Photogrammetry, Remote Sensing and GIS. The whole ISPRS knew their contributions brought to the different events, in the past and/or in recent years.

Prof. Luigi Solaini was a fine man, surely shy in front of a large number of people, but clear and clever when one person or a small group of people was approaching him. His availability was very large, his spirit (coming from the famous region Tuscany) very fascinating.

The writer is an Italian citizen, so he is glad to present, in conclusion of this report, a short summary of the Italian activities in the field of Technology Transfer and Education in Africa. This list, of course incomplete, globally concerns the survey and mapping disciplines.

Three examples seem to be sufficient to present the educational activities. Starting from the 1950s a student from Ethiopia was hosted at the TU of Milan, studying photogrammetry and cartography; then, owing to this, he occupied an important position in his country.

Successively, during 1990s, two students, from Somalia and Angola, were hosted respectively at the TU of Milan and at the 1st University of Rome (Italy). The first one specialized in data processing and geomatics, whilst the second one in geodesy and surveying.

The writer knew very well both students. Moreover he worked a lot, in close contact, with the student from Somalia. His scientific and technical capabilities, his perfect behavior proved the excellent qualities of the person. The writer sincerely hopes all the best for him.

Regarding technology transfer, some recent experiences on thematic cartography in Kenya and on Applied Geophysics in Angola can be quoted. Furthermore the perfect cooperation, both in geodesy and photogrammetry, with some Egyptian colleagues was particularly relevant.

Finally the decision to issue the Proceedings before the Symposium, imposed to finish all duty before it. On the other hand, because it was very difficult to write a compte – rendu in advance, the writer wished to invite all readers to attend this Symposium: he was sure, it will be much better.

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local keep not only a famous scientist but also a person
 cooperative spirit since a very long period.

Finally I am sure that the meeting has been fruitful and positive
 for all of you recognizing the importance of the international
 cooperation and technology transfer.

A special thank to the organizers of the meeting, Prof. Carlo
 Rognoni, Prof. Mario Tadini, Prof. Mario Tadini, Prof. Mario Tadini,
 ISPRS WG IV (GIS) and Prof. Mario Tadini.

We are at the beginning of a new period of intense
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LUIGI SOLAINI - Carrara (Italy), May 30, 1909 - Milan (Italy), June 21, 1989

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