

## REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

I would like to report to you our activities in the field of cartography

1. Since the Fifteenth Session (24 August and 4 September 1992, New York, one day before and one day after the Sixth UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names) three issues of the Group's Newsletter, Nos. 10 to 12, have been published.
2. The Fifth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas took place in New York, from 11 - 15 January 1993.
3. The conference stressed the important role of Cartography for both sustainable development and environmental protection. It reaffirmed the need for the United Nations to continue to provide guidance and direction for the international transfer of modern technology as well as technical assistance to developing countries in all fields of modern cartography: surveying, mapping, Geographic/Land Information Systems etc.
4. For the first time in 16 years, the Fifth Conference for the Americas was presided over by a woman, and a document entitled "The role of women in surveying and mapping" was presented and discussed with great enthusiasm; a resolution among 11 others, calling for increased participation of women in all fields of cartography, was adopted.
5. Another resolution recommended that the United Nations, together with the international scientific community, examine the feasibility of establishing an international advisory group to help developing countries acquire modern technologies in cartography.
6. The Conference also recommended that the United Nations provide advice to smaller nations through regional seminars on developing Geographic and Land Information Systems. Member States were urged to make publicly funded land and geographical data sets available at the least possible cost. The Conference believed that any constraints on the availability of digital land and geographical information were "in conflict with the clear aims and spirit of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)".
7. Among the actions taken, participants recognized the need to establish environmental information systems for sustainable development in developing countries. To that end, it was recommended that the Secretariat, in cooperation with the coordinating committees concerned, suggest effective means to introduce such systems in developing countries.

8. Resolutions on training cooperation called on the United Nations to support the awarding of fellowships in mapping technology to candidates from developing countries in cooperation with international scientific and professional organizations. The resolutions also called on the Organization to support training courses in the application of cartography to development projects.

9. Though there was some discussion, no resolutions regarding the standardization of geographical names were adopted. The Conference was attended by 100 representatives and observers from 35 countries, three specialized agencies and seven intergovernmental and international scientific organizations. The Conference decided that the Sixth Conference be held in early 1997.

10. The Thirteenth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific took place in Beijing, from 9 - 18 May 1994, at the invitation of the Government of the People's Republic of China, and under the auspices of the National Bureau of Surveying and Mapping of China.

11. The primary objective of the Conference was to further technical cooperation between the countries of the region and those of the rest of the world. The Conference provided an opportunity to build and strengthen collaboration with scientific and professional organizations.

12. The Conference, a turning-point for these conferences in Asia and the Pacific, reappraised the goals of cartography and related techniques to meet the "sustainability challenge" of the twenty-first century.

13. It was stressed that cartographic technologies play an effective and cost-efficient role in registering, monitoring and depicting earth and environment phenomena.

14. In the spirit of the Declaration of Barbados, the Conference addressed the issue of the environmental vulnerability of small island developing States, and also acknowledged that cartographic techniques were crucial tools for environmental monitoring and for the prediction of potential natural disasters.

15. The important role held by women in cartography was recognized; it was also noted that women were underrepresented at conferences and seminars. The Conference called upon national surveys to create opportunities for career advancement of women staff members.

16. Finally, the Conference adopted 20 resolutions, dealing with transfer of technology, policy and institutional issues. The overriding theme of the resolutions was that cartography and related techniques are a fundamental tool to meet the goals of

Agenda 21 - the comprehensive program of action adopted by the UNCED to halt and reverse environmental degradation and prompt sustainable and environmentally sound development in all countries.

17. One resolution on geographical names was adopted as follows.

Geographical Names

The Conference,

Recalling resolution 18 of the Eleventh United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and the Pacific,

Recognizing the importance of national programs of geographical names standardization,

Recognizing further the progress achieved in the standardization of geographical names by member countries of the Division of Asia South East and Pacific South West,

Endorses the decision of the member countries of the Division of Asia, South East and Pacific, South West of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names that New Zealand is elected as the Divisional Representative. This decision was taken during the Ad Hoc meeting of member countries on 25 February 1991 at the venue of the 12th United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for Asia and Pacific, Bangkok.

Records with appreciation the invaluable contributions of Malaysia as the outgoing divisional representative.

18. The participants recommended that the Economic and Social Council should convene the Fourteenth such conference for Asia and the Pacific region in mid-1997 with a primary focus on the contribution of surveys, mapping and charting in support of the implementation of Agenda 21.

19. Participating in the Conference were 204 representatives and observers from 27 countries and territories, two specialized agencies and three intergovernmental organizations.

