ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Seventeenth United Nations Regional Cartographic
Conference for Asia and the Pacific
Bangkok, 18-22 September 2006
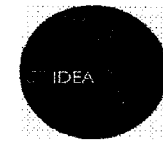Item 7 of the provisional agenda*

INVITED PAPERS

PC-IDEA AND THE NSDI'S IN THE AMERICAS

Submitted by PC-IDEA **

PC – IDEA AND THE NSDI's IN THE AMERICAS

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"Spatial Data Infrastructures" (SDIs) have undergone developments very unevenly across the American continents, given the great variations in the reality of each nation, the only common factor being the lack of economic resources (excepting countries like the United States and Canada).
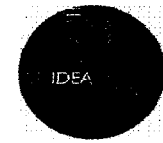
In this context, at the VI Regional Cartographic Conference of the United Nations (1997) recommended that spatial data infrastructures be organized in the American Continents as a way to create and share knowledge and information, thus benefiting sustainable development, improving the living standards of the people and making available an effective tool for appropriate and correct decision-making. In this way the *Permanent Committee for the Spatial Data Infrastructure of the Americas* (PC-IDEA) was born.

Over the last nine years, PC-IDEA has made efforts to set up SDI's in the member countries. The predominant and limiting factor has been the lack of economic resources needed for implementing, cooperating with, supporting and encouraging real and efficient initiatives for the development of Spatial Data Infrastructures, both at local (in each country) and regional levels.

Despite the lack of finance, PC-IDEA, with the support of some of the member countries has set up aid and support activities. Thus, during this year progress is being made to gain real knowledge of the situation of each country, to spread awareness and knowledge of the SDI's and to achieve the following projects :

- Determine a Progress List, recording current progress in Data Infrastructures of Latin America :

A survey led by PC-IDEA, in order to assess the organizational factors, the information, the technological, financial and human resources present in each country so as to determine a status record for helping to develop SDI's in the region. The methodology used to determine these records was proposed and evaluated by Cuba, enabling its result to help guide policies in terms of strengthening individual advantages in the interests of the rest of the countries of the region and of supporting those initiatives that have shown least progress by means of reinforcing capabilities, encouraging courses to be run, training and the exchange of experiences.

- Project titled "Evaluation and Strengthening of Spatial Data Infrastructures for sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean" part of the CYTED program (Science and Technology for Development).

A three-year project which has as its main objective the strengthening of SDIs by means of developing geo-spatial services that improve the decision-making process in Latin America and the Caribbean.

- Workshop titled " Spatial Data Infrastructures in terms of the needs of Latin America"

In the context of supporting and cooperating with the continental SDIs, the IGM of Chile, in conjunction with PC-IDEA and with the direct contributions of Cuba, Canada and Mexico are holding a workshop aimed at supporting and backing initiatives at national level and at reinforcing those that are least developed. Knowledge of experiences and support based on similar realities will be the topics of this workshop to be held from the 30th of October to the 3rd of November.

Being likewise a recognition of the efforts made in the continent and specifically of the work performed by Chile, in the month of November of this year the *9th International Conference of the Global Geo-Spatial Data Infrastructure (GSDI9)* will be held in Santiago with the main theme being "*Spatial Information : Tool for Reducing Poverty*", an event which provide access to experiences around the world in the implementation, development and maintenance of SDIs and in all policy and technological aspects related to them.