

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

**Eighteenth United Nations Regional Cartographic
Conference for Asia and the Pacific
Bangkok, 26-29 October 2009
Item 7(a) of the provisional agenda
Country Reports**

**Global Spatial Data Infrastructure (GSDI) Association –
Report to the 18th UNRCC-AP Conference***

* Prepared by Abbas Rajabifard, GSDI President



**GSDI Association
Report to the 18th UNRCC-AP Conference
October 2009, Bangkok, Thailand**

Presented by Abbas Rajabifard
GSDI President

The GSDI Association continues to be highly active and engaged. It held its 11th World Conference for Spatial Data Infrastructure in WTC Rotterdam, The Netherlands, from 15 to 19 June 2009. This was a combined efforts of GSDI Association, INSPIRE (European SDI Program) and GEONOVUM (Dutch SDI Advocacy Council) and with support of JRC (Joint Research Council, Italy), EUROGI (European Umbrella Organization for Geospatial Information) and Delft university to stage the 11th International GSDI conference in Europe proved an overwhelming success. The theme of the conference was "*Spatial Data Infrastructure Convergence: Building SDI Bridges to Address Global Challenges*" and this theme was fully addressed throughout the course of the conference.

It attracted more than 1200 participants along with 26 exhibitors representing 80 nations - the largest GSDI conference ever convened. The forum featured 31 workshops, 67 parallel sessions, 9 plenary sessions, 12 roundtable discussions, along with a whole host of business and committee meetings. In all, about 300 technical papers and 80 posters were presented. The huge size of the conference program points to the relevance and level of interest in the subject areas of the conference partners.

While the goal of the GSDI meeting was to further the building of National SDIs globally, INSPIRE used the forum as a benchmark reporting meeting on how the many EU SDI funded projects were fairing. GEONOVUM used the conference as its annual SDI and GI technical conference.

The preconference day included all 31 workshops – all of which were very popular. Each day of the conference itself, had separate themes. The first day had the opening and two plenary sessions with a global focus. Day two was focused on the INSPIRE Progress meetings, and day three centered on GEONOVUM initiatives. The final day had an opening plenary on private sector initiatives and the closing plenary discussed conclusions and the launch of the next GSDI, INSPIRE and GEONOVUM meetings.

We have a strong strategic focus in the Association. This shows we are an organization strong on teamwork and an organization on the move.

- GSDI activities are dedicated to international cooperation and collaboration in SDI development to address the social, economic, and environmental issues confronting the world;

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- GSDI regularly offers conferences to enhance communications among practitioners as well as among the leadership of other geospatial organizations. GSDI purposefully take these conferences to different parts of the globe in order to serve all parts of the planet;
- GSDI publishes monthly newsletters within and for various regions of the globe in multiple languages in order to keep all geospatial specialists aware of opportunities to become engaged and participate in their own regions;
- GSDI offers a regular small grants program in furtherance of SDI development in developing nations;
- GSDI is expanding support of our working committees that are actively addressing technical, legal and socioeconomic, social impact, and communication issues;
- An important priority for GSDI is to enhance our inclusivity so that we better respond to the individual needs of members, are open and accommodating to the ideas of others, and draw people from different backgrounds into our Association. The creation of an International Geospatial Society which is an individual Arm for our Association (and was launched during GSD-11 conference) and this is an excellent example of this strategy.

We believe the essence of what we do in the Association is help to create an enabling environment that enhances outcomes in societies, economies and the global environment. The betterment of societies through spatial enablement which is one of our goals in this new period.

GSDI-12 world conference is scheduled in Singapore for October 2010 and this will be a joint conference with 16th PCGIAP meeting and hosted by the Singapore Land Authority. The theme will be "*Realizing Spatially Enabled Societies*". Based on this, The GSDI Association invites the UN Statistics Division to host a meeting of the PC-IDEA, PCGIAP, EUROGI, CODIST-GEO subcommittee and PAIGH leadership at the GSDI-12 Conference in Singapore in October 2010. This will continue the SDI convergence process commenced at GSDI-11.

The GSDI Association has issued again a call for proposals for its Small Grants Program. These awards are for SDI-related activities in less developed nations. GSDI expect twelve cash awards and four professional services awards to be made in this round.

Over the past year we have succeeded in transferring the editorship and production of our three highly popular monthly regional newsletters to the regions served by the respective newsletters. The respective editors are now the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD) in Nairobi for the *SDI-Africa Newsletter*, the University of Melbourne for the *SDI-Asia & Pacific Newsletter* and the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History in Mexico City for the *SDI-Latin America & Caribbean Newsletter*.

A major project focus of the organization over the past twelve months as well as the months ahead is further development of the Geographic Information Knowledge Network (GIK Network-<http://giknetwork.org>). What began as an initiative to better serve the needs of National Mapping Agencies has expanded to become a much larger and more complex project to serve the global geographic information community at large. The goal of this facility is to enhance communications and sharing among geospatial specialists and organizations from all nations. Members of the Joint Board will be among the first asked to help test the user interfaces, evaluate the information forms and web reports, and determine whether their respective organizations want to be listed as supporters of the facility.

In order to avoid duplication and conflicts with other organizations our database will draw directly from the OGC database for those software vendors that have already registered their

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products as implementing or compliant with OGC standards and we will draw directly from the GEOSS database for those organizations that have registered instances of implementations. Any organization may register its SDI Program implementation (referred to as a Component) and the services related to that SDI program for free with GEOSS. Similarly, the same holds true for registering software products with OGC. Technical discussions in interfacing their databases with the GIK Network are ongoing. The GIK Network will allow geospatialist specialists, agencies and organizations at all levels to self-report detailed profiles about their expertise and organizations in a systematic manner.

In conjunction with the reporting of details about implementations, the GSDI Association has been urged to develop and adopt a minimum set of SDI operational best practice standards that all implementations might aspire to at a minimum. The first draft of these proposed minimum best practice standards as developed through discussions with members of the OGC and GEOSS communities will be distributed at the Joint Board Meeting. We are hopeful that the GIK Network will be operational by the end of the summer to the extent that we can invite initial participants to enter personal and organizational data and start providing us with detailed feedback.

Respectfully submitted,

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