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Regional and National Spatial Data Infrastructures in the Americas: Institutional and Capacity Building Issues

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Overview

1. A UN Conference *for* the Americas or *in* the Americas?
2. 30 Years of UNRCCs and the evolution of Cartography in the Americas
3. Institutional Framework required for SDI development
4. The need for an economic perspective on SDI in Developing Nations
5. PAIGH and PCIDEA
6. The reengineering of PAIGH
7. PAIGH OAS Hemispheric Initiative on Geographic Information
8. The meaning of the PAIGH 2005 Strategic Planning Survey
9. “Rethinking our America”, XVIII PAIGH General Assembly
10. Concluding remarks



A UN Conference for the Americas or in the Americas?

- Difficulties to appropriate the conference by the LAC UN member states
- Low level of international participation in key IGO's by LAC UN member states
- The meeting of experts in Aguascalientes in 1999 and the UNRCC conferences
- The UN summits on Sustainable Development and the Information Society
- The UN Agenda for the Millennium

In 1997, at the Sixth UNRCC Americas, the delegates, recognizing the rapid emergence of spatial data infrastructures and its potential contribution to maximize the benefits of geographic information for sustainable development, recommended the establishment of PCIDEA, reporting to the following meetings of the UNRCC-Americas.



30 Years of UNRCC Americas and the evolution of Cartography in the Americas

- A different path? A multiple number of thematic applications producers
- Priority assigned to the production of seamless supranational data (PAIGH 1997 catalogue)
- The need to attach UNRCCs resolutions to an effective action plan
- The production of framework data and the future of the national geographic organizations in the LAC region
- Unbalances between ICT and the production of spatial data
- Undelivered message to policy makers on the role of GI

Latin America, with multiple SDI initiatives, is looking seriously at the importance of having a regional spatial data infrastructure. But the pace is too slow. Government budgets applied to mapping activities are in many nations marginal. International technical cooperation is playing a crucial role in the development of more open, advanced, integrated and sustainable mapping systems in the Region.



The Institutional Framework required for SDI development

- The need for an economic perspective on SDI development
- Accelerating the process of incorporation of international standards
- SDI capacity building should incorporate also the policy makers
- Understanding the existence of a multi diverse society and different philosophical approaches to technology trends
- Increasing role of the private sector
- PAIGH and SDI development in the Americas

Early developments in GSDI focused on the idea of a unique global SDI concept. However, reality is proving that not only ICT infrastructure, financial or administrative situations are delaying in developing nations, the production and availability of global data sets and the development of SDI main components due to a great deal, to cultural and philosophical reasons.



PAIGH and PCIDEA

The origins of PCIDEA: the need for a technical committee

- The limited role of ‘champions’ and the need for the institutional umbrella
- The funding issue to regional efforts
- The role of the GSDI Association
- The future of PCIDEA

Still there is great need to coach LAC decision makers on the need for harmonic spatial data infrastructures at the local, national, regional and global levels and its contribution to economic, social and environmental Sustainable Development.



The Reengineering of PAIGH

- Mission: An organization of significance to The Americas
Vision: Identifying America in the XXI Century
- The recent past: Reasons for loosing the pace
- Turning point: Innovating to change
- Planning the future: A collective effort
- PAIGH: The geospatial factor for OAS and other regional initiatives

*PAIGH mandate is perfectly valid, especially if the activities carried on by the Institute are **relevant** to scientific development, its result supports related decision making and contributes to a better understanding of the people of America, in the context of spatial and historical dimensions*



Where are we now: Transiting 2005

- The Reengineering of PAIGH in 2004: A complete short term already implemented Financial , Administrative and Technical reform
- Technical Assistance and Cooperation Program Priorities for 2006
- Periodic and Occasional Publications Program (SDI LAC Newsletter and the Pan American Network)

The re-engineering of the PAIGH in 2004 is defined as a collective effort, based on the relevance of its mandate and its disposition to innovate, permitting it to respond effectively to the juncture and efficiently meet the challenges that it confronts for the future.



Updating the Strategic Plan: A Survey

In 2005, PAIGH advanced an internal survey, a multidisciplinary exercise based on a blueprint document prepared by PAIGH's General Secretariat. Noteworthy are the following responses with overwhelming majority that will be converted into a set of recommendations to advance PAIGH as an effective organization in the Americas:

1. *85.71% of the respondents signaled the need to incorporate with priority and effectively new generations of GI specialists to PAIGH*
2. *76.19% indicated the need for PAIGH to contribute to capacity building activities involving the institutions in charge of basic and thematic GI production*
3. *61.9 % backed the need to promote technical cooperation projects of a multidisciplinary nature*
4. *57.14% stressed the need to regularly translate into Spanish information produced in English concerning SDI components*



PAIGH OAS GI Hemispheric Initiative for Integral Development

- The OAS Science and Technology Lima Declaration (2005)
- Purpose of the PAIGH OAS initiative and main components:
 1. To stimulate the formation of GI national policy
 2. To deliver capacity building services to specialized agencies producing basic and derived spatial data
 3. To promote the application of GI international standards
 4. To develop a PAIGH's Geoportal for the Americas
 5. To stimulate the production of National Digital Maps
- The new Virtual Map of the Americas
- The 2005 Summit of the Americas (Argentina, 2005)

With this Initiative PAIGH seeks to consolidate the renovated role of GI in the Americas and to facilitate that specialists see their goals and projects stimulated with the readiness of spatial or geographical, affordable and applicable data.



“Rethinking our America” the XVIII PAIGH General Assembly and Meetings of Technical Consultations

- Meetings of Consultation in Cartography, Geography, Geophysics and History
- Technical Program for 2005 and 2006
PAIGH XVIII Assembly
- PAIGH Strategic Planning Survey
- Relevance and innovation

*Rethinking the Continent: Plurality, Diversity and Convergence
New roles for spatial technology and analysis in the context of sustainable
development at multi levels.*



CONCLUDING REMARK

There is need to end the *Spatial Information isolation* affecting many in the LAC region. In this context, the role of PAIGH and the task assigned to PCIDEA is essential for the required development of spatial data information capabilities, at all levels, in the region. Despite the difficulties, in the Americas many organizations are now:

- a) Increasing production of spatial data;
- b) Migrating local data to perform as part of NSDI initiatives;
- c) Increasing and sharing knowledge capabilities;
- d) Incrementing access to data and information;
- e) Contributing to the development of GSDI and Global Mapping;
- f) Facilitating an Inter American forum and
- g) Placing geoinformation as one strategic sector for development.

