

Annual Report for EARSeL SIG on Developing Countries

EARSeL SIG on Developing Countries (DC) has done two main activities in the year of 2008. Information about these events is given below in detail.

EARSeL Joint Workshop “Remote Sensing – New Challenges of High Resolution”

Ruhr University in Bochum, Germany

5-7 March, 2008

It was the first workshop where four different EARSeL Special Interest Groups (SIGs) met at one location; those were: 3D Remote Sensing, Developing Countries, Radar Remote Sensing and Urban Remote Sensing. The workshop started with an excellent opening talk given from Richard Sliuzas, ITC (International Institute for Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation), Netherlands. As an urban planner he pointed out the importance of high resolution imagery especially for the mapping of slums in Developing Countries. Then, the first session related to the DC was the analysis of high resolution satellite imagery. After this very technical session, the parallel Developing Countries session consisted of two talks about general mapping methods from space and the generation of a bio-geo database for the Himalaya region. A multi-sensor image analysis of Bangladesh, the development of a poverty index and the use of Digital Elevation Models for the mapping of mountainous areas were presented in those sessions organized by the DC. Afterwards, again the parallel Developing Countries session presented a method for the monitoring of soil degradation processes in Ukraine and the fight against malaria outbreaks in Cameroon with additional usage of Google Earth.

A poster session was held parallel to the oral presentations. An attractive and communicative social program was organized from the Ruhr University, namely Carsten Juergens and his eager student team.

The overall resume of this first Joint Workshop is very positive. It must be stated, that the synergetic findings are fruitful and the interdisciplinary scientific exchange between members of different SIGs leads to huge overall benefits. The concept of a Joint Workshop has been proofed very well and it should definitely be kept for future EARSeL meetings.

4th Workshop of the EARSeL SIG on Developing Countries
in conjunction with 8th Workshop of the GISDECO
4-7 June 2008, Istanbul, Turkey

Previous workshops of EARSeL SIG Developing Countries established 8 years ago: Ghent, Belgium (2000), Bonn, Germany (2002), Cairo, Egypt (2005) and the last one in Istanbul, Turkey. On the other hand, GISDECO network established in 1991 and organized 7 events up to Istanbul workshop. Both groups bring together researchers, professionals, exchange expertise and knowledge and use remote sensing and GIS for the development of developing countries. The reason behind this collaboration between DC and GISDECO: (i) remote sensing and GIS are natural partners: from data acquisition & monitoring – modeling – analysis & planning – visualization, (ii) especially in developing countries much is to be gained from this combination as many GIS datasets are outdated, (iii) provide many opportunities for the scientific research & development, and (iv) we have special case: developing countries;

- ✓ where most rapid changes; globalization, urbanization, rural & urban poverty, disasters, climate changes etc. occur.
- ✓ where low and unequal development levels are available.
- ✓ where spatial and temporal coverage of maps are very poor.
- ✓ where government offices have low capacity levels.
- ✓ where geoinformation technologies adopted but not fully nor effectively used.
- ✓ where constraints in planning and implementation.

Istanbul workshop was organized in parallel with the 28th EARSeL Annual Symposium and the other workshops in Suleyman Demirel Convention Centre of Istanbul Technical University (ITU). 44 registered participants presented their scientific papers during oral and poster sessions covering five different topics: (i) topographic mapping and DEMs, (ii) environmental issues, (iii) disaster management, (iv) rural development and land use planning, and (v) urban development and land use planning. This workshop showed that DC & GISDECO partnership for such activity was very fruitful and revealed that the development related to the problems of developing countries can effectively tackled by remote sensing and GIS as integrated technologies.

Besides scientific program, for participants, there were two main social programs: First one was the workshop dinner organized in ITU restaurant located just one edge of FSM bridge of Istanbul and has an excellent view to Bosphorus. Workshop participants had a wonderful night with nice meals from Turkish Kitchen and a lot of dancing with different kinds of music. Second one was the excursion to the IMP (Istanbul Metropolitan Planning Center) of Bimtas company of Istanbul Greater Municipality, followed by the touristic tour to the famous Historic Peninsula of Istanbul. Participants found opportunity to get detailed information about the projects running in IMP with regards to the urban and land use planning, architectural design, mapping and cultural heritage documentation by lidar technology. After lunch, participants were taken to the Historic Peninsula by bus and made a walking tour started from Hagia Sophia and Blue mosque ended in the Suleymaniye Mosque. They had many stops on the road and each stop, Historian Necdet Sakaoglu from IMP gave them a brief information about the historic monument located in that stop. Tour finished in the Suleymaniye Mosque Garden with the wishes to meet somewhere in the world in near future with good health and happiness.

As a result of this useful combination, DC and GISDECO are planning to have another workshop in 2010, but this time far from Istanbul, in Yogokarta, Indenosia. Works are continuing to handle this event with support of University of Gajda Mada, Yogokarta. Contacts to get the support of AARS (Asian Association for Remote Sensing) are underway as well.

I hope we will meet you again with new knowledge and ideas for issues in developing countries and expecting to see new faces in our groups.

Yours Sincerely

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