

QUITO DECLARATION

on the development of Land Cover Mapping in South America

We, the South American technical experts of national, sub-regional and regional organizations participating in the workshop on a Global Land Cover Network (GLCN), being jointly organized by FAO and UNEP from 15 to 19 November 2004 in Quito, Ecuador,

Recognizing that baseline natural resource and environmental information, including in particular land cover and land cover change information is key for addressing issues relating to poverty, food insecurity, climate change and environmental degradation and for developing operational solutions to sustainable development, and that consistent critical information components are lacking at the local, national, and global levels;

Being aware of a number of initiatives on land cover mapping and monitoring are already in existence, but no single initiative at local, national, regional or international levels can effectively address the issues alone, and believing that an added value will be generated through synergy and harmonization of various initiatives among interested stakeholders;

Convinced that meeting the objective of LCCS in South America presupposes the availability of sources of reliable up-to-date information on the state of the natural resources and a production and management capacity of this information at national and regional levels;

Observing the low level support to the local and national institutions devoted to the development and application of Geoinformation Science in the majority of South American countries, resulting in a gap in the appropriation of the related technological tools by the concerned institutions, particularly in the development of spatial data infrastructure (SDI);

Convinced of the urgent need for GLCN to become a reality, based on the Artimino, Dakar and Florence declarations;

Appreciating the example of the positive experience of the Africover Project in Eastern Africa in the form of availability of a Land cover asset at national and sub-regional levels, and related operational management mechanism linking the concerned countries;

Aware of the fact that the GLCN initiative is a great opportunity for South America to build their capacity in standardized Land Cover data production and management;

Noting that the GLCN initiative is not intended to replace existing networks or environment-related systems, natural resources mapping, Remote Sensing and Early warning systems, and the Desertification information systems promoted, but rather to complement them by focussing on Land Cover;

Hereby we fully **support** the inclusion of South America in the Global Land Cover Network, and

Welcome the GLCN initiative and commit ourselves to supporting its successful implementation in South America;

Recommend the establishment of a Global Land Cover Network in response to user needs and operational applications focusing on national perspectives and globally distributed responsibilities, with the objective of enabling the provision of information on land cover and its dynamics for better decision-making at all levels in support of sustainable development, through networking and harmonizing technical approaches at global, regional, national and local levels;

Invite FAO and UNEP to foster the partnership among South American countries and with other UN agencies and international organizations and programmes, to support technical and operational capacity building for the development and the maintenance of the Network in South America;

Call for building a coalition among governmental/inter-governmental agencies, academic institutions, private sector and other interested stakeholders in the processes of institutional networking, strengthening national capacity, harmonizing land cover classification and mapping, and developing global land cover databases;

Request the donor community to financially support the development and successful operation of the Global Land Cover Network in South America;

Express gratitude to the Government of Italy and Nederland for their financial support to the GLCN program

We would also like to express our special appreciation to the organizers (CLIRSEN) of the Quito workshop and the trainers: John Latham, Antonio Di Gregorio, Craig von Hagen, Timo Maukonen and Reuben Sessa for the efficiency of their strategy and the success of the meeting from both the awareness raising and the training points of view.

Endorsed by consensus
Quito, 19 November 2004