

**Summary of UIC Wrap-Up Meeting in Stresa, Italy
May 8, 2009**

DRAFT: 6-9-09

Purpose

- Share highlights of ISRSE technical sessions and GEO Committee sessions
- Brainstorm ideas and identify participants for activities in the UIC Activity Plan
- Start planning the next UIC meeting (week of September 14 in Melbourne, Australia)

Participants

- Tyra Brown (US GEO), Herve Caumont (ERDAS), Jan Connery (ERG), Kathy Fontaine (NASA), Lawrence Friedl (NASA), Steffen Fritz (NASA), Yukio Haruyama (Remote Sensing Technology Center of Japan, GEOS, IGOS, GEO Sec), Janja Husar (Lantern Corporation), Rudy Husar (Washington University), Rick Lawford (Water Cycle CoP), Ellsworth LeDrew (UIC co-chair), Lionel Menard (Mines Paris Tech), David McCabe (EPA), Carol Meyer (ESIP), Oystein Nesje (MoE, Norway), Masami Onoda (GEO Sec), Thierry Ranchin (UIC co-chair), Erin Robinson (Washington University), Amy Jo Swanson (NASA), Sushel Unninayar (NASA)

Highlights of Technical Sessions/General Discussion

General

- The importance of user needs is becoming increasingly recognized in the earth science community, including the European Space Agency (ESA), and in the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) work. This provides an immediate opportunity for UIC involvement to ensure that products are available and useable. David McCabe will push hard from the plenary for GMES involvement in this area.
- A representative of Global Marketing Insights spoke about work to characterize users. Action: Lawrence Friedl will follow up with her.
- GEOSS' value will be diminished to the extent that the data are restricted. Making data freely available to users is a big issue. Most European Space Agency (ESA) products will become freely available.
- Voluntary tools, such as GEOSS, citizen science, and Google Earth tools are becoming increasingly recognized in the earth science community.
- Soil moisture has been adopted as an essential climate variable. Satellite missions are being planned. This progress makes a good success story for Water Cycle CoP to develop for the 2010 Ministerial Summit. This could cross-cut with other communities.
- There is some sensitivity about the term "capacity building" as it can suggest a lack of capacity. The term "building on capacity" is preferred. The UIC should use this term.
- Jose Achache made several recommendations:
 - We should achieve data democracy and apply it to all projects in Africa – he made a plea to the ESA to do this.
 - He proposed a GEO Africa portal.

- He echoed the theme of building on capacity, emphasizing that GEO, with 20 members from the African continent, is a natural forum for this coordination. He wants to make sure that GMES Africa is more than just proving data.

Quantitative Estimate of Socioeconomic Benefits

- Several people at ISRSE mentioned cost-benefit estimation from the point of view of using this type of analysis as the business case to justify the work.
- Some good cases studies exist, but tools for this type of analysis, including measuring economic benefit, are still being developed. We see specific tools being used to apply earth observation data to scientific study, but we often do not ask how much the data cost. There is a need for tools to link GEO benefits/activities/efforts to economic benefits.
- There is an idea to do a follow up project to GEO BENE that showcases the economic benefits that better data provide to decision making.
- Cost-benefit analyses will be very different among the Societal Benefit Areas (SBAs). The UIC could look at how information is used in the different SBAs and characterize those differences.
- The UIC should consider how the portal evaluation fits in here.
- Masami asked whether cost-benefit analysis can take into account public sector and voluntary partnership use of data and the associated benefits. Action: Masami and Steffen will talk about this offline.

Highlights from Communities of Practice Meetings

Energy CoP

- Some energy topics, such as renewables, are dynamic. Others, such as coal, gas, and oil, are not. The Energy CoP needs to reactivate the less active components. For example, the Energy CoP needs to find someone who can lead and invigorate the bioenergy segment. This person should have contacts and the ability to interface at high levels with organizations such as the International Energy Agency, which is a major player but not yet involved in GEO.
- Realizing there is not a natural link between Earth observations and renewable energy, the Energy CoP has decided to promote this connection by organizing a session dedicated to Earth observations and renewable energy at the Intersolar Fair in Munich, Germany, on the May 27th 2009.¹
- The Energy COP has decided to have at least a monthly telecon to keep things moving.

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Agriculture CoP

- Until now needs of this CoP have not been addressed, so there are huge gaps. Based on discussions in this CoP, there seems to be a convergence on spatial resolution required for future work in this area.

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¹ Update: Since the May 8 UIC Wrap-Up Meeting, a seminar called "Using Solar Resource Knowledge in Practice" was held at the Intersolar Fair. At this seminar, the outcomes of the MESoR European project were presented to around 60 attendees. The seminar presentations can be downloaded from <http://www.mesor.org/seminar.html>

Ideas for UIC Activity Plan

User Type Analysis

- The joint UIC/STC and UIC/ADC meetings both drove home the point that an activity to characterize users should be a UIC priority. It is obvious that the UIC, ADC, and STC are conceptualizing users in different ways with different terms. Standardizing the terminology and definitions would increase the effectiveness and coordination of all user-related work.
- UIC should conduct an activity to define the types of users. This activity will develop a corporate definition of what we mean by “user” in GEO so all involved in GEO can use common terminology for GEO activities. This activity must involve STC and ADC representatives. Action: Kathy will consolidate inputs relevant to a user type analysis activity and send e-mails to request help with this activity.
- Suggestions:
 - Develop categories for people who are very familiar with using earth observation data all the way to the other end of the user spectrum, i.e., to novice users who simply want the end result. If we can develop descriptions for user nodes on this spectrum, then others can fill in with specific labels for user types that meet those descriptions.
 - Ask the CoPs and SBAs who their users are.
 - Given the infinite number of domains for user types, think of other committees as customers.
 - Focus on what GEO needs.
 - Consider who will use definitions of users. Even within GEO, we may need different sets of user characterization, for example: level of user experience using earth observations, etc., versus discipline.
 - See what types of users are involved in GMES projects.
 - Ask: What are the nodes through which information is being processed and what do users at each node need? Is there is a universal pattern?
 - Identify the questions that user groups have.

UIC Input into ADC User Survey

- Rick Lawford requested UIC input regarding what questions should be asked in the Phase 2 user survey for ADC’s AR 09-01b task.

Activity to Identify Agencies Involved with Water

- Rick Lawford requested an initiative be added to the Activity Plan. Under the proposed activity, the water SBA would review what agencies are involved in important water-related activities and develop a strategy for how the Water CoP and GEO can link with those activities. This suggestion is inspired by the success of the Forestry CoP in connecting their work with various work and conventions stemming from international treaties and other agreements. The Water CoP plans to do this—having this be an official activity in the UIC plan will provide legitimacy.

Interview CoP for Best Practices?

- Each year, the Water CoP meets in conjunction with some other water-related technical meeting. The CoP also organizes internal meetings on particular issues as needed. The subtask work groups organize their own meetings. Teleconferences are held every two months.
- The Air Quality and Energy CoPs appear to be relatively well structured and advanced in reaching out to users.

Connecting UIC Activity Plan with GEO Work Plan

- We should look at how the UIC can contribute to GEO's Work Plan and build that specifically into the Activity Plan.

IGOS-GEO Transition

- Yukio Haruyama emphasized the importance of mapping the IGOS work into GEO, in order to build off and take advantage of the work that has already been done. The November plenary will have a symposium on the IGOS-GEO transition. This will be a good opportunity for the UIC to present current activities and show how they relate to past and future activities. The UIC should consider holding side meetings at the plenary from the UIC perspective.

UIC at Other Conferences

- ESA is planning a Living Planet Symposium for late June/early July in Norway. The event is open to other organizations. Do we want UIC presence there? Do we want UIC to go to conferences in SBA areas, such as the World Water Conference, so we can “learn their language”?
- A suggestion was made to develop a calendar of events related to earth observation data and applications that users might attend. The UIC could use this calendar as a tool to facilitate future planning to connect with users.

Next UIC Meeting

The next UIC meeting will be in mid-September in Melbourne, Australia. Current very preliminary plans (subject to change in the C4 meeting being held concurrently with this one) for the week of September 14 are: Monday—combined cochair meeting; Tuesday—large plenary session involving all committees and focused on cross-cutting topics (e.g., user types, GCI, CFP, UIC Activity Plan); Wednesday and Thursday mornings—single committee meetings, followed by C4 meetings. A strong agenda should attract people, especially from the Asian-Pacific region. However, travel distance and time are a concern, particularly for participation by members of CoPs. Suggestions for the format and content of the meeting include:

General

- Make the meeting at least two days in length, given the amount to cover and travel distance. Meeting before the week of September 14 is a possibility.
- Important: Provide telecon connection.
- Provide an overview of the week at least a month in advance.

- Consider having a keynote regional session (e.g., on the Asian water cycle initiative; air quality work; disaster work) to provide perspective from users in this part of world.
- Consider organizing a field trip to organization(s) that are using observations. Action: Talk to Stuart Minchin about this. Australia's use of satellite data to generate a forest inventory is one possibility.
- Consider coordination with ADC and STC re joint actions/activities.

Ideas of Agenda Items

- Session on Activity Plan status. Figure out who will lead projects.
- Activity Plan ongoing task/subtask reports, including status of US-09-01a project.
- Proposal for user type analysis activity.
- Session on CoP status, including status update and discussion of UIC role in developing CoPs.
- Session on CoP best practices and lessons learned. Forests are one possibility. Action: Check which CoPs and SBAs will be in Melbourne.
- Session on CFP status (project support assignments/discussion/brokering).
- Discuss UIC relationship to monitoring and evaluation and other efforts to address societal benefits of use of earth observations.
- Discuss how we learn from GMES/GNU experience and build that globally.
- Discuss UIC membership, particularly promoting greater involvement from developing countries.
- Examine UIC terms of reference and consider whether any adjustments are needed. If so, propose at 2010 plenary.
- Discuss and finalize what presence UIC should have at the November plenary.