



**Resolutions from
The LICJ/URISA Caribbean Chapter
High Level Regional Meeting on
Geospatial Information Management
Montego Bay, Jamaica
November 14, 2012**

The High Level Regional Meeting (HLRM):

Acknowledges that Geographic Information Systems (GIS) tools and applications are being increasingly used within diverse policy environments to resolve and guide decision making relating to global, regional and national issues such as, climate change, disaster management, population growth and food security, tourism, urban planning and sustainable development.

Recognises that a number of Caribbean states have made steps towards the development of National Spatial Data Infrastructures (NSDIs) to facilitate the sharing of geospatial datasets. However, there is still an appreciable amount of work to be done to obtain support from national stakeholders and to lobby key players to develop a framework which will facilitate the coordinated exchange of regional geospatial information.

Recognises that there is a need to examine geospatial information management issues across the region, to decide on strategic objectives and chart the way forward, to strengthen the knowledge and use of geospatial technologies to facilitate improved decision making regarding the management of resources and sustaining the lives of the peoples of the Caribbean.

Welcomed the presentations by the experts on the following five areas considered relevant to GIS users across the Caribbean:

- i. Development of a regional framework for Geo-spatial Information Management
- ii. Capacity and Capability Building – Education and Training
- iii. Standardization of a Regional Datum
- iv. Provision of Access to Fundamental Datasets and Regulation of the Quality of Geo-spatial Information
- v. Trends in Information Technology

Congratulated the Meeting Committee for the great work they have done in coordinating and staging the high level regional meeting.

Noted the discussions and recommendations expressed by participants on the following areas.



Decision 1 Regional SDI Framework

- i. Urged Caribbean states to create national geographic information management/SDI bodies to guide the development and use of geospatial data and technologies.
- ii. Encourages Caribbean states to work together to strengthen the use of Geospatial information management in the five areas discussed at the HLRM, in the short to medium term.
- iii. Recognised the role and work that URISA Caribbean, PC-IDEA, GeoSUR, SIRGAS and GEO are undertaking in the region to strengthen the use of geospatial information to support improved decision making.
- iv. Caribbean states are encouraged to become members of existing regional and global spatial data infrastructure (SDI) organisations.
- v. Participants of the High Level Forum agree to take a multi-pronged approach via ministerial intervention through the Bahamas, the Minister with portfolio responsibility within CARICOM, second through the URISA Caribbean chapter in collaboration with Land Information Council of Jamaica (LICJ) and the Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change (MWLECC) will petition CARICOM to establish a position with responsibility for Regional Spatial Data Infrastructure (RSDI) within the Sustainable Development Division of CARICOM Secretariat. This should be recognised at the ministerial level a Minister being made responsible for this portfolio.
- vi. Establish a regional GIM professional group through regional tertiary education institutions such as the Caribbean URISA Chapter (CUC), University of the West Indies, St Augustine, University of Technology Jamaica and University of Guyana to guide and support the way forward for Regional GIM.
- vii. Establish a Regional Geographic Information Council within CARICOM with responsibility to guide the development of geoinformation management in member states.

Decision 2 Capacity and Capability Building – Education and Training

- i. Regional tertiary education institutions should work together to strengthen the delivery of education and training in GIS and related disciplines.



- ii. URISA Caribbean through its membership will research, identify and create a registry of regional GIS/SDI groups and organisations that provide geospatial education.
- iii. The Forum recommends that GIS awareness and education should be integrated from the primary through to the secondary education curriculum, in order to lead to qualification at the Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate (CSEC) or Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) Levels
- iv. URISA Caribbean and its partners/members will :
 - a. produce a Geographic Information textbook, training material and Workbook for the Caribbean. The text book will site regional examples and case studies and the workbook will use regional datasets and will be updated as deemed appropriate.
 - b. Publish a Caribbean URISA Chapter Journal for Caribbean Professionals with the support of regional and other Universities and GIS Professionals of the region.
- v. Conference organizers and URISA Caribbean will make arrangements to have the Key note presentations of future URISA Caribbean GIS conferences streamed to professionals across the region.
- vi. The Forum recommends the establishment of a regional Geospatial Center of excellence to enhance the creation of standards, curriculum development, the use of spatial analysis in decision making, and strengthen and increase the Caribbean geospatial workforce. This Centre will interface with regional Universities, research bodies and communities e.g. Geospatial Management Institute (GMI).

Decision 3 Standardization of a Regional Datum

- i. Regional states are urged to recognise the importance and need for a common regional reference frame that fits within a global frame. A common regional reference frame allows for data sharing and analysis across territories and assists in monitoring and preventing hazards related to sea level change, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions.



- ii. The Forum recommends that the Caribbean URISA Chapter in collaboration with UWI St. Augustine, University of Technology Jamaica and other interested parties explore the opportunities to fund and conduct a study to assess the status of geodetic reference frames in the Caribbean.
- iii. The Caribbean URISA Chapter will collaborate with the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics, PCIDEA and the Geocentric Reference System for the Americas (SIRGAS) to host a series of Geodetic workshops across the region.
- iv. Member states with the technical capacity and experience are encouraged to support the efforts of other Caribbean states not having a national geodetic reference frame to establish same.
- v. Recommends the adoption of a datum based on ITRF2008 for the Caribbean given its level of great accuracy, there is an existing network of reference stations worldwide and in the Caribbean and the system is realised almost annually,

Decision 4 Access to Fundamental Datasets

Acknowledgements

- i. Acknowledges that Caribbean States are challenged by similar geospatial data management problems such as lack of accessible and accurate spatial data no metadata, few mechanisms for data discovery and prohibitive data acquisition costs.
- ii. Recognises that access to fundamental datasets and the regulation of the quality of geo-spatial information are imperatives for informed decision making and sustainable development.

Decisions

- iii. The Forum commits to raise awareness among the community of public policy makers, public servants and researchers on the importance of providing free and open access to fundamental geospatial data sets to facilitate national development.
- iv. Urges Caribbean States to develop national and regional policies regarding access to and dissemination of fundamental datasets inclusive of level of



access and terms and conditions for use taking into consideration matters of liability, privacy and national and personal security.

- v. Promotes the need to establish a regional mechanism for spatial data discovery and dissemination,
- vi. Proposes that a a feasibility study to be done on the establishment of a regional regional geospatial data centre. If such a centre is needed the study will further make recommendations as to the management and operation this regional geospatial data centre.
- vii. The Forum agrees to undertake metadata management using best practices and other proven approaches,
- viii. Member States are encouraged to employ where possible modern low cost technologies and approaches such as the use of open source software, social media and public participation in GIS to support data acquisition,
- ix. The Forum recommends the creation and support of research networks in the Caribbean to produce new information and create innovative applications and services based on Open Data.
- x. Proposes that that a regulatory agency on geospatial matters within the region be identified/established and appropriately staffed.
- xi. Agrees that it is necessary to define mechanisms for societal participation and contribution on geospatial matters within the region.

Decision 5 Trends in Information Technology

- i. Recognises that major advances in information technology has positively improved the delivery of geospatial services; mobile and web based applications are more affordable, reliable and integratable.
- ii. Caribbean States are urged to embrace technology to improve the delivery of services and support national development, but must do so by evaluating its applicability and the benefits accruable.
- iii. Governments are urged to create opportunities for its professionals and technicians to learn and use emerging technologies and trends.
- iv. Governments are urged to have a mechanism for the modernization of technology tools used- there must be the awareness/understanding hardware and software tools must be maintained.



Decision 6 Preparation and Implementation of a Regional SDI Project

- i. The Forum agreed to support the implementation of a Spatial Data Integrator Project. This entails the development of a framework for the aggregation of spatial data, built on an Open Data model that would facilitate collaborative use of spatial data for economic development. This framework could be replicated across the Caribbean.
- ii. Agreed that the working group would prepare a full project document for this project.
- iii. Agreed to identify funding opportunities to support the creation of this Spatial data integrator.