

EDITOR'S NOTE

IJAGR Going International and Supporting AAG-EIS Initiative

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The articles in this special issue evolved (i.e., expanded, peer reviewed, and selected) from papers originally presented at the AfricaGIS 2009 Conference which convened in Kampala, Uganda, from October 26 to October 30, 2009. Dr. Shuaib, lecturer in the Department of Geography at Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, and scientific chair of AfricaGIS 2009 brokered this initial IJAGR-AfricaGIS 2009 linkage. Since 1993 when AfricaGIS first gathered in Tunis, Tunisia, this biennial conference has provided a forum for geo-information professionals and policy makers to interact and foster networks with others across Africa and beyond. I am pleased to announce that the successful completion of this issue spurred discussions with Dr. Shuaib and EIS-Africa Executive Director Sives Govender to pursue subsequent IJAGR-AfricaGIS journal-conference special issues.¹ Unfortunately, the political unrest in Egypt and across North Africa and the Middle East during 2011 necessitated the cancellation of AfricaGIS 2011 scheduled for Cairo, Egypt (AfricaGIS, 2011).

This IJAGR-AfricaGIS issue is important for two reasons. First, if the "I" in IJAGR is meaningful, then participation in IJAGR activities and initiatives (contributors, reviewers, subscribers, readers, editorial review board

members, associate editors, and guest editors) should be inclusive of practitioners, scholars, and policy makers from all world regions. This particular issue goes far in fulfilling this objective with articles from authors emanating from all the major geographic regions of Africa notwithstanding contributors from Mexico, United States, and Germany. Second, beyond emphasizing the "I" in our journal's namesake, this issue embraces two declared objectives of the Association of American Geographers' (AAG) Developing Regions Programs - Spotlight: Africa. These objectives express a desire to (AAG, May 2009)

Grow the number of collaborative scientific and technical research projects between African and U. S. faculty and students, in the use (of) GIS&T in support of sustainable development projects in Africa (see also AAG Newsletter, 2010a); Support the AfricaGIS Conference in Kampala, Uganda (Oct. 2009): the most significant African gathering of all GIS and geospatial experts, decision makers, researchers, educators, students, (and) practitioners.

The "proof is in the pudding" and the AAG and EIS-Africa are collaborating on a project "to fill gaps in fundamental geospatial data at

a continent-wide level.” Furthermore, the AAG and EIS-Africa have negotiated a reciprocal membership program “to enrich the professional experiences of AAG and EIS-Africa members alike” (AAG, 2010b). It is my hope, as editor-in-chief, that IJAGR is providing a valuable platform to facilitate, albeit in a modest way, the aforementioned AAG and EIS-Africa collaboration objectives.

So it is a great pleasure that IJAGR presents this special issue in collaboration with AfricaGIS 2009. Thanks to Executive Director Govender, Dr. Lwasa, contributors, reviewers, and IGI Global for their support and dedication in putting this issue together. IJAGR looks forward to continuing this fruitful relationship with upcoming AfricaGIS conferences.

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IJAGR

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ENDNOTE

- ¹ EIS-Africa (2001) is “[A] network for the co-operative management of environmental information in Africa” and the parent organization sponsoring the biennial AfricaGIS conferences.

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