

32nd International Symposium on Remote Sensing of Environment

The Centro Nacional de Alta Tecnologia (CNAT) in San Jose, Costa Rica from June 25th to 29th hosted the 32nd International Symposium on Remote Sensing of the Environment. Costa Rica takes pride in its "green" policies and practices, so it was fitting that the theme for the symposium was the "Global Earth Observing System of Systems (GEOSS)". Costa Rica announced that it had become the seventy-first member nation of GEO just days before the symposium. The Group on Earth Observations (GEO), of which ISPRS is a participating professional society acts as co-ordinator for the GEOSS.

Human Health

The bi-annual International Symposium on Remote Sensing of Environment (ISRSE) symposium is organised by an international committee of space agencies and other sponsoring organisations (ICORSE), which is itself a standing committee of ISPRS. TC-VIII/2 (Disasters, Hazards, and Public Health) contributed to the ISRSE technical programme with a track on human health, one of nine recognised GEOSS areas of societal benefit. The track consisted of a plenary session during which speakers addressed broad perspectives on how earth observations and GEOSS can detect, model and forecast environmental episodes that trigger human health response to air, water, soil and vector-borne agents. Speakers included Linda Moodie (NOAA), Elena Naumova (Tufts Univ.), Donald Goodwin (USAF Institute for Operational Health and Gary Foley (UNEP). The plenary was followed by four technical sessions focused on (1) environment and epidemiology, (2) health surveillance and tracking, (3) decision support systems, and (4) development needs and future technologies. While heavily dominated by North America, the programme of papers included valuable contributions from South Africa, Norway, Belgium, Argentina, and Switzerland. The remaining eight areas of societal benefit drew speakers from the general "call for abstracts". Aside from human health, these areas included disaster, climate, weather, water cycle, ecosystems, biodiversity, agriculture and energy. Altogether the programme consisted of six Plenary Sessions, 44 Technical Sessions, eleven Poster Sessions and three Workshops, and was attended by almost four hundred registered participants.

Workshops

ISPRS was a major contributor to the success of the symposium. Dr EmmaÅnuel Baltsavias held a student summer school in advance of the opening ceremonies. Student participants in this two-day session were sponsored by the ISPRS Foundation through a grant for lodgings, meals and related student expenses. President Dowman, working with the OGC, IEEE and the University of New Mexico's Earth Data Analysis Center, organised a GEOSS Workshop on the theme of "Agriculture and Earth Observation Advances". The aim was to draw attention to GEO architecture, promote adoption of earth-observation for food security and sustainable production, and learn what various roles and services might be provided through GEOSS. The workshop was accompanied by an OGC demonstration describing how earth-observing datasets and agricultural data and information could be discovered, retrieved and converged to provide viable information systems for use at country, regional and global scale, all within an interoperable framework independent of local operating systems.