

# ITC Earth Observation and Water Management Seminar



ITC has announced a three-day seminar dealing with earth observation and water management entitled Earth Observation for Improving Water Management in Africa; Developing Human, Technical and Institutional Capacity. The seminar will be held from 23rd to 25th September 2008 in Enschede, the Netherlands and will be opened by the Ethiopian Minister of Water, Mr. Afsaw Dingamo.

Central questions that will be addressed are:

- How will earth observation data and information services to improve integrated water resources management, evolve in the coming years?

- What is best practice in capacity development in this field?
- What is the role of African national and regional knowledge centres in capacity development, and of international institutes like ITC?

Many initiatives dealing with earth observation and water management are ongoing on the African continent. We can mention the TIGER initiative of ESA, the PUMA project of WMO and EUMETSAT, FEWS NET of the USGS, the global change and hydrological cycle or GLOWA projects, and several other national and bilateral programmes.

New large initiatives are undertaken like the AMESD project, funded by the EU and executed by the African Union (AU). Other world regions increasingly focus on earth observation (EO) for Africa like the CBERS2 for Africa project, executed by Brazil and the P.R. of China, or SERVIR from the US. Coordination of actions in a Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) is pursued by the Group of Earth Observation (GEO) member countries and affiliated institutions.

All these activities require knowledgeable resource persons on the ground. Is there sufficient absorption capacity in Africa and through which mechanisms efficient application of EO can be achieved, are recurrent issues in these initiatives?

The role of ITC in capacity building for earth observation in Africa is widely recognised. Apart from postgraduate degree training at ITC, many training activities are organised with African partners: tailor-made training, refresher courses, and MSc/PhD fieldwork activities. ITC is also involved in major international networking and capacity building initiatives like the UNU-DGIM. Looking ahead for the coming years, challenging opportunities exist to further develop capacity building activities together with partners in Africa.