

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

THE GUEST OF HONOUR, MR. PERMANENT SECRETARY,  
YOUR EXCELLENCY THE AMBASSADOR OF ITALY TO KENYA,  
FOOD & AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION Representative to Kenya,  
AFRICOVER CHIEF TECHNICAL ADVISOR,  
DISTINGUISHED PARTICIPANTS,  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

On behalf of the fraternity of Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nation in Nairobi and on my own behalf, I extend to all of you a most cordial welcome to this auspicious occasion signifying the 'Official Opening of FAO Africover-E.Africa Project First National Coordinators Meeting.'

As you are aware, FAO has been involved in the organisation of this important initiative called Africover for the last three years. This project has been prepared in response to a number of national requests for assistance to the implementation of reliable and geo-referenced information on natural resources at sub-national, national and regional levels.

The analysis of national needs proved that no information system on resources, concerning early warning, forest and rangeland monitoring planning, catchment management production of statistics, biodiversity or climate change, can do without reliable and homogeneous basic geographic information showing both usual landmarks and land cover.

Africover is therefore an FAO intervention to prepare the basic geographic information common to the information components of actual and future programmes on natural resources in African countries.

The Guest of Honour, Your Excellency, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, we are pleased to state that FAO has started the implementation of three international working groups to prepare the technical specifications of the Africover Project, for land cover classification geometry and geodesy, and technical methods.

We therefore, can hardly hide our happiness at the fact that we are all here this week to strategize this project objectives for implementation. With us here today are the participants of this Meeting who are actual Coordinators of AFRICOVER in their respective Ministries and countries. I have no doubt that they shall agree on future project plans as well as present and discuss the National Working Group activities and the final user's needs for each of our member countries. Through their deliberations, the participants shall discuss and agree on project technical issues such as land cover classification, methodology, geometry and reference issues, including ancillary data.

FAO wishes to express its appreciation for all the support it continues to receive from the her host, the government and people of Kenya. FAO also appreciates excellent co-operation and collaboration it is receiving from each of your countries – that has enhanced its operations in the region.

The Guest –of-Honour, Your Excellency, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen , allow me to take this opportunity to very briefly refer to some other FAO technical assistance programmes and activities which have been initiated in response to the various needs not only of Kenya, but of the sub-region as a whole pertaining to the subject of this workshop:

The “Water Resources Management Policy and Institutions in the Lake Region” project was put in place in response to the need felt by the Lake Victoria countries to address common interests in water resources development, management and protection of the Lake Region.

The “Assistance to the Establishment of Lake Victoria Fisheries Commission” project was approved in 1993 to assist the riparian countries to establish an interational fishers management body for the Lake. The “Monitoring, Forecasting and Simulation of the River Nile in Egypt” project was initiated in 1991, among others, to monitor the rainfall and run of regime in the Nile Basin.

The “Operational Water Resources Management and Information System in the Nile Basin Countries” project was started in

May 1996 to facilitate the adoption of adequate, harmonised national water policies in the participating Nile Basin States and for institutional strengthening and training in legal, organizational and technical issues related to integrated river basin management and the allocation of trans-boundary water resources in the Nile Basin.

The Guest-of Honor, Your Excellency, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, before I end these few remarks, I wish to stress the important objectives of all these projects is to foster complete harmony and good neighbourliness in the use of all natural resources in the region. Through this regional involvement FAO has identified many specific interventions for each of the collaborating countries. In these circumstances FAO takes great pleasure to thank all participating donor countries and in particular ITALIAN Government for providing funds and resources that have facilitated this unique intervention.

Finally I wish to conclude my remarks by commending all the National Co-ordinators for their active and effective implementation of the project objectives, one of which is to strengthen indigenous capacities for land cover mapping and for the monitoring of changes, unaided, at the regional and country levels. It is through this cordial networking relationship that the region can consolidate and manage its large wealth of natural resources sustainably. It is my belief that by the end of this consultative week better and stronger inter-country relationship will be created for greater prosperity of all our people in this sub-region.

I thank you.