

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE REGIONAL
CENTRE FOR SERVICES IN SURVEYING, MAPPING AND
REMOTE SENSING ON THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE UNITED
NATIONS, FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL ORGANISATION
AFRICOVER - EAST AFRICA PROJECT SECOND NATIONAL
COORDINATOR'S MEETING 15-20 FEBRUARY, 1999

The Guests-of-Honour,
Your Excellency the Ambassador of Italy,
Food and Agricultural Organisation Representative,
Africover Chief Technical Advisor,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to be with you at this auspicious occasion of the opening of the FAO Africover Project Second National Coordinators Meeting.

The Guests of Honour, Your Excellency the Ambassador, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is noteworthy to appreciate the efforts of the East Africa FAO Project for the efforts put in achieving their objectives. The Project seeks to achieve both in the short and long run, a base for sustainable development aspirations of all our countries, most of which are members of the Centre.

Since a long time ago, several organizations, including our Centre have assessed as one of the major bottleneck for the development of

the region and the national countries, the lack of reliable and detailed information on the natural resources available, the cover and the use of our land.

The methodology and tools being developed at the project are allowing the development of a unique source of detailed and reliable resource information at both National and Regional level that is aimed to solve this major structural problem. This became extremely important both at national level, fostering the development of each participating country, and at regional level, having crucial projects expecting to use comparable data such as the Nile Basin, Lake Victoria, Great Horn and IGAD projects.

It seems very important to stress the point that up to now the sources of information for such type of regional projects have relied on data coming from different countries, developed with different methodologies and standards. This basically means that data representing certain source of information in a country were not comparable with data representing similar source of information in another country.

The expected results of this project will give the chance to each country participating to exchange, whenever they want, homogenous

and comparable data in all project areas for developing common models and methodologies.

The programme provides a forum for discussion on the status, progress and future plans of the activities for each country, giving particular attention to common issues such as Geometry of the Database and Data Dissemination Policy among Project Countries and with the Project Regional Office in Nairobi.

Our Guests of Honour, Your Excellency, Distinguished Delegates. At this time in our development when external aid and assistance are playing a major role in our national and regional public investments, the contribution of the Italian Government in this initiative is a great intervention for the well-being not only of the region, but of Africa as a whole, in the support of better planning, the use of scarce natural resources, as well as fostering our development.

Our Guests of Honour, Your Excellency, Distinguished Delegates, most of our countries are now seeking to establish greater institutional capacity and we express our sincere appreciation to Africover for the efforts made in this direction.

The Guests-of-Honour, Your Excellency, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, with this few remarks,

I thank you for your attention.