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**Third NATIONAL CO-ORDINATORS MEETING**  
**26 January 2000**  
**Sharm el Sheick, Egypt**

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**MINUTES**

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## 1. OPENING

The opening addresses made by the various Guests-of Honour,

### (a) **Mr. N. Doumandji, FAO Representative, Egypt**

The FAO representative pointed out that FAO has been involved in the organization of the Africover initiative for the last five years, 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.

Africover is therefore a FAO intervention to prepare the basic geographic information common to the information components of actual and future programs on natural resources in African Countries. The methodology and tools being developed at the project are allowing the development of a unique source of detailed and reliable resource information that is aimed to solve this major structural problem. The combination and integration of both the regional and national approach of the project is one of the major strengths of the Africover project.

The FAO representative took this opportunity to very briefly refer to some other FAO technical assistance program and activities that have been initiated in response to the various needs of our Sub-region and are expected to benefit from the Africover database, such as the “Water Resources Management Policy and Institutions in the Lake Victoria Region”, the “Assistance to the Establishment of Lake Victoria Fisheries Commission”, the “Monitoring, Forecasting and Simulation of the river Nile in Egypt”, and the “Operational Water Resources Management and Information System in the Nile Basin Countries”.

### (b) **Prof Simon Ndyetabula, Director General, Regional Center for Services in Surveying Mapping and Remote Sensing (RCSSMRS)**

Prof Ndyetabula stressed the mandate of the Center to facilitate the generation of resource information for sustainable development in Africa and its cooperation with the project. Apart from hosting the project, the center provides advice on geodetic aspects, and its staff is involved in the interpretation activities to assure the sustainability of the mapping efforts in the region after the project life. He stated that in order to realize the full project benefits associated with the Africover database following issues will have to be addressed:

- maintenance and management of the database
- improvement and upgrading of the database
- establishment and maintenance of the database linkages within the participating countries.

**(c) Mariano Foti, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

The Italian Cooperation follows with interest the activities on this project which is together with the Nile Basin Water Resources Management Project the most important one at regional level in Eastern Africa.

The results so far achieved both in terms of the elaborated methodology and the data produced had to be considered positively although a certain delay has been reported.

The representative of the Italian cooperation expressed his thanks to the Egyptian authorities for hosting the meeting and to the Representative of FAO for his participation.

Finally he welcomed Eritrea within the Africover program.

The written speeches are included in Annex II

**2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND RAPPORTEUR**

The meeting started with the appointments of the chairmen and rapporteurs.

Dr. Nabil el Mowelhi, the National Coordinator for Egypt, was appointed as chairman

Rob Postma, Project Officer of the Africover Eastern Africa module, was appointed as rapporteur

The list of participants is included in Annex .....

**3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The Agenda was amended and adopted.

#### **4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

A number of matters arising from the minutes of the first National Coordinator Meeting (**NCM**) were considered and clarifications and comments were provided by the Chief Technical Adviser (**CTA**) of the AFRICOVER Eastern Africa project.

The annotated minutes of the second NCM answering to the remarks of the NCM members were revised and are included in Annex I.

#### **5. PRESENTATION OF AFRICOVER ACTIVITIES**

##### **5.1 General overview of Africover activities,**

The CTA presented the following topics regarding the Africover Eastern Africa module of the AFRICOVER initiative:

(a) The general background of the AFRICOVER initiative and the basic facts on the project were summarized. The main objectives and activities as described in the project document were explained.

##### **(b) Status activities**

The major activities include the implementation of land cover interpretation based on the FAO Land Cover Classification System (**LCCS**), the development of a digital database of land cover units of Eastern Africa, the development of different software tools and the training of national experts. The current status of these activities was shown.

##### **(c) Main achievements.**

The main projects achievements since the last NCM were realized on technical assistance (with digitization activities as done by some NFPI's), communication mechanisms (all e-mail equipment is installed, Africover Web page is operational, brochure printed), strengthening and improvement of the grassroots actors participation, workshops (20 national photo interpreters have been trained in the Africover procedures of land cover classification, NWG's had several meetings in most of the member countries) , support to local institutions, demonstration case studies (Agroscene, Tarangire, Somalian Irrigation Management) and procurement of equipment (for the NFPI's :PC's, modems are installed, printers under procurement.)

##### **(d) Main problems encountered.**

- Delay in the selection, production of quick looks, procurement and final delivery by the supplier of the satellite imagery.
- Delay in the finalization of the software: both softwares produced, have incurred a delay due to the extended phase of debugging (AIMS) and reprogramming of specific parts (LCCS)
- Delay caused by the normative exercise

**(e) Workplan and budget up to the end of the project**

The end of the current Africover project is end May 2000. It will be not possible to achieve the finalization of the Africover project activities within this remaining period. The CTA presented a workplan showing the time needed for the finalization of the projects activities and the activities to be started to capitalize on the projects achievements.

The Chief of SDRN of FAO HQ introduced the steps taken by FAO to prepare for an eventual project extension. He stated that in order to capitalize on the important achievements made by the project (MADE, national/regional network, methodology) up to now, FAO prepared a first draft of a project proposal for a possible project extension up to may 2002. This proposal is based on the recommendations given by the NC in several meetings including the second NCM and by a mission of FAO to the project offices in Nairobi in December 1999. The new phase should stress the following domains :

- enhancing of capacity building at national and regional level.
- Give extra attention to the 'latecomers' in the project
- Development of applications that show how the Africover data can be used.

The Chief SDRN proposed to send as soon as possible a draft of the project proposal to the NC's for comments and amendments in order to enable FAO to consolidate and finalize the proposal for formal submission to the donor.

A presentation of a workplan was made covering all activities foreseen in the project including a tentative budget till the end of a proposed extension of the project till May 2002.

**(f) Conclusions**

The overall results achieved until now are highly satisfactory while some delay was experienced.

The final product will be more detailed and technologically more advanced than originally planned.

In order to achieve all project requirements the project would need to be extended and the budget revised accordingly.

A first estimation of the budget as indicated in the preliminary project proposal for the accomplishment of a project extension phase of 2.5 years (June 2000 – May 2002), is close to 4 million USD.

The full presentation is included in Annex III.

## 5.2 Technical presentation of the Africover activities.

The Senior Mapping Expert of the Africover Eastern Africa project presented the following topics:

- The progress of the interpretation activities up to now in terms of the number of land cover classes as described in the legends per country.
- The quality control needed after the photo-interpretation : checking of codes and polygons on the acetate as produced by the national photo-interpreters before they are digitised
- The digitisation process : contracts are made with the NFPI or private companies to deliver the digitised land cover, hydrological and road network layers.
- The database structuring is based on the following activities :1. Final control of land cover layer.2. Digitisation by contractor. 3.Control of digitisation by project. 4.Update of digitisation by contractor. 5. Control of updates by project. 6.Check overlay polygon layers on digital image by project. 7. Production of the mosaic of the individual scenes by contractor. 8.Automatic Procedures of Database control by the project
- Status software development (excluding data):
  - LCCS : Will be released for operational use by the NFPI's and other interested institutions in the first half of 2000. Final tests going on.
  - AIMs : Final version delivered. Factory acceptance tests going on
  - ADG : Collaboration for setup of the software with major GIS software house to be finalised and delivery of first release by the end of 2000.
  - AID : To be released after completion of database. Data capturing of Somalia and Kenya is finalized.
- Developed applications on the basis of Africover data are Agrosce, Tarangire project, Somalia Irrigation Information System and others. The Letters of Agreements are included in the CD-ROM handed out during the workshop for decision-makers.

The full presentation is included in Annex

## 5.3 Remarks/Recommendations/Observations

- To better assess the attained delay of the Africover activities, the project was requested to provide a precise overview on the progress of its activities showing the yearly achievements (photo-interpretation, development of methodologies, development of softwares). This might be especially of interest in view of the justification of the preparation of a new project phase.
- Concern was raised about the effect on the project's resources of the applications as developed through Letters of Agreement (LOA) between Africover and other organizations. The project informed the members of the NCM that these activities are being executed on the basis of the LOA's, which include specific budgets allocated by the partner organizations.

## 6. AFRICOVER EASTERN AFRICA COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS

### 6.1 Presentations per country

Country reports on the status and progress of national activities were presented by the National Co-ordinators of the following countries:

- (a) **Burundi** :Le projet Africover Eastern Africa est déjà connu par les futures utilisateurs, et en particulier le Ministère de l'aménagement du territoire et de l'Environnement. Il n'u a pa eu beaucoup d'actions enterprises à part les réunions du Groupe National de Travail et la visite effectuée par le CTA du projet. Dans le proche future, si-tôt que les base de données sera disponible, avec l'aide du projet il faut prévoir un séminaire de sensibilisation pour lesutilisateur potentials. Le projet devrait nous aider dansle renforcement des capacités (formations et équipement) La digitalisation de la photointerpretation ser effectué par l'Institution Point Focal. L'accès à la base de données sera comme pour les autres données géographiques disponibles à l'Institut Géographique du Burundi. Ces donnees sont accesibles moyennant un prix très petit ou sont disponibles chez leur producteur avec une autorisation écrite de l'Institut.
- (b) **Democratic Republic of Congo** : Depuis la deuxième réunion du Coordinateur Nationaux tenue a Nairobi du 15 au 20 fevrier 1999, le projet Africover EA n'a pas enregistre des progress significatifs en RDC. L'insufficance des images satellitaires est la principale contrainte qui handicape la poursuite et la finalisation des activites du projet Africover EA dans le pays precrite. Les trois autres dossiers qui meriterret d'etre regle rapdement pour assurer le deroulement normal des activites du projet sont les suivantes :
- Le versement du solde de 1.500 USD destines a la couverture des frais de fonctionnement du NWG.
  - La livraison de l'imprimante et ordinateur promis a la NC
  - la parement par la FAO Rome du frais d'installation de l'e-mail de la NC du projet Africover en RDC en souffrance depuis le mois d'avril 1999
- (c) **Egypt** : The digital geo-referenced database of the Egyptian land cover is about to finish and handed over to the NFPI within the next three months. Current status: digitisation completed coding according to the Africover specifications and geocoding and edge matching of all scenes is under programming. Future initiations : prepare at the NFPI SWERI a facility to house the database generated from the project. Update capacity and capability. Generate the interest among the Egyptian N'WG to use the data according to their individual needs.
- (d) **Eritrea** formally signed the agreement with FAO in November 1999. The three photo interpreters are already selected and will start training and preliminary interpretation in March 2000 in Florence at . It is envisaged that the preliminary interpretation will be completed latest by the end of May. This will be followed by field verification during June and July. The final interpretation and quality

control will be finalized by November 2000. In the case of digitization it is envisaged it may take another two months.

(e) **Kenya** : The digitisation of the Kenya land cover has been completed, and if problems of geodesy can be overcome, a database should be in place any time soon. Most of the original members, except 3 of the NWG retired. However, because of the government rationalisation exercise most of the members of the NWG are now in the same Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, except for the director of Kenya Wildlife Service, Director of Agriculture and Director of Survey. Meetings are therefore now much more frequent, both informally and formally. A strong request has been made for Africover data for both national and regional planning of environment, biodiversity, land use, and watershed (particularly Nile Basin initiative for the preparation of regional watershed management plan) Africover should start a user support service in a second phase, to assist in an effective use of the database. A status report on geodetic network in Kenya was prepared, with the areas that need improvement highlighted.

(f) **Rwanda** :Activities realized during 1999 are mainly :

- creating awareness on Africover. This has been done during the visit of the CTA in April 1999, but informal contacts have been pursued. The NWG did not meet awaiting the official start of the project
- selection of candidates for photointerpretation. Two candidates have been selected and will start training in February 2000.
- Agreement letter between FAO and the NFPI has been signed in December 1999.
- The geodetic report has been prepared by a national consultant. We are waiting for remarks from Africover.

- A PC and modem have been supplied. They lack a UPS and printer

The main problem encountered resides in communications between FAOR Rwanda, Africover and NFPI. Information should be communicated to the 3 parties.

For the year 2000 we request that:

- the number of photo-interpreters are increased
- the computer equipment be completed
- communication be improved.

(g) **Sudan** : This country report covers the period from last year's NCM to date. Project activities included :

- The NWG held 4 meetings
- Visit of CTA and Senior Mapping Expert to Sudan
- Collection of ancillary data
- Completion of image interpretation
- Future initiatives : updating of National Agro census.
- Monitor desertification
- Establish data dissemination system
- 

(h) **Tanzania** : The NFPI convened two NWG meetings one of which was attended by the CTA. According to the government structure in place, utilization of the database shall mostly be at district level where execution of projects is focused. For effective awareness campaign about the availability and benefits of the Africover database, it is important for the NWG members to be knowledgeable

about the context and operational capabilities of the database in order to explain it well to potential users and inquirers. Furthermore, demonstration of the application of the database for solving or analyzing a problem will draw and attract attention of a larger community of users. However, in order to be able to do so, it is recommended to train at least one member of the NFPI to become conversant with manipulating the database using the provided software

A national policy for distribution of digital data does not exist. But existing digital data is sold by agreement specifying terms and conditions of possession and utilization. Africover Database shall be sold at a non-commercial price. However, the actual price can be determined better upon evaluation of at least a sample of the data against price criteria. In principle it is agreed that the Database shall be kept by the NFPI and should there be need for copy right protection, it shall be vested in the NFPI.

The NFPI completed field verification of the preliminary interpretation. Final interpretation and harmonization was completed at project offices and now digitization is on progress whereby the NFPI has been contracted to digitize 10 out of 40 scenes which cover the country.

- (i) **Uganda** : The NWG did not meet because the funds for the NWG were not received for the organisation of the meeting. Since the LOA was signed in 1997, only 1.500 USD was received. The NFPI had planned to hold the NWG with the CTA and the FAOR, but they couldn't attend. Discussions were however held with individual members of the NWG from the respective institutions.

The full presentations are included in Annex V to XI.

## 6.2 Remarks/Recommendations/Observations

After the presentations the NCM made the following remarks/recommendations:

- (a) Members of the NCM indicated a need to provide the NFPI's with additional equipment (printers, UPS, CD-Writer) for their operational services related to the Africover activities. The project currently has started the procurement of printers for the NFPI's
- (b) Members of the NCM questioned the order in which the countries were selected for the mapping activities. The project management clarified that the selection was based on technical criteria such as the availability of cloud free images (covering at least 80% of the country), the availability and quality of recent land cover maps/databases, and the methods applied for the ortho-rectification of the images.
- (c) Members of the NCM stressed the necessity of additional training, during and after the finalization of the database and softwares. At least one specialist per NFPI should be fully trained in the management of the Africover database. The members also recognized the need for additional training (workshops, seminars) to a wider range of users.
- (d) Members of the NCM pointed out that there were problems with the allocation of the financial support covering the operational costs of the NFPI's related to the activities carried out within the Africover program. An overview of the

individual country's situations will be made by the project in order to address the issue with FAO HQ and the different FAOR's.

- (e) On request of the NC of Rwanda, the project explained that the choice of two photo-interpreters for the land cover interpretation of Rwanda is based on the ratio between the size of the country and the use of the available resources at the project offices in Nairobi.
- (f) The members of the NCM expressed the unanimous view that the Africover project has so far been highly successful in term of that. A preliminary multi-purpose environmental database has been developed, a methodology including related software packages which would have a world wide application potential was developed and a regional cooperation network has been developed through a range of national capacity building activities. However, the member of the NCM also recognized a noticeable delay on the project implementation due to several reasons out of control of the project management, such as ambitious project design but with unrealistic assessment of time frame and limited budget.
- (g) In view of that, the members of the NCM strongly urge the donor and FAO to take an immediate action in extending the Africover project for a new phase, as this is essential to allow the participating countries in completing the current program of activities. It will also enable the participating countries to capitalize the current achievements of the project and further strengthening their capacities in the wider application of Africover results for sustainable development.
- (h) The members of the NCM would like to request the donor and FAO to assure a close follow up of the proposal for the project extension, in order to allow the project activities to continue without an interruption.
- (i) The draft proposal for the extension of the project, taking in to account the conclusions of the NCM's should be sent to the members of the NCM within the next 2 weeks for necessary comments. The members of the NCM agreed that their comments and observations would be sent back to FAO within 2 weeks after receiving of the draft proposal to enable FAO to consolidate and finalise the proposal for immediate official submission to the government of Italy.
- (j) In anticipation of an eventual extension of the project it was proposed that the members of the NCM consider revising the TOR's of the NC's according to the new functions of the NFPI's as the institute/department responsible for the dissemination and update of the Africover data.
- (k) The members of the NCM's, recognizing that it would be beneficial to promote the awareness of Africover within and outside the Africover region, recommended that efforts should be made by FAO to avail of various events, in particular the forthcoming Regional Conferences for Africa and the Near East, for technical presentations of Africover.

## **7. OTHER TOPICS**

As an observer at the third NCM, Dr. Amin Missallati from the Biruni Space Center at Tripoli, Libya, expressed his appreciation for the Africover project and stressed its need within the region because of the lack of homogeneous spatial data. He also appreciated the efforts made by the project on the geodetic issues since this also poses a major problem for the surveyors in Libya.

## **8. DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

A proposal was made to hold the meeting in Arusha, Tanzania or in Kampala, Uganda. Given the current situation of the proposition of project extension, the project management is requested to decide at the appropriate time.

**After discussion, the NCM adopted the minutes.**

### **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED**

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| ADG     | Africover Database Gateway   |
| AID     | Africover Interactive Database for photointerpretation               |
| AIMS    | Africover Interpretation and Mapping System                          |
| CTA     | Chief Technical Adviser  |
| FAO     | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations              |
| GIS     | Geographical Information Systems                                     |
| LOA     | Letters of Agreement   |
| LCCS    | Land Cover Classification System                                     |
| MADE    | Multipurpose Africover Database for Environmental resources          |
| NC      | National Co-ordinator  |
| NCM     | National Co-ordinators Meeting                                       |
| NFPI    | National Focal Point Institute                                       |
| NWG     | National Working Group   |
| RCSSMRS | Regional Center for Services in Surveying Mapping and Remote Sensing |
| SDRN    | Environment and Natural Resources Service                            |