



PORTUGAL 2007

The Lisbon Process on “GMES and Africa”

Lisbon, December 7th, 2007

Introduction

Earth Observation derived applications can valuably contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, providing useful information on a wide range of areas such as food security, management of natural resources, desertification, climate monitoring, conflict prevention and humanitarian aid, among others. Reference to their use as critical tools for the support of sustainable development has thus been integrated in strategy documents adopted both by the European Union (EU), and by the African Union (AU)¹.

The European Commission and EU Member States have substantially invested in Earth Observation (EO) for environmental monitoring in Africa and ACP countries through European Development Fund (EDF), research programmes and bilateral cooperation.

Other European stakeholders (namely the European Space Agency and the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites, among others) have also made investments in the same area, providing capacities in Africa and preparing the African users at policy and technical levels to the extensive use of EO for the sustainable management of the African environment and its resources.

The Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES), a joint initiative of the European Union and ESA, is being developed to provide, on a sustained basis, reliable and timely Earth observation-based information services related to environmental and security issues in support to policy makers' needs.

GMES' vast potential to serve the African continent is widely recognized, but has not been fully exploited yet. In this context, the Commission of the African Union, the Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States and five Regional Economic Communities of Sub-Saharan Africa² have signed the Maputo Declaration³.

At the global level, Europe is deeply committed to the Group on Earth Observation (GEO), an intergovernmental global partnership which includes 71 countries and 46 organisations committed to a worldwide effort to build the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) coordinating and harmonising national and regional programmes and initiatives.

¹ COM(2005) 489 final, “EU Strategy for Africa: Towards a Euro-African pact to accelerate Africa's Development”, October 2005; COM(2006) 376 final - Interconnecting Africa : the EU-Africa Partnership on Infrastructure; Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August – 4 September 2002, (United Nations publication, No. E.03.II.A.1); COM(2007) 212, “European Space Policy”, April 2007; “Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action” – August 2005; COM (2007)357 final – “From Cairo to Lisbon – The EU-Africa Strategic Partnership”, June 2007

² The Economic Commission of the West Africa States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development of East Africa (IGAD), the Monetary and Economic Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC).

³ “Maputo Declaration - in support of the “African GMES” Initiative”, October 2006 – 7th EUMETSAT User Forum in Africa

Background

GMES is being developed in steps through the introduction of pilot phase services, starting with three fast track services (land, marine, emergency) by the end of 2008. Further, initial services have already been identified, which could be successively deployed to support a wide range of needs. In the short-term, GMES will draw on existing in-situ and space-based observing capacities developed by EU and ESA Member States. In the longer-term, investments will be made in the deployment of new capacities to provide continuity of data sources and infrastructure in support of the development of GMES services⁴.

Some of the assets already being put together for the GMES fast track services have significant potential to serve also the African users and policy makers. In view of effectively serving them, the African requirements should be integrated in the definition of the upcoming GMES services, and the regional and local capabilities strengthened, allowing users and policy makers to access EO information provided by these services.

Indeed, following the principles of the European Development Consensus, also EO cooperation activities should be based on the integration of African development requirements and objectives in EU R&D policies, on one hand, and on the assistance to developing countries in enhancing their domestic capacities in science and technology areas, on the other. In particular, values such as convergence, harmonisation and use of indigenous and local knowledge, effective participation and ownership of technology and capacities by the African countries will be the guidelines for a valuable partnership between GMES and Africa.

Africa has a number of regional and national centres of excellence, as well as continental scientific and political organizations that are key players in promoting the exploitation of EO information to the benefit of African citizens. Some countries have developed, with a substantial contribution of European development cooperation instruments, innovative approaches and services on the utilisation of EO data for food security and sustainable management of natural resources.

The "GMES and Africa" partnership should be integrated in the Africa-EU Joint Strategy and Action Plan for 2008-2010, and will be part and parcel of the EU-Africa Partnership on the Information society, Science and Space.

Proposal for launching "GMES and Africa" partnership

Under the Portuguese Presidency of the EU, it is proposed to start the process of establishing the partnership between GMES and Africa. This will be done by:

- Deepening the dialogue with the African users and between the African and European policy makers for the identification and integration of their requirements for the provision of GMES services to the African Continent;
- Leveraging on existing relevant initiatives and projects for strengthening and building Earth observation capacities in Africa, valuing in particular the existing endogenous initiatives as to avoid duplication;
- Establishing a long term partnership among European and African stakeholders.

Through the event "Space for Development: the case of GMES and Africa"⁵ held in Lisbon on December 7th, 2007, and having in mind the multiplicity of players in such an endeavor, with scientific, technological, industrial, political, institutional and cooperative/development dimensions, the Portuguese Presidency of the EU launched a two-year process leading to an *Action Plan on "GMES and Africa" partnership*.

In addition to the direct benefits of "GMES and Africa" to its users, the initiative will enhance the European-African cooperation on sustainable development and scientific cooperation. It will also strengthen the international dimension of the European Space Policy in general and of GMES in

⁴ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament – Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES): From concept to reality" (COM(2005) 565 final)

⁵ Under the responsibility of the Portuguese Presidency of the EU Council, in collaboration with the European Commission, the European Space Agency and the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites.

particular, while consolidating both the European and African contributions to the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS).

The Lisbon Process on “GMES and Africa”

In the wider framework of the Africa-EU Partnership on Science, Information Society and Space of the Africa-EU Action Plan 2008-2010, the **Lisbon Process** is the exercise aimed at drafting and consolidating an *Action Plan for “GMES and Africa” partnership* for approval at the third EU-Africa Summit, foreseen for end-2009.

The European Commission will work together with the Commission of the African Union to promote this process and will prepare a draft *Action Plan for “GMES and Africa” partnership* at the end of 2008. The European Commission will maintain a close dialogue and consultancy with the EU Member States and ESA, as well as with other European stakeholders in GMES (EUMETSAT, relevant EU institutions, etc.) and with the current and upcoming EU presidencies; the Commission of the African Union will maintain a close dialogue and consultancy with its Member States and with the other African counterparts and institutions (Regional Economic Communities, relevant African institutions, etc.), as well as with user and providers communities as appropriate, during the whole process.

The Action Plan will be developed under the responsibility of the competent EU-AU Joint Experts' Working Group being set-up in the framework of the implementation of the Africa-EU Action Plan.

Actions undertaken in this context will include the establishment of a strategy for a partnership between GMES and Africa, as a result of an articulation and concerted position among users and stakeholders referred to above. It shall include:

- the **identification** of European and African **users communities** and **stakeholders** to be engaged in “GMES and Africa”;
- a **mapping exercise** aiming at the identification of relevant past and current activities, infrastructure, capacities and programmes on which “GMES and Africa” can build on (including the work done by the GEO capacity building committee and other international experiences);
- an efficient approach for a **long-term dialogue** among the European and the African stakeholders for the integration of African requirements and needs in the provision of GMES services to Africa. This long-term dialogue should **structure the cooperation** among the African and the European GMES stakeholders and user communities;
- the identification of the necessary **elements** to provide GMES services to Africa and to develop the complementary regional capabilities, and of a **strategy** to implement them. Data infrastructure initiatives in Africa, training programmes and capacity building on Earth Observation (e.g., in the context of GEO, AMESD, TIGER or regional initiatives) shall be fully identified and exploited;
- **prioritization of requirements and actions** based on the consultation with, and federation of, the African user communities and on the available portfolio and identified assets resulting from relevant projects, programmes, infrastructures and others;
- **identification of gaps** where action is needed;
- identification of **suitable programmes and funding instruments and schemes** for the “GMES and Africa” partnership (e.g., in the context of GMES, EC research and development programmes, GEOSS, AMESD, ESA and EUMETSAT programmes, EDF, regional initiatives, bilateral cooperation, etc.), when local African capacities and infrastructures are not sufficient and having in view the harmonisation of all assets for the long term sustainable development of services and the regional capabilities. Exploration of the typical communitarian instruments used for the general development of GMES, as well as the typical mechanisms in line with the EU external relation and cooperation policies, shall be pursued;

- an approach to the **governance and data access policy issues**;
- the setting of a **timetable** for long term future actions in the development of “GMES and Africa” partnership.

Timetable and monitoring mechanisms

The Lisbon Process will last from December 2007 until the third EU-Africa Summit, foreseen by the end of 2009 in Africa. It will be done in the context of the Africa-UE Action Plan 2008-2010, and it will aim at producing a consolidated strategy for discussion and approval at that Summit – the *Action Plan on GMES and Africa* –, as an element to integrate the next Africa-EU Action Plan.

With that objective in mind, the first draft of the *Action Plan on “GMES and Africa” partnership* should be submitted end-2008 by the European and AU Commissions to the EC-AUC Joint Experts' Working Group, the EU and African constituencies, for discussion.

From end-2008 to the third EU-Africa Summit, the European Commission and the Commission of the African Union will lead a consolidation process through the formal institutional cooperation mechanisms in place, aiming at a consolidated version of the Action Plan for endorsement at the next EU-Africa Summit.