



Beijing Declaration on Digital Earth

September 12, 2009

We scientists, engineers, educators, entrepreneurs, managers, administrators and representatives of civil societies from more than forty countries, international organizations and NGOs, once again, have assembled here, in the historic city of Beijing, to attend the Sixth International Symposium on Digital Earth, organized by the International Society for Digital Earth and the Chinese Academy of Sciences, with co-sponsorship of sixteen Chinese Government Departments, Institutions and international organizations, being held from September 9-12, 2009:

Noting That

Significant global-scale developments on Digital Earth science and technology have been made over the past ten years, and parallel advances in space information technology, communication network technology, high-performance computing, and Earth System Science have resulted in the rise of a Digital Earth data-sharing platform for public and commercial purposes, so that now Digital Earth is accessible by hundreds of millions, thus changing both the production and lifestyle of mankind;

Recognizing

The contributions to Digital Earth made by the host countries of the previous International Symposia on Digital Earth since November 1999, including China, Canada, the Czech Republic, Japan and the USA, and by the host countries of the previous Summit Conferences on Digital Earth, including New Zealand and Germany, for the success of the meetings as well as further promotion of Digital Earth;

Further, that the establishment of the International Society for Digital Earth and the accomplishments of its Executive Committee, the launch of the International Journal on Digital Earth, and its global contribution to cooperation and data exchange;

That the themes of the previous seven meetings: Moving towards Digital Earth, Beyond Information Infrastructure, Information Resources for Global Sustainability, Digital Earth as Global Commons, Bring Digital Earth down to Earth, Digital Earth and Sustainability, Digital Earth and Global Change, and Digital Earth in Action, have laid out a panoramic scenario for the future growth of Digital Earth;

That Digital Earth will be asked to bear increased responsibilities in the years to come, in the face of the problems of sustainable development;

Further Recognizing

That Digital Earth should play a strategic and sustainable role in addressing such challenges to human society as natural resource depletion, food and water insecurity, energy shortages, environmental degradation, natural disasters response, population explosion, and, in particular, global climate change;

That the purpose and mission of the World Information Summit of 2007, the Global Earth Observation System Conference of 2007, and the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference of 2009, and that Digital Earth is committed to continued close cooperation with other scientific disciplines;

Realizing

That Digital Earth is an integral part of other advanced technologies including: earth observation, geo-information systems, global positioning systems, communication networks, sensor webs, electromagnetic identifiers, virtual reality, grid computation, etc. It is seen as a global strategic contributor to scientific and technological developments, and will be a catalyst in finding solutions to international scientific and societal issues;

We Recommend

- a) That Digital Earth expand its role in accelerating information transfer from theoretical discussions to applications using the emerging spatial data infrastructures worldwide, in particular, in all fields related to global climate change, natural disaster prevention and response, new energy-source development, agricultural and food security, and urban planning and management;
- b) Further, that every effort be undertaken to increase the capacity for information resource-sharing and the transformation of raw data to practical information and applications, and developed and developing countries accelerate their programs to assist less-developed countries to enable them to close the digital gap and enable information sharing;
- c) Also, that in constructing the Digital Earth system, efforts must be made to take full advantage of next-generation technologies, including: earth observation, networking, database searching, navigation, and cloud computing to increase service to the public and decrease costs;
- d) Further, that the International Society for Digital Earth periodically take the lead in coordinating global scientific research, consultations and popular science promotion to promote the development of Digital Earth;
- e) Expanding cooperation and collaboration between the International Society for Digital Earth and the international community, in particular with inter-governmental organizations, and international non-governmental organizations;
- f) Extending cooperation and integration with Government Departments, the international Scientific and Educational community, businesses and companies engaged in the establishment of Digital Earth;

We Call for

Support from planners and decision-makers at all levels in developing plans, policies, regulations, standards and criteria related to Digital Earth, and appropriate investments in scientific research, technology development, education, and popular promotion of the benefits of Digital Earth.