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CIRCULAR LETTER 68/2005
30 June 2005

**JOINT BOARD OF GEO-SPATIAL INFORMATION SOCIETIES (JB-GIS)
ANNUAL MEETING, CAIRO- EGYPT April 19th, 2005**

Ref : A : CL 69/2003 dated 12 November 2003
B : CL 30/2005 dated 21 March 2005

Dear Hydrographer,

During the FIG Working Week 2005 and the 8th International Conference on the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure (GSDI), that took place in Cairo from the 18-20 of April, the **Joint Board of Geo-spatial Information Societies (JB-GIS)** held its annual meeting with representatives from FIG, IHO, ICA (International Cartographic Association), IAG (International Association of Geodesy), ISPRS (International Society of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing), ISCGM (International Steering Committee for Global Mapping), IMTA (International Map Trade Association) and GSDI. VAdm A. MARATOS represented the Organization.

During the Meeting, the Terms of Reference of the JB-GIS were discussed and drafted. The JB-GIS is a forum of International Organizations interested in the Geo-spatial Information and it can be seen as a cooperation network. The JB:

- a. Will have a Chairman who will appointed by the JB for two years and who can speak externally, if needed, after consulting with members of the JB;
- b. All decisions will be confirmed by all members ;
- c. Can establish ad hoc committees on important topics of common interest
- d. Will have a permanent address which is the permanent office of FIG;
- e. Will meet normally once a year.

The Bureau believes that participating in this Joint Board we will benefit from the experience of other international and professional organizations in the field of the Geo-spatial Information and Infrastructure, a topic that is also of interest to IHO and its Member States. A seminar on this topic (The role of Hydrographic Services with regard to Geo-spatial data and planning infrastructure) is organized by the German Hydrographic Service in Rostock, 8 and 9 November 2005, as it was announced with reference B. Member States are encouraged to bring to the attention of the Bureau topics of interest on the subject of the Geospatial Information, that can be discussed at the JB meetings. The next JB meeting will take place in Vienna on the 11th July 2006 in conjunction with a Symposium organized by the ISPRS.

The JB has established a draft web site that will be improved and finalized in the future, operated by the FIG. It is available on www.fig.net/jbgis.

The minutes of the meeting and the ToR of the JB are attach as Annexes A and B. The Bureau welcomes any comments.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'A. Maratos', written over a horizontal line.

Vice Admiral Alexandros MARATOS
President

Annex: A: Minutes of the Meeting
B: ToR of the Joint Board of Geo-Spatial Information Societies.

**Joint Board of Geospatial Information Societies
MINUTES**

of the meeting held at the Semiramis Intercontinental in Cairo, Egypt on Tuesday, 19th April
2005 from 9:00 to 12:30

Participants:

Prof. Holger Magel, President of FIG, in chair
Prof. Milan Konecny, President of ICA
Prof. Bengt Rystedt, Vice President of ICA
Prof. Gerhard Beutler, President of IAG
Prof. Hermann Drewes, IAG
Vice Admiral Alexandros Maratos, President of IHB
Mr. Allan Doyle, Business Director of GSDI
Dr. Alan Stevens, Secretary General of GSDI
Prof. D. R. Fraser Taylor, President of ISCGM
Mr. Hiromichi Maruyama, Secretary General of ISCGM
Prof. Ian Dowman, President of ISPRS
Mr. Peter Jolly, Past President of IMTA
Mr. Markku Villikka, Director, FIG

In attendance:

Mr. T. N. Wong, Vice President of FIG
Prof. Stig Enemark, Vice President of FIG
Mr. Ken Allred, Vice President of FIG

MINUTES

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Prof. Holger Magel, President of FIG welcomed the participants to this Joint Board meeting in Cairo. After the welcome all participants briefly introduced themselves.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Adopted the agenda as circulated in advance.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 15TH JULY 2004 IN ISTANBUL

Minutes of the meeting held in Istanbul July 15, 2004 were **adopted** as circulated. As follow-up **noted** that Dr. Fraser Taylor told about the preparations of the World Summit for Information Society and that the plans to get a sponsor for JB GIS participation (parallel event) have not been realized as expected, still some options are open. **Noted** that Dr. Taylor has made separate reports on the progress with this event.

4. ORGANISATION OF THE JOINT BOARD AND ITS STRATEGIC ROLE

The discussion on the organization and role of the Joint Board of Geospatial Information Societies was based on the Green Paper prepared by Prof. Ian Dowman, **appendix to item 4**. After the presentation of the paper by Prof. Dowman, following points were raised during the discussion:

Dowman: The Green Paper has been prepared based on the discussion in Istanbul and discussion that Prof. Dowman and Prof. Magel had in December in London. Concerning the organizational structure he was supporting the model of ad hoc commissions and having a chair for the Joint Board for term of office of two years (two meetings).

Konecny: Supporting model 3 with ad hoc commissions. The JB should be effective actor on the field of geospatial information. Supported a project based approach and thus model 3 with possible combination with alternative 2.

Beutler: The JB has already decided on chair and permanent address. The role of the JB should be that of a pressure group, however he expressed concerns whether this will work in practice (whether members of the JB are willing to use the JB when they have direct links to get their ideas through). It may be that the JB will work only on certain special circumstances. There is obvious need to agree on the lead on joint actions. Asked what the ad hoc committee will be in practice? Expressed suspicion on the operability of these groups. However there is need for a more organized organization (not as formal as the former IUSM, but more than at the moment).

Maratos: Supported combination of models 1 and 3. Appointed that the concept and rules need to be approved by member associations, especially in the case of IHB. Supported the idea of getting better use of modern technologies e.g. having discussion on Internet and establishing (discussion or action) groups on certain topics. Supported to start – for a certain (limited) period. After that the results of the JB can be evaluated and assessed. Was in favour for two years experiment period (or at least to make an evaluation after this period).

Doyle: Was in favour for option 1. Option 3 means written statements that need to be signed all organisations case by case. Chair of the JB will have a coordinating role but cannot be a spokesman externally. Proposed that the chairmanship to be changed alphabetically. Supporting option 1 with some parts from option 3).

Taylor: Supported a pragmatic approach: what can be done with the results. There is need for a mechanism how to use the results from the work of the members and ad hoc commissions. Supported a two-year term of office for the chairmanship and the proposed structure. The main issue what are the common goals for the JB. The ad hoc group should be led by the organisation with biggest knowledge on this topic. Supported a combination of options 1, 2 and 3 but not using the JB as a “pressure group”.

Jolly: We should use term action or activity group instead of “pressure group”.

Magel: Summarised that there was common support for the model of ad hoc committees, but also support for elements from options 1 and 2. Supported a model that allows the chair to act and be a spokesman for the group (“common voice”).

Dowman: ISPRS is supporting ad hoc committees model The JB should not be too heavy, but a chairperson that can act is needed. This is needed e.g. in situation when something needs to be put together with a short notice (e.g. tsunami). Supportive for informal approach – substantial issues to be taken into the agenda to allow attendance – not to have the JB only for “meeting”.

Doyle: We should decide whether the JB is for internal coordination (e.g. to avoid overlap with meetings) or to be an external spokesman. Was in favour for internal coordinating group.

Magel: As an example: How would the JB work or react on tsunami in the new structure of the JB GIS?

Maruyama: Explained the instant activities of the ISCGM after the tsunami (providing maps etc.)

Taylor: Secretariat to contact members what is there and available. Members to contact their member associations how can they contribute. Important to avoid duplicating efforts. In the case of tsunami ISCGM was in close co-operation with ICM. Use of printed maps by Global Map and in the reconstruction phase to use an ad hoc group to evaluate the situation.

Magel: Need to contact the United Nations and inform about the JB. This time there was no interest to contact the JB for its experiences and expertise.

Taylor: Who makes the contact / request from the UN?

Jolly: Made a reference to the report from IMTA.

Dowman: From ISPRS no immediate response would have been possible. Lead in this case should have been by Global Map. ISPRS would have been (and is) able to help in longer term.

Beutler: Tsunami catastrophe is one way a good example of for the JB. IAG has the follow-up system, organisation responsible for measurements should be active and provide information for others – global infrastructures are becoming more important.

Maratos: Immediate action from chair of the JB to guarantee that the members will support actions on this topic. Inform member associations. IHO has a special session on tsunami. IHO has also a special policy paper on risk management. The chair of the JB should e.g. make a press release informing the JB (or in fact its members) can give assistance.

Doyle: What is more important: infrastructures or immediate response? Long term contribution are more important and thus the focus should be on built infrastructures.

Magel: What are the differences between options 1 and 2?

Dowman: Difference is in the structure: in option 1 the chairs coordinates activities while the group takes care of activities; 2) the role of the chair is more than a chair (being more involved in actions).

Magel: Chair should be responsible for meeting and coordinating ad hoc groups.

Rystedt: Chair should be more than technical chairperson.

Taylor: Can chair establish ad hoc groups?

Doyle: The role should be only in coordination. More effort should be put to email lists, modern correspondence technology etc. All organisations are coordinators and not actors. Coordination is needed on the activities in GEO.

Magel: JB is not needed only to have another meeting platform. It should raise voice on important issues e.g. at the UN.

Taylor: We should go back to the decisions made at the JB in Durban.

Doyle: More information is needed whether GSDI can join the JB.

Magel: As summary all agreed that a chair is needed (at least) for two years and the chair should be responsible for internal issues meeting (to put together the agenda etc.) but he is also needed as a visible spokesperson of the JB (“common voice”).

Taylor: Having a spokesperson cannot prevent or forbid individual action (of the members of the JB).

Decided as follows:

- The JB will have a Chairperson who will be appointed by the JB. The term of office is two years (from meeting to meeting i.e. for two meetings) with option for extension of one period.
- Chairperson can speak on behalf of the JB externally after consulting with members of the JB.
- All decisions of the JB need to be confirmed by all member associations
- The JB can establish ad hoc committees on important topics of common interest. In urgent issues the ad hoc committee can be established by the Chairperson after consultation with the members of the JB
- All members of the JB can apply / appoint chair/members to the ad hoc committees
- The JB will have a permanent address which is the permanent office of FIG (responsible for minutes of the meetings, administration and website).

Decided to appoint Prof. Magel, President of FIG as the chair of the JB for the next two meetings (2006 and 2007).

Decided on the rules and goals of the JB that the FIG office will prepare a draft (about one page) for the rules and that these will be circulated to the members of the JB for their comments and commitment. The draft will be based on the material prepared for the previous meetings of the JB.

Decided that the membership of the JB that new members can be accepted based on invitation or application.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE JOINT BOARD

Discussed on new members and **decided** to invite GSDI, OCG and Digital Earth as members and recorded that GSDI will consider its membership after this meeting.

6. FUTURE ACTIVITIES – JOINT PROJECTS AND PRESENTATIONS/AD HOC COMMITTEES

6.1 Inputs to the World Summit for Information Society in Tunis, November 2005

Recorded the report of Prof. Taylor about his activities on this item to get a partner to sponsor the participation of the JB in the drafting of the final document of the World Summit and organising a parallel event in Tunis. The work in Tunis is divided in the political event and side events (NGO Forum). The final document is finalised except small sections that were left open in the preparatory committees. This means that the document is not open for changes from the JB. NGOs linked to the World Summit topic can register and send their profile on the ITU web site dedicated to the conference (ISCGM has registered already). The way to have any influence to the final document is to work through national delegations. The other option is to participate through UNESCO regional (preparatory) meetings (civil society participation). The final draft of the statement does not include geospatial information as part of the information society. There is option for side events in Tunis, but it is not possible for the JB to organise any events by its own. Possible participation could be through ICSU CODATA Commission which is organising a side event in Tunis (many of the JB members are members of ICSU and may have option to participate through that option). **Recorded** that Dr. Taylor has informed ICSU CODATA on the JB GIS and its interest to participate the World Summit in Tunis. The option would be to have one slot in the ICSU side event reserved for the geospatial topic (JB GIS) in Tunis. Dr. Taylor considered that it is worth participating the World Summit only if the JB has input in the side event. **Noted** that individual associations can participate the World Summit by submitting their information via the ITU web site. JB can do the same. In addition individual associations can make input by lobbying national delegations on the needs to change the position paper. Active participation is possible through the UNESCO meetings and the side event(s) in Tunis.

Prof. Konecny informed that INSPIRE will also participate the World Summit in Tunis.

Concerning the ICSU side event it was recorded that the event will be financed by ICSU and that there should be no costs for the JB or its members to be partners (ISPRS, IAG (via IGGS), ICA and FIG are members of ICSU).

Recorded that the JB supported the proposal to attend the World Summit through the ICSU side event and influence through ICSU CODATA. The members will be informed by email on the progress.

6.2 8th UNRCC-A in New York 27 June – 1 July

Recorded that Amor Laaribi who was invited to the meeting had to cancel his participation on the last minute but has sent his apologies. Recorded that at the moment Prof. Dowman Prof Drewes (IUGG), Prof. Menno Jan Kraak (ITC, ICA) and Carmen Reyes (Mexico, ICA), representative from IHB and Prof. Enemark (FIG) will attend the UN RCC-A in New York. FIG will also be represented by Prof. John Parker who will present the Aguascalientes Statement which is the result of the UN/FIG/PC IDEA Special Forum that was organised in Mexico in October 2004 by the request of the UN.

6.3 Operation with/at the Group on Earth Observations GEO based on the outcome of GEO-6

Recorded the report of Prof. Drewes on the activities of the ad hoc group on Earth Observations (GEOSS). The report is included in the report from IAG to these minutes.

Recorded that the participation to the GEO process has been difficult and the deadline to react are very short. Recorded that IAG, ISPRS and ISCGM are involved in the process. For IAG this is a core activity – IAG has 10 people involved and has managed to get its words in the final document that will be circulated in early May and confirmed in May.

Prof. Dowman expressed that there is role for coordination of JB actions at the GEOSS meetings. It will be proposed at the GEO meeting in Geneva that participating organizations to GEO have 3 seats in the Executive Committee [Note: this was not approved, and the composition of the EC is still under consideration.]. There are also representatives in the technical committees but coordination is especially needed at the Executive Committee.

Prof. Beutler stated that there are representatives from the members of the JB in the subgroups but that the coordination should be organised on bilateral bases.

Decided that those members of the Joint Board that will attend the GEOSS meeting in Geneva in first week of May will coordinate their actions there because of the short preparation time available.

6.4 Co-operation between members in developing countries

Decided to do this through topics and joint events (like the FIG regional conferences).

6.5 Workshop on disaster management

Recorded the Dr. Wilber Ottichilo who is charge for this issue in ICA (and who was invited to this meeting but was unable to attend) will organise a meeting on this topic at the ICA Congress in Coruna. IAG is interested in georisks. **Recorded** that there is both common interest on this topic as well as need to coordinate activities.

Decided to establish an ad hoc committee on risk management / early warning. The first task for this ad hoc committee will be to collect information from members of the JB on the various projects that already exist etc. **Decided** to appoint Prof. Rystedt as the chair of the ad hoc committee and following persons as members: Ottochilo (ICA), Prof. Drewes (IAG),

Prof. Theo Kötter (FIG), Mr. Maruyama (ISCGM) and Vice Admiral Maratos (IHB). ISPRS will nominate someone to this committee.

6.6 Education in Africa

In the discussion following points were mentioned:

Maratos: There are problem to recruit students in Sub-Saharan and West Africa (financial problems for students). Should be recognised that hydrography is a component of survey engineering.

Konecny: This issue has been discussed with Ruth Neelan (AFREF).

Magel: Especially South Africa and University of Cape Town are most influenced with this problem (funding and lack of students). FIG will have a regional conference in Accra, Ghana March 8-11. 2006.

Taylor: ICA has a Working Group on Mapping Africa. CODI will organise a geo capacity building activity in ICA.

Noted that there is a CODI meeting 23-28 April 2005 in Addis Ababa (Prof. Dowman and Prof. Rystedt to attend).

Noted the need to link activities on this issue to ECA and AFREF.

Decided to have one day seminar on education (and capacity building) in Africa linked to the FIG regional conference in Accra, Ghana in 2006.

Decided to establish an ad hoc committee on capacity building in Africa. **Decided** to appoint Prof. Dowman to chair this ad hoc committee with following members: Dr. Taylor (ISCGM), Ms Ruth Neelan (IAG), Prof. Stig Enemark (FIG) and Prof. Bengt Rystedt (ICA). Draft terms of reference for this ad hoc committee, prepared by Prof. Dowman, are attached to these minutes.

6.7 Relationship with other organisations IEEE, GEOSS, etc.

Decided to invite IEEE to JB.

6.8 Web site of the Joint Board

Decided that FIG will be charge for the web site of the JB (with basic information of membership, members and mission statement). First draft is available at www.fig.net/jbgis .

7. REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES OF MEMBERS

Recorded that reports of the members of the JB are attached to these minutes.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Decided that the next meeting of the Joint Board will be held on Tuesday, 11 July 2006 in Vienna, Austria prior to the ISPRS Symposium of Commission II (Theory and Concepts of Spatio-temporal Data Handling and Information) (to take place 12-14 July 2006). ISPRS will offer Presidents of the JB GIS free registration to attend the symposium.

**Joint Board of
Geospatial Information Societies
JB GIS
Terms of Reference**

Mission Statement

The Joint Board of Geospatial Information Societies (JB GIS) is a coalition of leading international geospatial societies which can speak on behalf of the geospatial profession at international level, especially to the United Nations and other global stakeholders. Its second goal is to coordinate activities within the geospatial society and organisations.

Membership

The members of the JB GIS are FIG, IAG, ICA, IHO, IMTA, ISCGM and ISPRS. The Joint Board can either invite new members or they can be accepted based on application. The JB GIS is a co-operation network and there are no obligations to the membership neither does the JB GIS collect any membership fees.

Administration

- The JB will have a Chairperson who will be appointed by the JB. The term of office is two years (from meeting to meeting i.e. for two meetings) with option for extension of one period.
- Chairperson can speak on behalf of the JB externally after consulting with members of the JB.
- All decisions of the JB need to be confirmed by all member associations
- The JB can establish ad hoc committees on important topics of common interest. In urgent issues the ad hoc committee can be established by the Chairperson after consultation with the members of the JB
- The JB will have a permanent address which is the permanent office of FIG (responsible for minutes of the meetings, administration and website).

Each member of the JB GIS is allowed to appoint two representatives to the meetings of the JB GIS. In normal case the representatives are the President and Secretary General / Chief Executive of the organisation. The member is free to appoint its representative freely based on the topics, venue etc. of the meeting.

Meetings

The JB GIS meets normally once a year in normal case linked to one of the conferences or other meetings of one or two of the member associations.

The host of the meeting decides whether the participants are allowed for free registration. In normal case free registration is recommended to be offered to at least one representative of each member of the JB GIS.

Ad hoc Committees

The JB GIS can appoint ad hoc committees for certain projects and important topics. Normally these committees shall have clear goals and are normally appointed for a limited time period.

Each interested member of the JB GIS is allowed to appoint a member to the ad hoc committee of its interest.
