

Committee: United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space  
Committee Session: Sixty-sixth session, 31 May 2023 to 9 June 2023

THE AFRICAN ASSOCIATION OF REMOTE SENSING OF THE ENVIRONMENT (AARSE) STATEMENT AT THE  
66<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF UN COPUOS

Read by: dr Sias Mostert

---

Mr. Chairman, Excellences, Distinguished Delegates and Representatives,

Mr. Chairman,

AARSE would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election. Furthermore, we thank the acting director of the office, Mr. Niklas Hedman and members of the secretariat, for their able organisation.

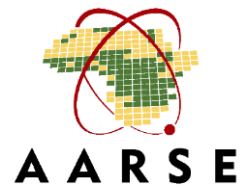
Mr. Chairman,

Recalling our more than thirty years of impact on the African continent, AARSE remains firmly aligned with the mandate and goals of the UN COPUOS through initiatives which aim to develop inputs to policy making and increasing the awareness of African governments and their institutions, the private sector and the society at large, about the empowering and enhancing benefits of developing, applying and utilising, the products and services of space systems for science, observations and geo-information technology and enabling responsible access to space. In short, acting as the platform for the interests of African stakeholders, AARSE continues to facilitate two critical discussions on the continent; firstly, the benefit of space for African states and their respective societies and secondly, establishing responsible practices and policy input so as to secure future access to space for African stakeholders in a sustainable way.

Mr. Chairman,

Keeping this in mind, AARSE would like to remind the Committee of the momentous milestone reached on the 31 January 2016 when the African Space Policy was finally adopted. Representing the first step towards a collective African Space Program, we believe it will benefit from organisations such as AARSE who in particular has strived tirelessly to foster collaboration on the continent with activities such as;

- a. *Hosting* biennial conferences, annual workshops and tutorials to exchange and discuss ideas relating to Earth observation systems and geo-information science,
- b. *Covering* all regions of Africa in our every communicate along with all the societal benefit areas of the Sustainable Development Goals,
- c. *Promoting* the use of remote sensing and geospatial information for Africa, working with extensive support of the AUC, AfriGEOSS, UNECA and African SDI, Africa Wide Programmes and within each of the sub-regions of Africa and,
- d. *Creating opportunities and supporting members of AARSE* to participate in projects such as Garnet-E and the GMES and Africa program that enable applications to be developed and



the decision makers, policy makers and politicians to benefit from the impact of space derived information.

- e. *Promoting and stimulating* national societies/associations/communities of practice to conduct seminars/symposiums/workshops on the usage of such technology in problems relating to their countries.

Mr. Chairman,

Building upon the success of the 13<sup>th</sup> biennial conference, which had two hundred participants from over thirty-three countries, one hundred and thirty technical papers presented and sixty full papers peer reviewed and submitted, AARSE would like to draw the Delegates from 44 countries, including 13 from outside Africa, were present at the 13<sup>th</sup> International AARSE Conference on “held at Kigali, Rwanda from 24<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> October 2022:

The event themed, “Space and geospatial technologies for the Africa we want”, was in collaboration with the AUC that supported the a number of GMES and Africa space application groups to meet, including the complete African maritime network and the youth to join the event. The event was closed with the Kigali Declaration.

*Topics covered include*, the achievement of the SDG’s with topics such as, Space and earth observation technology for achieving the sustainable development goals, Disaster risk management and resilience, climate change, climate risk management, human capital development in geospatial science, space policy and strategies in Africa: cost benefit of space technology, Geospatial technologies for energy, forestry and agricultural management.

I would like to draw the attention of the delegates attention to the 14<sup>th</sup> biennial regional Conference taking place in Cote d’Ivoire, from 21<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> October 2024. All members of COPUOS are in particular welcome to attend and contribute.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion AARSE would like to remind the Committee of General Assembly resolution 67/113, which emphasized the essential role of regional and interregional cooperation and coordination in the field of space activities in assisting states in the development of their space capabilities, of the importance of organisations such as AARSE with a pan-African network and the opportunity for collaboration with the international community.

In this spirit, AARSE will continue to;

*Promote, support, participate* in and collaborate with a number of international organisations namely; the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS), the IEEE Geosciences and Remote Sensing Society (GRSS), the European Association of Remote Sensing Laboratories (EARSeL), EIS-Africa the Group on Earth Observation (GEO), the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure (GSDI) Association, UN-ECA’s Executive Working Group on Geoinformation and the sub-committee Development Information, Science and Technology



(CODIST) and Africa Union Commission (AUC) Space Secretariate and the African Space Agency,

- f. *Provide* a forum for our members, as well as the wider African community, the African diaspora, and international community to prioritise topics related to space to impact positively on prosperity and sustainability in Africa.

Reaffirming with confidence our commitment to the development, utilisation and domestication of space science and technology in African countries through research, education and training. I, on behalf of AARSE, would like to thank the Committee for their time, attention and continued support.