



Beijing Declaration on Digital Earth

December 2, 1999

We, some 500 scientists, engineers, educators, managers and industrial entrepreneurs from 20 countries and regions assembled here in the historical city of Beijing, attending the first International Symposium on Digital Earth being organized by the Chinese Academy of Sciences with co-sponsorship of 19 organizations and institutions from November 29, 1999 to December 2, 1999, recognize that humankind, while entering into the new millennium, still faces great challenges such as rapid population growth, environmental degradation, and natural resource depletion which continue to threaten global sustainable development;

Noting that global development in the 20th century has been characterized by rapid advancements in science and technology which have made significant contributions to economic growth and social wellbeing and that the new century will be an era of information and space technologies supporting the global knowledge economy;

Recalling the statement by Al Gore, Vice President of the United States of America, on *Digital Earth: Understanding Our Planet in the 21st Century* – and the statement by Jiang Zemin, President of the People’s Republic of China, on Digital Earth regarding trends of social, economic, scientific and technological development;

Realizing the decisions made at UNCED and Agenda 21, recommendations made by UNISPACE III and the Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development, which address, among other things, the importance of the Integrated Global Observing Strategy, the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure, geographic information systems, global navigation and positioning systems, geo-spatial information infrastructures and modeling of dynamic processes;

Understanding that Digital Earth, addressing the social, economic, cultural, institutional, scientific, educational, and technical challenges, allows humankind to visualize the Earth, and all places within it, to access information about it and to understand and influence the social, economic and environmental issues that affect their lives in their neighborhoods, their nations and the planet Earth;

Recommend that Digital Earth be promoted by scientific, educational and technological communities, industry, governments, as well as regional and international organizations;

Recommend also that while implementing the Digital Earth, priority be given to solving problems in environmental protection, disaster management, natural resource conservation, and sustainable economic and social development as well as improving the quality of life of the humankind;

Recommend further that Digital Earth be created in a way that also contributes to the exploration of, and scientific research on, global issues and the Earth system;

Declare the importance of Digital Earth in achieving global sustainable development;

Call for adequate investments and strong support in scientific research and development, education and training, capacity building as well as information and technology infrastructures, with emphasis, inter alia, on global systematic observation and modeling, communication networks, database development, and issues associated with interoperability of geo-spatial data;

Further call for close cooperation and collaboration between governments, public and private sectors, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations and institutions, so as to ensure equity in distribution of benefits derived from the use of Digital Earth in developed and developing economies;

Agree that, as a follow-up to the first International Symposium on Digital Earth held in Beijing, the International Symposium on Digital Earth should continue to be organized by interested countries or organizations biannually, on a rotational basis.