AARSE Alexandria Declaration

29th October 2018

Delegates from 37 countries present at the 12th International AARSE Conference on “Earth Observation and Geospatial sciences in service to the Sustainable Development Goals” held at Alexandria, Egypt from 25th to 29th October 2018:

- Recognizing the role of Earth Observation in developing accurate geospatial datasets, information and knowledge to support the efforts of nations in achieving their national development agenda;
- Noting the importance of Earth Observation and Geospatial Science and Technology products and services in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the AU Agenda 2063, as well as the African Action Plan on the UN Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) and other key national development and poverty alleviation strategies;
- Recognizing the final adoption of the African Space Policy and Strategy by the African Union Summit of Heads of States;
- Recognizing the adoption of the Statute of the African Space Agency by the African Union Summit of Heads of State to start the process of the implementation of the African Space policy and strategy;
- Recognizing the importance of Africa’s participation and contribution to the implementation of the GEO 2016-2025 Strategic Plan through AfriGEOSS; and noting an increase in a number of African countries and organisations participating in GEO;
- Noting that Africa is making major strides in space science and technology development with several countries developing successful space programs, including acquiring their own Earth Observation satellites;
- Recognizing the need to move from policies and strategies towards proper implementation and action in realizing the benefits of Earth Observation from space and Geospatial Information;
- Recognizing the necessity to build on existing capacity across the value chain from research and development, to technology, applications and operations;
- Recognizing the achievements of AARSE over the past two decades as major point of contact and facilitator of Earth Observation and Geospatial Information activities in Africa;
- Recognizing the role and contribution of the African Union and the United Nations Agencies such as the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA) and building on previous declarations and multilateral coordination initiatives in space science and technology for sustainable development in Africa;
- Recognizing the importance and success of continued long term collaboration between international partners and African scientists in various joint programmes;

- Welcoming the input from international scientific societies including the IEEE Geoscience and Remote Sensing Society (IEEE GRSS), the International Society for Digital Earth (ISDE) and the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS) that support the building of science base in Africa;

- Recognizing the role being played by GMES and Africa in implementing Earth observation on regional and continental scale for societal benefits;

- Recognizing the significant contribution of the United Nations Programs including UNDP, UNEP, WFP, etc.;

- Recognizing the solutions inherent in remote sensing in the alleviation of compounding environmental factors related to disasters, epidemics, poverty and the economic recessions;

- Recognizing the significant impact of Global Climate Change on African communities and the need to mitigate the impact and reverse the trend;

- Affirming the commitment of AARSE to the realisation of the above-mentioned initiatives and programmes;

**Hereby declare and call on the African Union and African Governments to:**

1. Support the implementation of the Pan African Space Policy and Strategy and recognise the necessity for establishing the African Space Agency to manage and coordinate the implementation;

2. Urge African National Space Agencies and Remote Sensing Organisations to contribute to the implementation of the Pan African Space Policy and Strategy;

3. Encourage the development of national space policies and strategies flowing from and in line with the Pan African Space Policy;

4. Support the African Union Commission to strengthen Africa’s space science and technology capabilities across the continent for the development of African nations;

5. Ensure the realisation of the AU Agenda 2063 and the African Action Plan on the UN Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM);

6. Stimulate African dialogue on space as a front-runner for innovation, technology development and job creation;

7. Build and invest in African capacity and capability, in both human resources and technology;

8. Encourage and support African universities and other institutions of higher education through adequate funding for fundamental and applied research and teaching in Earth Observation and geoinformation science and technology including the measuring of the indicators for the targets to be achieved by the SDGs;

9. Strengthen public-private partnership in space related activities and service delivery by private sector companies based on space-derived data;

10. Recognise the role of specialised institutions at both the national and continental levels in geoinformation and Earth Observation and the role that they can play with AARSE to improve the knowledge and capacity in Africa;
11- Increase local investments to complement external investments to ensure sustainability of Earth Observation in Africa.

12- Inspire Africa’s youth through innovative space based education and outreach programs;

Signed in Alexandria, Egypt, on 29th October 2018

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President of AARSE

Prof. Alaa Abdelhay
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Prof. Mahmoud Hussein
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