

# CEOS IDN Newsletter

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September 2009, Issue 27

## Welcome to South Africa for WGISS 28

September 28th 2009 marks the beginning of the 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of Working Group on Information Systems and Services (WGISS). It's with great pleasure that the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) invites the members of the WGISS to South Africa for this next biannual workshop.

South Africa is situated at the southern most tip of the African continent and will be a long way from home for many of the WGISS participants; however, I assure you that the long journey will be worth the visit. South Africa is a melting pot of cultures, biodiversity, and history that span back to the origins of mankind. With national treasures such as "The Cradle of Human Kind", "Table Mountain" and "The Kruger National Park", South Africa provides a perfect venue for a pre- or post-working group de-stressing. South Africa represents a country of massive biodiversity and an opportunity to view some of largest land mammals on our planet, including elephants, lions, rhinos, and giraffes. It is also home to many cultures worth exploring - each with their own folklore, history and language. In fact we have eleven official languages.

The meeting will take place in the city of Pretoria, the administrative capital of South Africa. Pretoria, also affectionately referred to as the Jacaranda City, is situated 45km outside Johannesburg and is home to the main campus of the CSIR. The meeting place is located at the CSIR International Convention Centre (just outside the CSIR main campus) where the working group will meet for five days. Situated inside a small nature reserve, the CSIR and the Convention Centre fall on the eastern outskirts of Pretoria and provide a peaceful and nature-bound setting, where much useful discussion and work will occur.

The Pleasure Is Ours,  
On Behalf of the CSIR  
Terence L van Zyl



Weather;

Good weather; nice and warm 28 degrees C (84 degrees F); small chance of afternoon thunder shower.

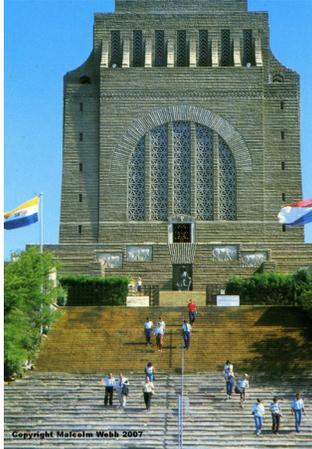
Currency: Today \$10 U.S dollars=74.52 South African rands

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# Pretoria: A Rainbow of Cultures

By Cecilia Nelson & Folami Duncan



*Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria*

The extravagant city of Pretoria is home to a wide array of cultures, adventures, and natural treasures. Anyone visiting Pretoria will always find that there is an abundance of activities and things to see and do.

Located in the northern part of Guateng Province,

South Africa, Pretoria is the country's administrative capital city. Pretoria houses one of South Africa's most diverse populations. The city is composed of a unique blend of cultures: Afrikaans (Dutch), British, and the native black Pretorians. The languages of the people of Pretoria range from English to Xitsonga.

Reflective of the diverse culture, Pretoria's cuisine is a "melting pot" of flavors. Church Square is a great place to find a mixture of fine restaurants. With the large variety of food choices, there is something to satisfy every individual's taste.

Your visit to Pretoria should be enjoyable, despite the frequently warm weather. Winters in Pretoria are usually dry and sunny, while the summers are hot.

While exploring the city you'll find that the history of Pretoria can be portrayed through some of the outstanding structures and buildings in Pretoria. One historic attraction to visit is the Voortrekker Monument, which was built by the Voortekkers and left behind between 1835 and 1854. Another attraction is the Melrose House and Kruger House. The Melrose House is where the Treaty of Vereeniging was signed in 1902 to end the Second Boer War. The Kruger house was built using cement and milk in 1884, because the cement provided was not of good quality.



*Mauve-flowered trees*

Aside from its rich history, Pretoria's wildlife and natural scenery are great features of the lovely city. Pretoria is known as the Jacaranda city, named after its famous trees. The mauve-flowered trees are very popular in October when they are in full bloom. If you love animals, while in the city, be sure to visit one of the many animal sanctuaries such as the Austin Roberts Bird Sanctuary, the Makopa Reptile Park, and the National Zoological Gardens of South Africa.

It is not difficult to find activities to do while visiting Pretoria. You will be pleased to know that it is easy to find your way around the city.



# WGISS-27



(1) Lorant Czaran (2) Martha Maiden (3) Pakorn Apaphant (4) Chang Liu (5) Dingsheng Liu (6) Natalia Kussul (7) Yonsook Enloe (8) Gabor Remetey-Fulopp (9) Michael Burnett (10) (11) Courtney Davis (12) Terence L Van Zyl (13) Jean-Pierre Antikidis (14) Michelle Pieprgrass (15) Andrii Shelestov (16) Martin Yapur (17) Olga Kussul (18) Shinobu Kawahito (19) Li Guoqing (20) Lyndon Oleson (21) Dan Mandl (22) Julio Cesar Dalge (23) Sergii Skakun (24) Paul Kopp (25) Ivan Petiteville (26) Beate Hildenbrand (27) Chutipong Lavongkird (28) Karen L. Moe (29) Phuriwaj Ruengnaowaraj (30) Francis Lindsey (31) Kayzer Moroka. [Several attendees missed this photo-shoot.]

## WGISS-27 in Toulouse, France

Many Thanks to Paul Kopp and CNES for Hosting WGISS-27



Paul Kopp appears to be satisfied with the meeting. Everyone attending appeared to be “very satisfied”. Thanks to CNES for a great meeting. From Paul: “Organizing the meeting in Toulouse was a real pleasure, and I hope all participants could take a flavor of characteristic atmosphere of our city. On the CNES side, we were happy to introduce some of our EO data centers during the workshop.”

# International Directory Network Now Sporting A New Look And New Capabilities

By Rosy Cordova

<http://idn.ceos.org>

CEOS International Directory Network

Welcome to the CEOS International Directory Network - A Gateway to a World of Earth Science Data. The CEOS International Directory Network (CEOS IDN) is an international effort developed to assist researchers in locating information on available datasets. The CEOS IDN is sponsored by the Technology and Services Subgroup of the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS) as a service to both the Earth and space science communities. To view the full content of the CEOS IDN data sets, please visit the CEOS portal. Subsets of the complete IDN content that focus on specific projects or contributing organizations can be viewed below under the topic, "IDN Portals".

**IDN Portals**

- AMD
- CEOP
- CEOS
- Climate Diagnostics [New!](#)
- ...more

**IDN Resources**

- Latest Keywords
- Newsletters
- INTEROP
- Participants
- Meetings

**Related Agencies**

- Committee On Earth Observation Satellites
- CEOS Working Group on Information Systems and Services
- WGISS Technology and Services Subgroup

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Privacy Policy and Important Notices.  
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Contact IDN User Support for assistance

Please note that the new CEOS site at <http://www.ceos.org/> offers the structure to locate the Working Group on Information Systems and Services (WGISS) in the left navigation. From the WGISS option, one can locate the "IDN Interest Group" within the Applications Subgroup. Choosing the "IDN Interest Group" under the Applications Subgroup tab will guide one through the group's purpose, focus, and dependencies.

The <http://idn.ceos.org> site will also be updated. The redesigned website will be released in preparation for WGISS 28. The new site will highlight the IDN portals, including the CEOS Climate Diagnostics and the new CEOS Health portals.

Also highlighted is the 'CEOS/IDN Members and Associates' section. It will contain metadata listings by member agency. If you do not see your agency listed, please contact us through the IDN website, and we will add your name when your agency metadata is added to the IDN. Please send all website requests to [ceos-idn-interop@lists.nasa.gov](mailto:ceos-idn-interop@lists.nasa.gov).

# WGISS IDN Interest Group Represented at Upcoming SCADM Meeting

By Stephanie Grebas, IDN Environmental Sciences Coordinator

The first meeting of the Standing Committee on Antarctic Data Management (SCADM) was held jointly with the Standing Committee on Antarctic Geographic Information (SC-AGI) in Amsterdam, Netherlands from September 7-9<sup>th</sup> 2009. Previously known as the Joint Committee on Antarctic Data Management (JCADM), SCADM is focused on the continuing evolution and advancement of data management for Antarctic data sets. This was a wonderful opportunity for these two groups to come together and support common interests and directions within the Antarctic community. The meeting provided a means for continuing to improve the Antarctic Master Directory (AMD, <http://gcmd.nasa.gov/portals/amd/>) and a forum for receiving valuable feedback from those who use it most frequently. The docBUILDER authoring tool for submitting metadata records was demonstrated during the meeting, in order to increase efficiency in metadata submission and answer user questions. Representatives from each country gained a more complete picture of their portal usage within the directory.

Currently, the total number of NADC portals has reached 19. Individuals from the scientific community gave presentations on their data concerns to provide a valuable perspective on the most pressing issues. An action plan for meeting SCADM goals was also developed on an individual country basis to ensure that commitments are met based on the abilities of each data center. Under the guidance of Chief Officers, Kim Finney and Helen Campbell, the first SCADM meeting served as an important step in continuing the success of data management activities within the Antarctic scientific community.



Amsterdam

## Science Coordinator Supports SCADM



Stephanie Grebas

The Standing Committee on Antarctic Data Management (SCADM) welcomed Stephanie Grebas to the first SCADM meeting, held in Amsterdam, earlier this month. Stephanie recently graduated with a B.S degree in Environmental Sciences and a B.A. in Philosophy from the University of Virginia. She is working primarily on cryosphere-related metadata with partners, including the National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) and the Australian Antarctic Data Center (AADC). With time spent studying both Spanish and Japanese in college, her language abilities have already proven useful for communicating with international partners. Stephanie is originally from the Richmond, Virginia area and previously worked in the environmental consulting field, primarily on remediation activities for clients with groundwater contamination problems. Having recently moved to the Northern Virginia area, she is grateful for the rewarding opportunity to work with the IDN team because of the interesting challenges and the impact she can have within the scientific community.

# Martha Maiden: A Job Well Done

By Michelle Piepgrass, WGISS Executive Secretariat

Martha Maiden, NASA, assumed the chair of CEOS WGISS after CEOS-22 in November 2007. Since then, she has chaired three WGISS meetings: WGISS-25 in Sanya, China; WGISS-26 in Boulder, USA; and WGISS-27 in Toulouse, France. In September, she will chair her last WGISS meeting (WGISS-28) in Pretoria, South Africa. In addition to these meetings, she has conducted multiple teleconferences with the WGISS secretariat and represented WGISS at several CEOS, Strategic Implementation Team (SIT), GEO (Group on Earth Observations), and Working Group on Calibration and Validation (WGCV) meetings.

However, meetings are not where all the work of WGISS takes place. The team of delegates and participants in WGISS have ably supported Martha in achieving the principal themes of the past two years. These themes are to (1) provide the satellite arm of GEO System of Systems, providing innovative contributions that will persist and can be re-used; (2) work closely with and support the Virtual Constellations; (3) work closely with and collaborate as appropriate with WGCV; and (4) support the CEOS Data Democracy initiative.

During Martha's tenure, WGISS can claim a number of significant accomplishments. The make up of the working group underwent a significant reorganization. The work of WGISS occurs within a number of interest groups tasked to think strategically and to be poised to provide needed data and services in advance of customer requests. A number of projects have also been identified within these interest groups. The 5-Year Plan document underwent a significant review; the WGISS website was modified to fit the CEOS standard, and the content was updated.

Also during Martha's tenure, the Land Surface Imaging (LSI) Constellation Portal and the Climate Diagnostics (CD) Portal were released. A value-added style portal associated with the CEOS Atmospheric Composition Constellation has begun development and is designed to be capable of flexibly hosting distributed data, tools, and services. WGISS has also begun to actively participate in the Global Precipitation Measurement Data Working Group and is tasked to ensure communication to provide interoperability and data flow for needed societal benefit area data flows.

Another significant outcome during the period is a plan to implement a WGISS disaster response capability prototype using a web services grid powered model. WGISS will pull together all applicable tools from across WGISS for this prototype. Martha also has worked hard to increase cooperation between WGISS and WGCV, specifically developing the dialogue on data quality (QA4EO), and the GEO data harmonization task, which WGISS leads.

More recently, WGISS has begun a dialogue with the Health Societal Benefit Area (SBA) to identify contributions which WGISS can make to health. Martha also initiated an active collaboration with an INPE (Brazil) CEOS member, who is actively working toward Data Democracy, so that there is free automated access to data and services without manual intervention.

Martha has been ably assisted by Pakorn Apaphant, GITSDA, who, as vice-chair, has taken on the role of coordinating the GEO tasks in which WGISS is involved. Pakorn has expanded this role, representing WGISS at GEO and CEOS meetings, and promoting the work of WGISS so that newly demonstrated technologies can capitalize on the CEOS agency assets, with crosscutting impacts on GEO and the Societal Benefit Areas.

The WGISS members are energetic and have many ideas for the best way to move forward. They combine expertise, enthusiasm and professionalism, as WGISS meets the challenge to work on new projects, and to develop successful prototypes that are sustained beyond demonstration. The international interoperability, interuse and demonstration of standards that characterize WGISS as it responds to the information technology needs and challenges to come, have been well led by Martha. We expect that this leadership will continue with Pakorn at the helm in the next two years.



# Michelle Piepgrass Reminisces on Her Two Years as Executive Secretariat

By Michelle Piepgrass, WGISS Executive Secretariat



The upcoming WGISS-28 in Pretoria, South Africa will be my last opportunity to serve as Executive Secretariat under Martha Maiden (Chair). There are many things I will miss – the travel to new and old places, the exposure to parts of the world I have never before visited, the food, the long, but not boring, airplane rides. One significant thing I will miss especially: the many wonderful and exemplary people whom I have met in GEO, CEOS and WGISS. My life is much richer from the exposure to fun, interesting, conscientious, committed, capable, and globally minded people. Another thing I will miss is the exposure to what is happening in remote sensing, data democracy, and data and web services.

I left remote sensing behind many years ago in favour of teaching and business software development, and I hadn't realized how very rewarding it was to me to observe the changes that have occurred in WGISS over the past two years: the reorganization into interest groups and projects, the increasing involvement in GEO, and the ongoing and increasing focus on data democracy. If I had to summarize the benefit to me personally in serving in WGISS, it is seeing first-hand the strong commitment of countries, agencies, scientists, analysts, and individuals toward international cooperation, specifically in the societal benefit areas. I extend my sincere thanks to all the participants in WGISS, and especially Martha Maiden and Lola Olsen for making my participation in WGISS possible. I wish you the best of luck in your future.

## Courtney Davis, NOAA, Serves as WGISS Infrastructure Services Project (WISP) Technical Lead.

By Courtney Davis

My first WGISS experience was in September of 2008 at the WGISS 26 meeting in Boulder, CO. I remember being a bit confused with names I'd never heard and acronyms I didn't understand. Fortunately, Ken McDonald was there to help me put faces to names and answer the many questions I had! Listening to the presentations throughout the week was also helpful to get a better understanding of the organization and mission of WGISS. The next WGISS in Toulouse, France was an even a better opportunity, as I began to get a grasp of each of the subgroups and see how WGISS contributes to a number of organizations, as well as with my day-to-day job at NOAA. My favorite part of WGISS so far has been meeting and working with a very diverse and capable group of people and getting to travel to places I've never been!

My role in WGISS as the WISP (WGISS Infrastructure Services Project) technical lead, includes managing the WGISS portion of the CEOS website,

managing distribution lists, and collecting the presentations at the meetings to post on the website.



Lately, my main focus with WISP has been updating the new WGISS website. I help coordinate changes to the WGISS portion of the CEOS website with Brian Killough of NASA's System Engineering Office (SEO), and I am responsible for any structural changes to the website such as: adding new menus, renaming or reordering menu items, or creating new sections and features. The process of moving over some 1,200+ documents from the previous website is almost complete. I'm slowly working my way through each of the sections to provide updated links to those documents. I am also responsible for creating new user profiles, resetting passwords, and providing training for the website. With the help of Allan Doyle, I manage the WGISS distribution lists as well. If you need to create a new distribution list, update a name, or add new members, please let me know, I'll be glad to take care of all of that too. See you at WGISS 28<sup>th</sup> in Pretoria, SA!

# Pakorn Apaphant's "Omnipresence" Sets the Stage for His Upcoming Inauguration

By Lola Olsen



One of our interns who was previewing photos from WGISS noted that Pakorn appeared to be in the majority of the photos. We can probably expect him to be a "high profile" leader during his term.



# A Message From the Incoming WGISS Chair

by Pakorn Apaphant GISTDA, Thailand

It is my great pleasure to have an opportunity to include my statement and perspectives in this IDN newsletter. First of all, I would like to thank all of you for giving a GISTDA representative an opportunity to serve as WGISS Chair during the next two years. I would also like to thank our current chair, Martha Maiden of NASA, who has kindly trained me to prepare to serve in this significant role. Martha has done a great job with the support from members, during her chairmanship. She has delivered to WGISS and CEOS, with her leadership and capability to transfer policy to operation in a very well organized and systematic way.

There are a few important points I wish to share with you in preparation for the next few years. As one of the CEOS Working Groups, I am positive that WGISS will continue to respond to CEOS plenary goals as one of our priorities. There will be a leadership transition in both CEOS

and The Strategic Implement Team (SIT) in November 2009. However, I believe that the main priorities of CEOS will not change much. We need to understand CEOS requirements early in the year and determine how WGISS can support them through the activities of both subgroups. Our support to GEO tasks is typically done through CEOS. As we are reaching the ministerial GEO summit in late 2010, CEOS as a space arm of GEO will make sure that its deliverables will be recognized by the decision makers. We all realize that WGISS members have offered resources and efforts during the last few years in support of GEOSS in the area of information services and systems. The enthusiasm with which several members of WGISS responded to GEO tasks was impressive and effective. WGISS has played a very important role in the development of several CEOS/GEO portals, namely the Land Surface Imaging (LSI) portal, the Atmospheric Composition Constellation (ACC)

portal, and the Climate Diagnostic Portal (CD) etc. We have established a special group to support the GEO task on "Data, Metadata and Products Harmonization."

The WGISS members will continue our important role in responding to GEO, supporting CEOS, and participating in other international key forums. To achieve these goals, we will need to have strong cooperation throughout the years. The cooperation will not be limited within our group only, but will be extended to other working groups and virtual constellations. Regarding this, I have started discussion with the Working Group on Calibration and Validation (WGCV) on the possibility of holding joint working group meetings in the near future. As mentioned earlier, active cooperation is very important. We will set anticipated outcomes for each year together so that we will know what to do and which direction to go. WGISS executives will continue

to follow up our actions and plan for the future activities during our monthly telecons. We have working group meetings twice a year. I understand that the function may cause difficulties for some members due to limited budget. Therefore, meeting objectives and defining structure is the key for members to join our face-to-face meetings. If you have topics that you would like to address at the meetings, please suggest them to me directly at any time. Early notice will also allow us to begin discussing these issues with the related members prior to the meeting.

Thanks to everyone for your overwhelming contribution to our group. GISTDA realizes how important the leadership role in this proactive working group is. We really hope you will continue your great support to ensure that our common goal will be reached.



*Pakorn and his lovely children (L to R) Punn and Aom*

# WGISS-28 Agenda

## Monday (09/28/09)

- am **WGISS Plenary**
- pm **Joint Subgroup Session**
  - Security Follow-up Report
  - Data Management Interest Group Proposal
  - Precipitation Constellation Liaison
  - Global Datasets Interest Group

## Tuesday (09/29/09)

- am **Joint Subgroup Session**
  - WGISS Architecture and Data Contributions (WADC) Project
  - Web Services Interest Group
- pm **Disaster Response Interest Group**
  - Technology Subgroup**
    - Sensor Web Interest Group

## Wednesday (09/30/09)

- am **Grid Technology Interest Group**
- pm **Joint Subgroup Session**
  - Health SBA and WGISS
  - CSIR Host Session
  - CSIR Hosted Session

## Thursday (10/01/09)

- am **Applications Subgroup**
  - Atmospheric Composition Portal Interest Group
  - Land Surface Imaging Interest Group
- pm **International Directory Network (IDN) Interest Group**
  - IDN Progress Report**
  - Climate Diagnostic Directory**
  - Demo preview of CD Directory for potential CEOS/GEOS presentation**
  - WGISS Findings**

## Friday (10/02/09)

- am **WGISS Plenary**
  - Applications Subgroup Report**
  - Technology Subgroup Report**
- pm **Way Forward**

# GEO-VI: Sixth Plenary Session of the Group on Earth Observations (coming soon: November 2009)

By: Michael Morahan, IDN Climate Diagnostics Coordinator



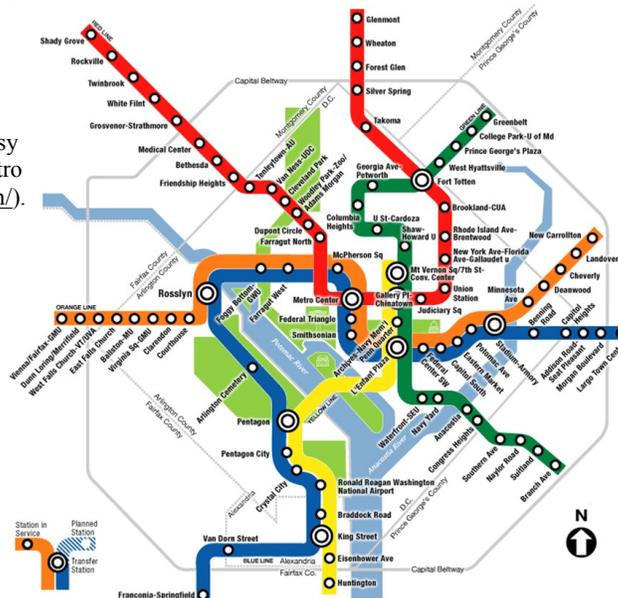
This year's GEO-VI: Sixth Plenary Session (<http://www.earthobservations.org/meetings/geo6.html>) will be hosted by the U.S. Group on Earth Observations in Washington, D.C. at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center (<http://www.itcdc.com/index.php>). These historical buildings are located in the heart of Washington, D.C. close to the Smithsonian Museums, the National Mall, the Capitol, and White House.



The GEO-VI Plenary session's main reception will be held on November 17, 2009 at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in the Sant Oceans Hall from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

“The Sant Ocean Hall is our largest permanent exhibition. It explores the ancient, diverse, and constantly changing nature of the ocean, the historical connections humans have had with it, and ways in which we are impacting the ocean today.” - Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History.

Commuting in D.C. is fairly easy using the Washington Area Metro System (<http://www.wmata.com/>).



Hope to see you at the GEO-VI in Washington D.C. on November 17 & 18, 2009!