

**Summary of the Barbados Summit  
URISA 2<sup>nd</sup> Caribbean GIS Conference  
Sherborne Conference Centre  
16<sup>th</sup> September 2004**

**OBJECTIVES**

The Barbados GIS Summit will provide an opportunity to assess GIS in Barbados and discuss the way forward. It will be hosted and chaired by the Chairman of the National GIS Committee, Mr. Robin Gittens, Chief Land Surveyor of Barbados. It will involve brief presentations and provide an opportunity for general discussion.

The specific objectives of this session are:

- An overview of the state of GIS in Barbados including existing and recent initiatives
- An outline of the challenges faced with the implementation of GIS in Barbados and how these are being addressed in other Caribbean and developing countries
- Outline of a schedule/work program for the development of a national GIS policy in Barbados

**REVIEW**

***Status, role and activities of the National Advisory GIS Committee – Mr. Robin Gittens, Chairman of National GIS Committee***

Mr. Gittens gave a background to the NAGISC and specified its priorities. Specifically he noted that the Committee was undertaking the following:

- Review the status of GIS
- Increase the awareness of the general public and specific groups about GIS and its utility
- Advise the government on a standardized approach to GIS implementation
- Advise on the development of an institutional structure for GIS in Barbados
- Advise on a workplan for the above
- Promote GIS and educational initiatives – incl. the URISA conference and the CGLIS program

Mr. Gittens noted that the first phase of activities will see a paper being submitted to the Cabinet of Barbados before the end of the year.

***Challenges to GIS Implementation in Small Developing States – Mrs Martha Lombard, Past President, URISA***

In her presentation, Mrs. Lombard noted there are three major challenges characterizing GIS implementation in developing countries and even more generally. These were identified as:

- People
- Money
- Data

She noted that GIS was a seductive technology but much needed to be done. She identified the following areas for attention:

- Get out of office* – Communicate with general public  
Cooperate, collaborate, share (including data)
- Management* - Walking around
- Management needs* - Current management requirements demands modern IT tools  
Given the amount of resources applied to management of its assets, GIS can be cost effective
- Data* - Will be less expensive if shared  
Need for data sharing partnerships
- Cost benefit* - This is necessary to illustrate effectiveness, although may not be commonplace, but there is no one fit option

***Review of issues facing Caribbean GIS and views on the way forward – Dr. Jacob Opadeyi, Centre for Geospatial Studies, UWI***

*Challenges*

- Legacy
  - Do not have legacy of using information for knowledge and decision making – so not comfortable in paying to meet information development needs
  - Region of map users, not map makers – so not prepared to invest in capacity to develop this database
  - Hard copy maps are fairly cheap and therefore the quantum leap in the cost of digital databases not readily accepted
  - Data is not seen as a resource, so little investment
  - Budgetary approach – each department decides its priorities, including relating to data collection
  - Department as opposed to multi-departmental approach
  - GIS is not a income generating programme, more of a service
- Funding Strategy
  - No agency has overall responsibility and therefore no corporate approach by government, with a few exceptions
- Human Capacity limitations

- Political Support

*Overcoming Challenges*

- Openness
  - Challenges people/institutions to produce
- Collaborative approach
  - Data collection
  - Data sharing
  - Training
  - Use of resources
- Documenting the costs and benefits
- Application driven
- Coordination – 3 levels
  - National council – Ministerial level
  - National technical advisory group – addressing policy, training and education, data issues
  - National user group

***Review of Status of GIS in Barbados and suggestions for way forward – Mr. Ricky Marshall, Conference Co-Chairman and Geocaribe***

Mr. Marshall noted that GIS was introduced to Barbados for over 15 years and noted some of the initiatives as follows:

- Lands and Surveys’ “Land Registration and Titling Program” – 1988
- Ministry of Agriculture’s “Agriculture Census” and “Land Use Policy” – 1991
- Ministry of Public Works’ “National Transportation Policy” – early 1990’s
- Coastal Zone Management Unit’s various coastal zone project and programs – since 1990’s
- Ministry of the Environment’s “Environmental Management and Land Use Policy” – 1998
- Barbados Water Authority facility mapping and water quality – late 1990’s
- Barbados Statistical Service’s 2000 Census

In the private sector, Mr. Marshall noted the following:

- Barbados Light and Power undertook to geo-reference its infrastructure and latterly linked this information to its front office so its available for mngineering/maintenance activities and customer service activities – started the process in the late 1980’s
- Cable and Wireless created base maps but have slowed

Internationally based initiatives identified were:

- GDSI
- MACGA

### *Way forward*

- National GIS Committee
  - Data standards
  - Policy
  - Coordination
- Digital Base Map
- Training
- Software
- Funding
- Public Education
  - Case Studies, Executive Seminars
- Human Resource Framework

### ***Conclusion and Recommendations***

- Structure for GIS Development
  - National Council – Ministerial level
  - National user’s Group
  - National Advisory Committee
- Recommended Short-term Activities for the National Advisory Committee
  - Finalise the user needs survey
  - Promote and educate – including a GIS day
  - Collaborate with the Data Processing Department’s BPIP to place GIS on the Barbados Portal
  - Identify a short-term visible project, e.g. an Addressing System
  - Review the idea of a GIS centre