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## **EU and East Africa: land monitoring collaboration to support food security and natural resources management**

The European Commission, represented by its Joint Research Centre (JRC), and the African Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD), covering 15 African countries, have today signed a Collaboration Agreement. The two organisations aim to co-operate in the field of agriculture and land cover monitoring to support food security and the management of natural resources in East Africa. EU Commissioner for Science and Research, Janez Potočnik, and Uganda's Minister for Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Daniel Omara Atubo, witnessed the signature in Nairobi (Kenya).

The overall aim of the Collaboration Agreement is scientific co-operation in monitoring the changes in the surface of the earth (land cover dynamics), evaluation of natural vegetation conditions, biodiversity and crop monitoring. It has, among others, the following objectives:

- to obtain the scientific data needed to monitor changes in the land and estimates for crops in the Horn of Africa
- to improve co-operation on monitoring and characterising crop and vegetation conditions, biodiversity assessment and land cover changes
- to deepen the understanding of the scientific, economic and social issues relating to the vulnerability of human populations and the sensitivity of ecosystems to land-cover change
- to promote the exchange of tools, based on Earth observation techniques, dedicated to land monitoring.

For these purposes, the agreement foresees staff and data exchanges, training, joint field missions, co-organisation of workshops and exchange of tools between the two organisations and has an initial duration of four years, which can be extended.

### **Background**

The JRC has recently intensified its scientific activities over Africa in different thematic domains from the monitoring of natural resources to the support of food security and humanitarian aid policies. It promotes strong partnerships with regional and national centres in Africa, such as the RCMRD, allowing for staff exchange and joint participation in research and development projects.

The RCMRD is an intergovernmental research and advisory institution, based in Nairobi (Kenya). Its mission is to provide quality geoinformation and allied ICT products and services in environmental and resource management for sustainable development. Its member countries are currently fifteen: Botswana, Comoros, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

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