# Summary Report of the 2nd International Symposium on Geospatial Health Held in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA, December 4-7, 2008

The Global Network for Geospatial Health (www.GnosisGIS.org) convened in the ambience of the French Quarter of New Orleans (Louisiana, USA) for the 2nd International Symposium on Geospatial Health on December 4-7, 2008. Forty-eight registrants traveled to attend the meeting from 15 countries on 5 continents (Fig. 1). Individual countries represented included the United States, Denmark, France, Switzerland, Ireland, Sweden, Italy, Russia, Australia, Brazil, Columbia, China, Thailand, Zambia and Nigeria. The programme included 38 diverse papers on geospatial health applications and theory.

Eight plenary talks featured a wide range of topics, including the results of a French project on local scale geospatial analysis of a mosquito-borne Rift Valley fever habitats in the Sahel of Senegal by Yves Tourre, cluster detection and ecological niche modeling in disease ecology research in Central Asia by Jason Blackburn, Bayesian mapping of schistosomiasis in Africa by Archie Clements. We also heard Guojing Yang on climate change and schistosomiasis japonica in China, Gonzalo Vazquez-Prokopec on spatial heterogeneity and risk of Chagas disease vectors in Argentina, and Penelope Vounatsou in a review of geospatial statistical analysis methods. Finally papers were given on random effects models and premature urban mortality in Los Angeles by Richard Scribner and a rousing talk by Ben Jacobs on geostatistical algorithms for identifying *Anopheles*-malaria aquatic habitats in Kenya.

A 12-student contingent competed for the best student paper. Valerie Relf won first place for her talk on her PhD research on fascioliasis in Ireland. Runner-ups were Prixia Nieto on GARP modeling of visceral leishmaniasis in Brazil and Jennifer Lenz on diseases of the coral reefs in the Carribean.

Meeting associated activities included a pre-meeting short course sponsored by the International School for Geospatial Health in Baton Rouge from December 1-4, 2008 and a well attended post-meeting symposium on "Advances in Geospatial Health" sponsored by GnosisGIS on December 8, 2008 as part of the annual meeting of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, also held in New Orleans.

The social programme of the symposium included an opening reception at the Chateau LeMoyne-French Quarter venue hotel, a gala Friday dinner at Muriel's Restaurant, Sunday brunch at the world famous Brennan's Restaurant and abundant open time opportunity to discover of the rich traditions and good times of the French Quarter.

At the business meeting, action on agenda topics resulted in adoption of a new constitution, plans to expand International School for Geospatial Health course offerings, provision of Minimum Medical Database resource data via the Internet and wider mail distribution of the journal Geospatial Health. Two new executive com-
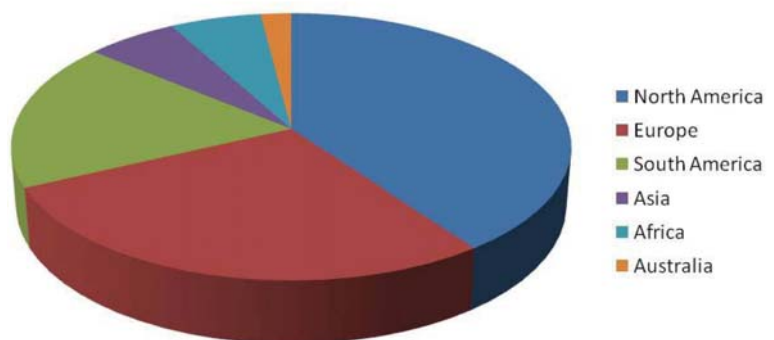


Fig. 1. The distribution of participants at the 2nd International Symposium on Geospatial Health in New Orleans on December 4-7, 2008.

mittee members were elected, Mara Bavia of Brazil and Yves Tourre of France. Thomas K. Kristensen was elected to a 4-year term as the 2009-2012 President. Additional details can be found at www.GnosisGIS.org.



Fig. 2. Some attendees of the 2ⁿᵈ International Symposium on Geospatial Health in the meeting room of the Chateau LeMoyen-French Quarter Hotel venue, New Orleans, USA.