The purpose of this satellite conference was to look forward as an organization and to develop goals and work plans for the coming decade. Extensive work on the position of SCORUS within IAOS has taken place in the last few years and the relationship is continuing to progress. This progress allows us to look forward, to determine where we wish to be as an organization in five and ten years time and begin to develop a work plan that will help us meet those goals. Attendees represented ten countries, academics, city and regional statisticians, and independent consultants.

The conference was opened with the following presentation: ‘Challenges and Opportunities in Regional and Urban Statistics – setting the agenda for the next decade’ Derek Bond, University of Ulster

This was followed by presentations on views from various counties as provided by the participants. While each country had differences in the way data was both collected and disseminated at the local level, there were a number of common issues.

- Focusing of urban and regional areas in terms of exploring their role in national economic and social structures; identifying issues of comparability (indicators and use); and available statistics
- The effect of constrained resources at the national level on the production of urban, regional, and local level
- Communication between hierarchical levels of government, between individual cities and regions, and among individuals involved in urban and regional research (academic and governmental)
- Alternative means of engaging statisticians working within local government
- Urban and regional statisticians as both consumers of nationally collected statistics and contributors to those systems

Following these presentations, the group began the work of laying out a five-year plan of specific activities to achieve specific goals identified within the mission and goals of SCORUS as laid out in the SCORUS statutes. This conference began identifying specific activities to take place in the next five years which relate to the general activities found in the SCORUS statutes.

SCORUS organises conferences (the biannual conference, regional conferences and thematic conferences), on regional and urban research and statistics as well as sessions at ISI and IAOS conferences,

We have been successful in the first area of activity over the past five-year period, increasing our profile within IAOS conferences and through independent SCORUS. Organization of contributions to future ISI and IAOS joint conferences as well as regional and international

SCORUS provides an internet platform for the continuous exchange of knowledge and of ideas and for developing consensus positions on relevant issues,

The SCORUS web and email list have experienced some technical changes and are being moved to new platforms. This gives us the opportunity to reconsider the specific goals for the web in terms of layout, content, and audience. The first step will be to establish a new web site on a stable platform. While this is taking place content issues will be addressed, this should be addressed within the next 12-18 months. The email list will be moved to a new platform and membership will be actively promoted via direct contact and indication of interest on conference registration forms. This move will take place within the next 3 months.

SCORUS actively tries to enlarge the participation of users (researchers, policy makers, consultants) and producers (at municipal, regional, national and international level) of regional and urban statistics in this worldwide exchange of experience and ideas,

Recognizing that many of the individuals involved in urban and regional research are locally based and lack funding for international involvement, we need to refocus our outreach efforts in engaging these people electronically. This means exploring means of supporting remote access to activities and linking with other national level organizations having conferences on related topics. We are also exploring means of informing young statisticians of opportunities for paper submissions to ISI from students actively engaged in urban and regional research.

SCORUS promotes the exchange and co-operation on topics of common interest within Regional SCORUS groups.

There are substantial differences in the needs and current levels of interaction within each regional group of SCORUS. While regional conferences may be effective in one region, they may not be feasible in another. Regional groups need to determine appropriate activities for their particular region and relate these to overall SCORUS goals.

SCORUS will continue to work on clarifying the details of the five-year and one year work plans. We wish to thank the University of Ulster for supporting this successful conference and Derek Bond for organizing both the business and social activities.

For information on joining the SCORUS listserve or providing suggestions to the leadership group please contact SCORUS Secretary, Wendy Thomas at wlt@pop.umn.edu