

**International Workshop and Seminar on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management
“The Data Ecosystem for Sustainable Development”**

Deqing International Convention Center, Zhejiang Geospatial Information Industrial Park
Deqing, Zhejiang Province, China
17 – 22 October 2019

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are highly dependent on geospatial information and enabling technologies as the primary data and tools for relating people to their location and place, and to measure ‘where’ progress is, or is not, being made, particularly at ‘disaggregated’ sub-national and local levels. In this respect, the 2030 Agenda specifically demands the need for new data acquisition and integration approaches, including to exploit the contribution to be made by geospatial information and Earth observations to support the implementation of the SDGs, targets and global indicators.

However, in the pursuit for sustainable development, many countries continue to face a series of impediments that exacerbate their ability and ‘opportunity’ to participate fully in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, to support national development, economic prosperity, and through that, a global and thriving information economy. The Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data calls for the identification and removal of barriers to the use of new data sources, including registries and administrative data, geospatial information systems, and other innovative data sources. To this end, the Action Plan promotes the integration of modern geospatial information management systems within mainstream statistical production programmes, highlighting synergies between the two systems. It also stresses the need to support the integration of data from traditional and non-traditional data sources.

Today geospatial information and enabling technologies, the ‘data ecosystem and related architectures’, have evolved and progressed at considerable pace. Geospatial information is able to be presented in many forms and mediums, providing the digital connection between a place, its people and their activities, and to illustrate what is happening – where, how and why. It is also used to model and portray the impact of the past, the present and likely future scenarios. Technological enablers such as the Internet, Cloud computing, analytics, Big Data, mobile devices, unmanned aerial systems, and the rapid explosion of location-based services, which bring everyone directly into contact with location information every day, have ensured that people the world over, are beginning to appreciate the need for geospatial information in their consumption of data.

This has also significantly motivated the global geospatial industry to be more innovative, solutions orientated, and to embrace an emerging information economy and the ‘digital transformation’ opportunities that we have today; where the expectations for growing global interconnectivity and information societies are being underpinned by both digital disruption and digital transformation – enabling e-commerce and a modern information economy to prosper. But with more data and technology available than ever before, many developing countries have yet to have the ‘opportunity’ to interact with these rapidly emerging capabilities, as the democratization of geospatial information and the data ecosystem is not being equally shared. Geospatial data, leadership, knowledge and innovation is primarily



still limited to the developed countries. While technologies are evolving at a rapid rate, the commensurate capabilities, skills and opportunities in the developing countries are not.

The Secretary-General’s report on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals for the 2019 session of the High-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), identified a series of systemic gaps in the overall response to the 2030 Agenda and called for specific actions to fill them. These include placing special focus on the most vulnerable to ensure that as countries progress, they leave no one behind; ensuring adequate and well-directed financing; strengthening institutions and making them more effective and inclusive; bolstering local action to accelerate implementation; strengthening economies and building resilience; strengthening collection, access and effective use of data for the Goals; and harnessing science, technology and innovation with a greater focus on digital transformation for sustainable development.¹ The Secretary-General’s report further noted that “for more than half of the global indicators, data are not regularly collected by most of the countries or there is no established methodology to measure them. This has a negative impact on the ability to fully understand Sustainable Development Goals progress and challenges”.²

In his opening statement at the first United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress, held in Deqing, China, in November 2018, the Secretary-General emphasized that “geospatial data, methods, frameworks, tools, and platforms is urgently needed, and that reliable, timely, accessible and disaggregated geospatial information must be brought to bear to measure progress, inform decision-making and ensure effective and inclusive national and subnational programs that will chart the path towards the ‘Geospatial Way to a Better World’, to assist in the implementation of the SDGs, and transform our world for the better”.³ There continues to be an urgent need for more integration across the various national information systems and platforms so that we are able to leverage the best and most efficient data and analysis for policy and evidence-based decision making for the SDGs.

Organizers

The United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Section, Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the Government of China through the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Zhejiang Provincial Government, will joint organize this International Workshop and Seminar from 17 – 22 October 2019. The International Workshop and Seminar is supported by the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Asia and the Pacific (UN-GGIM-AP).

Objectives of the International Workshop and Seminar

The Deqing International Workshop and Seminar on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management, with the theme “Data Ecosystem for Sustainable Development”, will provide a platform for deliberating key features and considerations of a data ecosystem for sustainable development, and interact on the methodologies and modalities needed to leverage digital transformation and realize this data ecosystem that delivers the evidence on ‘where’ people interact with their place, events, activities

¹ E/2019/68, para. 18

² E/2019/68, para. 21

³ <http://ggim.un.org/unwgic/>

(including economic activities) and environment, and to deliver timely and reliable information necessary for citizens, businesses, organizations and governments to build accountable actions and evidenced-based decisions.

The International Workshop and Seminar will consider a number of sub-themes through its component activities that will allow participants to engage, interact and exchange with one another to realize a data ecosystem for sustainable development.

About the International Workshop and Seminar

This Deqing International Workshop and Seminar on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management "Data Ecosystem for Sustainable Development" comprises a number of components as follows:

Technical Learning component on Data Ecosystem for Sustainable Development - Integrative Technologies and Processes from 17 - 19 October 2019 – This learning component will be a closed (by invitation only) capacity and capability development component of the International Workshop and Seminar for invited participants from selected developing countries to improve knowledge and understanding on the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, the importance of 'nationally' integrated geospatial information management, and the vital and integrative role of geospatial information. The three-day technical learning component is expected to be a hands-on practical component where invited participants can work through a means to federate information as a nexus for delivering evidence-based information for the implementation of national strategic and development priorities and for sustainable development. This technical learning component is expected to be the first in a series of capacity and capability development efforts to realize the vital and integrative role of geospatial information conducted by United Nations Secretariat on Global Geospatial Information Management.

Technical briefing and visit on the Deqing SDGs Profile on 20 October 2019 – This component will be open to participants of the International Workshop and Seminar and where participants can be informed of the development and progress of the Deqing SDGs Profile including the Deqing SDGs Data Hub. The technical briefing will allow participants to understand first-hand the efforts and progress in the application of geospatial information and its integration with statistical and other data for sustainable development in Deqing, in Zhejiang and in China.

Technical Seminar on Data Ecosystem for Sustainable Development from 21 – 22 October 2019 – This component within the International Workshop and Seminar will be open to both international and national participants (but subject to a maximum of 150 participants). This is the open component of the International Workshop and Seminar to improve awareness and understanding, discuss and interact on the data ecosystem for sustainable development where integrated information systems enriched by geospatial information provide evidence on the state of the earth, people, events and activities, to deliver timely information necessary for citizens, organizations and governments to build accountability and make informed and evidenced-based decisions.

Participation

The technical seminar component of the Deqing International Workshop and Seminar on 21 and 22 October 2019 is open to participants from governments, United Nations system, international organizations, the private sector, academic and research institutions and civil societies.

However, the technical learning component within the Deqing International Workshop and Seminar from 17 to 19 October 2019 is a closed sub-event and participation is by invitation only. The technical briefing and visit on the Deqing SDGs Profile is open to interested participants but prior registration is required for all interested participants.

Language

The International Workshop and Seminar will be conducted in English only.

Venue

The Deqing International Workshop and Seminar on Deqing International Workshop and Seminar on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management with the theme "Data Ecosystem for Sustainable Development" will be held at the Deqing International Convention Center located at the Zhejiang Geospatial Information Industrial Park in Deqing, Zhejiang Province, China.

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