

regional and global mapping organizations. You will participate in Panel 1 and will be seated on a stage with 6 others and Stefan Schweinfest, UN Statistics Division Director as the facilitator. For additional context, there will be a second panel discussion (**Panel 2**) that will focus on addressing the challenges confronting countries – it will include leaders of country mapping agencies and organizations that have been leading the charge on improving data. You will not participate in Panel 2.

**You will have 5-7 minutes to provide comments on the foundations work in geospatial data and our interest in overall support of improved geospatial data and to say our specific vision and commitments. We have provided some remarks below.**

**Foundation Objectives:**

- To show our commitment to improving development data and decision making tools through investment and support of geospatial data.
- To discuss what we have supported in geospatial data – Polio mapping of Northern Nigeria and tracking of vaccine campaigns to ensure we reach eradication. Our increased country-level approach, efforts towards better internal and external data production, access, use and coordination, and that we want to work with other like-minded donors to reduce redundancy and strengthen country capabilities.
- To publically say how critical we see good transparent data to measuring results and ensuring everyone is counted and accountable to reaching the poorest wherever they live and finishing the job on the MDGs.

**Suggested Remarks (You will have 5-7 mins to talk as part of Panel 1 on SDGs and geospatial data):**

**[START REMARKS]**

I am very excited to be here today to join this distinguished group on stage to discuss the way forward for the importance of geospatial data and to reaffirm the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's commitment to improving data for development.

As the Director for Africa at the Gates Foundation and as a trained medical doctor with over 20 years of working in global health – I have seen firsthand how good data can transform the lives of people and help governments to get goods and services to those that need them most.

I have seen what a well-organized immunization program can do to save the lives of young children and I have seen what access to family planning commodities can do for empowering women. I have also seen what happens when the data isn't good enough -- ~~when women~~ aren't counted and don't have access to family planning are faced with too many mouths to feed or when delays using traditional methods result in inaccurate population counts and there aren't enough vaccines to go around and children die from preventable disease.

We invest millions of dollars every year in improving data, because our leaders understand the importance of using data to measure progress, improve institutional

performance and reach our collective development goals; ultimately working to build countries' abilities to improve their data and data systems, to track development progress, through the SDGs and other methods in order to achieve measureable and tangible results.

We do this because at the end of the day, we know that data-driven decision making is critical to well-functioning governments and that measuring global goals while important, isn't enough if a Minister of Health or Finance doesn't have what she or he needs to allocate resources to achieve country development plans and make real progress for their citizens.

We also recognize that it's important not to underestimate the data challenges that remain and the need for new partnerships, the possibilities of new technologies and that we may need to approach funding data in innovative new ways. This is a long term play and we want to make sure our investments in data are sustainable.

This week offers a big moment for countries to not only participate in the creation and issuing of the Addis Declaration, but to also commit resources and reinvigorate their own individual goals for location based analytics, sustainable geospatial maps, and robust geospatial data systems.

If country level geospatial data systems strengthening is going to happen, countries must step up and take a central leadership role now, and we commend the UN-GGIM and many of the organizations in attendance, for working to build such leadership. Words won't be enough though, and countries need to pledge domestic resources for improving geospatial data. Countries can also improve data systems, where appropriate, by creating closer bonds between mapping and national statistics.

Geospatial data is by nature an integrator of data. We have seen how sharing data, and using geospatial platforms to combine datasets can create powerful tools for decision making including improvements to service delivery, policy setting and resource allocation. Countries commendable support of data production, literacy, access and use is even more powerful when location based information is used to improve coordination between agencies and ministries.

Donors must also continue to play an important role in how the application of geospatial data to enable and accelerate development plans over the next 10 to 20 years. More funding in a more coordinated way that supports both country and global needs will be essential.

I feel strongly that there is an important role for each of us in this room to perform to make sure that country geospatial data systems are successful. The foundation has funded work through the several of our program teams to ensure there are complete and sustainable maps and we continue to support many partners working on applications of

geospatial data at the local, country and global level; institutions like the Emergency Operations Centers for Polio in Nigeria and Pakistan, and the ATA, here in Ethiopia. I would like to highlight two areas where there has been great impact on the ground through mapping and geospatial data. Both in health and agriculture.

In the area of health, the polio campaign has used geospatial data to identify areas at greater risk and where people are in need of vaccines. We are working with the Nigerian government to create detailed maps of roads, settlements, settlement names and other points of interest to ensure successful vaccination campaigns to eradicate polio. These maps helped us understand things like populations in Northern Nigeria that had never been known before. We plan to continue to invest in using powerful geospatial tools to understand populations, locations, migration and access to provide improved health care delivery to all.

We also fund geospatial tools for malaria, where maps are of critical importance. We need to see where the mosquitos are, the patterns of travel of both the vector mosquitos and people. We need to understand the distribution of malaria cases to optimize how we use limited resources to get bed net and drug distribution out at various times of the year in the most efficient way possible.

In agriculture, we support institutions that help unlock productivity for small holder farmers. One of the grants the foundation is supporting is the African Soil Information Service (AfSIS) through the Columbia Global Center, to develop continent-wide, comprehensive digital soil maps for sub-Saharan Africa for the first time in history, using new types of soil analysis and statistical methods. In collaboration with AfSIS, the Ethiopian Soil Information System (EthioSIS) is being implemented by the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency and the Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture. This national effort is already paying off - Ethiopia is now at the forefront of utilizing geospatial data and soil sampling to create soil maps of Ethiopia. The Ministry of Agriculture uses this information for planning purposes, including the development of appropriate fertilizer mixes for the different agroecologies and soil fertility status, and deciding on the most appropriate location for fertilizer facilities. This example of how Ethiopia applies the use of geospatial information shows the virtuous impact these powerful tools can have, particularly when combining information between research groups, agencies, ministries and other actors.

Be it health care needs, agricultural needs, or any areas, geospatial data can help in decision making and implementation not just serve as measurement tools to ensure countries achieve their Sustainable Development goals. Geospatial data is a promising tool for not only measuring the SDGs, but also integrating country data between agencies and ministries, and improving information for decision making by all development actors.

We look forward to intensifying our support of these tools in partnership with countries as they develop stronger geospatial data systems. Together, the use of integrated geographic data is really at the center of being able to improve the lives of everyone.