



*Permanent Mission
of Barbados to
the United Nations*



Statement delivered by

**The Permanent Representative of Barbados
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at the

Forum on Integrated Geospatial Information Management

**“Integrated Geospatial Information Management
to 2030 and Beyond”**

Tuesday, 6 August 2024

15:00 to 18:00

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Senior Officials, good afternoon and a special welcome to those delegations coming from our respective Capitals – to enjoy the many benefits of a hot and muggy New York summer !

I'm delighted to join you at this forum on integrated geospatial information management on the eve of the fourteenth session of the UN-GGIM. It's an honour to have been invited to make some brief remarks at this Forum on Integrated Geospatial Information Management.

My journey to this podium started on the margins of the recent SIDS4 conference, where I was also honoured to say a few words at the UN-GGIM Side Event on Leveraging Geospatial Information for Climate Resilience.

SIDS4 was a success leading to the adoption of the Antigua & Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS) declaration for "a Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity".

It is through this lens that I want to share some reflections from the SIDS perspective knowing that countries like mine are among those most dependent and involved in regional and international cooperation in this area.

In 2014, the SAMOA Pathway reaffirmed the commitment of small island states to “strengthen the availability and accessibility of data and statistical systems”. We also committed to “enhance the management of complex data systems, including geospatial data platforms, by launching new partnerships or scaling up existing initiatives”.

In 2015 the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development committed to “exploit the contribution to be made by a wide range of data, including Earth observations and geospatial information”. By 2020 we had agreed to “enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for LDCs and SIDS, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by geographic location and other characteristics.”

Regrettably, we have not come close to meeting those ambitions. But I know all of you in this room are committed to realising that ambition for our world.

The Committee of Experts has made considerable progress at the technical and policy levels. But more advocacy efforts are needed for due recognition to be given to Geospatial Information Management as a vital

tool for not only measuring and monitoring progress through data but more so for the successful implementation of the SDGs.

Now that we are barely five years away from 2030, we need – as my prime minister says in the discussion about the international financial architecture – to go further and faster.

[I am now connected and aware of your work through our Chief Surveyor and his office. I urge you all to connect with your missions here in New York and vice versa and raise the importance of geospatial information with them.]

So, what is at stake here for Barbadian communities, the wider Caribbean, and the world?

- Our changing climate is increasing the fragility of the most vulnerable countries, making adaptation and mitigation even more difficult;

- Just in this hemisphere in the last two months we have been reminded of the impacts of natural disasters. The fury of Hurricane Beryl in the Caribbean last month and Hurricane Debby yesterday in Florida are not 'one-off' phenomena. If we do not develop

sustainably, our vulnerability to these exogenous shocks increases. This leaves those who are already far behind, even further behind;

- We are increasing demands and capacity for data creation, access, sharing and use;
- We are inspiring innovation and adoption of emerging technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence.

Action and implementation is therefore needed ***now***. Implementing the **United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework** will build and strengthen national geospatial information capacity and improve the availability, quality, timeliness and disaggregation of geospatial data and information to enhance decision-making.

My country is playing its part, by participating as the co-chair of the UN-GGIM Task Team on Geospatial Information for Climate Resilience.

Colleagues,

More extreme weather events severely damage infrastructure, agriculture, and public health systems, resulting in high economic and social costs. While

SIDS contribute less than one per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, they disproportionately suffer from the impacts of climate change impacts:

- Around 75 per cent of their coral reefs are threatened by climate change.
- The cost for environmental adaptation is estimated between USD 22 billion and USD 26 billion yearly, underscoring the need for urgent global cooperation and support.

Investing in geospatial information and its infrastructure can be expensive, but we cannot afford not to.

Strengthening climate resilience is essential for all countries. It is especially crucial for SIDS, which are especially vulnerable to their small size, geographical remoteness, limited scale, and undiversified economies.

I commend you for your work done so far and for what is to come, and I wish you the very best with your deliberations in the coming days. Thank you.
