

Report from Side Event at Intergovernmental Negotiation Meetings in NY

Kristian Møller, Danish Geodata Agency
UN-GGIM: Europe Executive Committee meeting,
Brussels 29. April 2015



Unleashing the power of 'Where' to make the world a better place: How geographic information contributes to achieving the SDGs

Co-organisers: Permanent Mission of Denmark, UN-GGIM: Europe, UN-GGIM Secretariat,
Group on Earth Observations (GEO)

1:15 – 2:30pm, Wednesday April 22 2015
Conference Room 6, UN Headquarters, New York

Hunger, poverty, disease, disasters, climate change, deforestation, urbanisation and environmental challenges ... they all happen somewhere over space and time. In order to measure, monitor and mitigate these challenges we need to bring together the best data – satellite, demographic, statistical, geospatial, and environmental – linking the data together with the one thing they have in common – location. One of the significant opportunities we have in attaining the future we want is to bring together information about people and places from a variety of sources into national monitoring and evaluation systems. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), location information - collected at local, national and global levels, and supported by the best science, tools and technologies - is critical in monitoring targets and indicators. This will enable all nations to analyse and model data, create maps and detect and monitor change over time in a consistent and standardised manner. All this information is linked together by a common thread - geographic location.

This side event will provide participants with important information on:

- How geographic information, combined with other information, will help governments measure and monitor implementation of the SDGs, and why it is important to improve the availability of and access to geographic data and statistics.
- Why geographic location is a core source of information for providing content and context to understand natural and human systems.
- How geographic information helps to measure, monitor and manage sustainable development in a consistent way over time, thereby contributing to evidence-based policy decisions.

Introduction and Context (10 min)

- H.E. Mr. Erik Laursen, Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative of Denmark to the UN
- UN-GGIM Secretariat and Group on Earth Observations

Presenters (30 min)

- Dr. Yusuf Djajadihardja, Deputy Chair of Geospatial Information Agency, **Indonesia**
- Ms. Nadine Brown, Sustainable Development and Regional Planning Division, Planning Institute of Jamaica, **Jamaica**
- Mr. Lawrence Friedl, Director, Applied Sciences Program, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, **United States**

Moderated interactive discussion with participants (35 min)

Moderator: Ms. Laura Poulsen, Head of Division, the Danish Geodata Agency of the Ministry for the Environment, **Denmark**

Note: A light lunch will be provided for participants

Recall: What we would like to achieve...

- ...to promote the importance of reliable geospatial information to measure and monitor the goals (Monitoring and Review)
- Ideally the use of GI should be assessed for all targets/indicators

=> Need to influence the final negotiations, where the decisions on data and indicators are being made

- If we succeed... it will also support our aim to put UN-GGIM on a proper budgetary footing in 2016



Well visited event...



03/06/2015

How did the event go...

- Excellent introduction by the Danish Ambassador and Stefan Schweinfest
- Good presentations from Indonesia, Jamaica and the USA
- Full room (maybe 80-90 people)
- Good moderation – people stayed 10 min over time to get the final part of the discussion:
 - General support to have geo-information used for monitoring, an eye opener for many, and a good stepping stone for thinking geo-information into the SDG process
 - A very interesting question popped up: When will geo-information officially be include in the Statistical commission in the UN.
 - Very good feedback from the participants after the meeting – so now the important follow-up work begins i.e. getting our statement into the final text...

Ambassadors statements...

- This side event aims at providing valuable insights and perspectives regarding the use of data and monitoring in achieving the SDGs. To this end we have brought in the expertise of a broad set of actors, including national geodata agencies and representatives from the scientific community.
- Geographic information is an essential element in the extensive and complex framework for the implementation and monitoring of the post-2015 agenda and mentioned in target 17.18 as one of the sources of data relevant for the agenda.
- Finally, let me highlight that with this side event we seek your support for the further promotion of basing monitoring, review and accountability on a science-based framework –braced by geographic information – in support of an effective and universal implementation of the post-2015 agenda.

Good presentations

- Dr Djajadihardja showed how geographic information provides important evidence to inform hard choices on how to balance economic development with environmental protection.
- Ms Brown made convincing cases for the value of geographic information in assessing and managing the socio-economic and environmental issues related to climate change adaptation, flooding and hurricane / disaster management in Jamaica
- Mr Fridl demonstrated how technology has greatly increased our capacity to track changes in our natural environment. And how this is a crucial prerequisite for adjusting policies and responses.

Closing remarks

- Laura Poulsen closed the event with the following statements:
 - It's been a real pleasure and delight to listen to the breadth of observations and perspectives on the topic of geographic information and sustainable development.
 - Many speakers and delegates provided ample arguments for the powerful ways that geographic information and analyses can inform facts and evidence-based decision-making.
 - And thus, for reliable, consistent, accessible and timely geographic information to play a key role in the monitoring and implementation of sustainable development goals
 - And for me this is the main takeaway from this event: the importance of quality geographic information for measuring, monitoring, managing and achieving sustainable development.

The event captured by DESA

The screenshot shows the DESA website header with the United Nations logo and the text 'United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs'. A navigation bar includes links for HOME, ABOUT US, IN FOCUS, PUBLICATIONS, NEWS, CALENDAR, and CONTACT US. The main content area features an article titled 'Unleashing the power of 'where'' dated 22 April 2015, New York. The article text discusses the importance of geographical information in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A video player is embedded in the article, showing a scene with a person walking through a snowy, damaged urban area. A quote from Lawrence Friedl, Director of NASA's Applied Science Program, is highlighted: 'Satellites can do much more than just take pretty pictures from space.' Below the quote, it identifies Lawrence Friedl as the Director of NASA's Applied Science Program. At the bottom of the article, it mentions Yusuf Djajadihardja, Deputy Chair of the Indonesian Geospatial Information Agency, as one of the event's panellists. On the right side of the page, there is a search bar and two lists: 'NEWS BY YEAR' (2015: 58, 2014: 136, 2013: 133, 2012: 138, 2011: 140, 2010: 68) and 'NEWS BY CATEGORY' (Capacity Development, ECOSOC, Financing for Development, Forest, Gender, Policy Analysis, Population, Public Administration, Social Development, Statistics, Sustainable Development). At the bottom right, there is a section for 'DESA NEWSLETTERS' with a sign-up link.

United Nations
Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Strong UN. Better World.

HOME ABOUT US IN FOCUS PUBLICATIONS NEWS CALENDAR CONTACT US

Unleashing the power of 'where'

22 April 2015, New York

Everything that happens, happens somewhere over space and time. The world is getting more connected and goods, persons and information can travel greater distances in shorter amounts of time. However, this has not eliminated hunger, poverty, disease, disasters and environmental challenges. In order to measure, monitor and mitigate these challenges we need to bring together the best data – satellite, demographic, statistical, geospatial, and environmental – linking the data together with the one thing they have in common – location.

Everything that happens. <

To highlight the significant role that geographical information – collected at local, national and global level – plays in the realization of the sustainable development goals, the United Nations initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), in collaboration with the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations organized a side event themed 'Unleashing the power of "where" to make the world a better place: How geographic information contributes to achieving the SDG's'.

The side event outlined the many ways in which geographic information helps governments measure and monitor the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

"Satellites can do much more than just take pretty pictures from space," Lawrence Friedl, Director of NASA's Applied Science Program and one of the panellists remarked.

Geospatial information systems help statisticians collect, manage, analyse and display detailed geographical information about the earth and all processes and circumstances existing on it. These systems can be used to visualize complex data in the form of charts, maps and report. By making the data easily understood and shared, they give policymakers an insight into patterns, relationships and trends that occur within our society.

Yusuf Djajadihardja, Deputy Chair of the Indonesian Geospatial Information Agency, and one of the events' panellists, emphasized the importance of the collection of geographic information for the Indonesian archipelago.

"Satellites can do much more than just take pretty pictures from space,"

Lawrence Friedl
Director,
NASA Applied
Science Program

Search DESA

NEWS BY YEAR

- > 2015 (58)
- > 2014 (136)
- > 2013 (133)
- > 2012 (138)
- > 2011 (140)
- > 2010 (68)

NEWS BY CATEGORY

- > Capacity Development
- > ECOSOC
- > Financing for Development
- > Forest
- > Gender
- > Policy Analysis
- > Population
- > Public Administration
- > Social Development
- > Statistics
- > Sustainable Development

DESA NEWSLETTERS

UN DESA offers a range of issue specific newsletters. Sign Up and receive your customized newsletters.

- <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/news/statistics/geospatial-information-3.html>