

## Report Subgroup 1 - SDGs – Deliberations and SDG Related Sessions at the Tshwane South Africa Work Programme Symposium and ISRSE Meeting

### Work Programme Symposium and ISRSE Meeting

1. SDGs and the application of remote sensed data were a common theme across many of the presentations during the ISRSE meeting.
2. It was clear that there is a profusion of SDG related activity that has not been coordinated within GEO Work Programme elements and by many external actors. An example informally compiled by Arnold Decker regarding the water related Goals 6 and 14 counted the following at least:
  - GEOBON study how they address SDG 6
  - GEOBON wetlands focusing on SDG6 and 15 (and maybe 14)
  - AMERIGEOSS is assessing multiple SDG's (6,14 and 15).
  - AFRIGEOSS
  - Blue Planet mostly SDG 14
  - AquaWatch is the thematic expertise centre for SDG 6.3.2.
  - EO4SDG's including activities with the UN Custodial Agencies and UN Member Countries
3. It was generally agreed that there should be coordinating contact made with the GEO Flagships, Initiatives and where applicable, Foundational Tasks to enhance coordination, look for synergies, reduce overlap, and identify demonstrations that deliver towards SDG targets or indicators with strong engagement of decision makers and users. The need for coordination with other GEO activities included in the Work Programme will be stressed.
4. The two primary SDG sessions were well attended (in context of this WPF meeting). The opening speech from South African Statistician General Pali Lahohla addressed particularly important topics including how the UN is relying on Statistical Agencies and UN Custodial Agencies for implementation of the SDG Indicator framework and collection of data by countries. He also stressed that efforts must be focused to achieve the sustainable and just society outcomes envisioned by the UN process for Africa and elsewhere. The panel discussion moderated by Tim Haigh revealed numerous processes in action and stressed examination of how to build coordinated efforts based on successes of GEO activities. The importance of regional activities was illustrated by the presentation and interventions of Derek Clark Head of the Mapping Agency for South Africa, an important participant in the UN and African GGIM processes. GEOGLAM success in Africa and elsewhere were shown to provide an opportunity to expand engagement with policy makers and support for SDG indicators.
5. An indicator for progress by GEO activities regarding SDGs needs to be developed tailored to help inform the GEO Executive Committee priority on progress. A process to collect this information to support and indicator more systematically and regularly was requested and there was a call to include an indicator on this topic as part of the M&E work. It will be essential to coordinate with the M&E lead on the collection of data from the GEO activities.
6. Private sector and NGO entities including GEO Participating Organizations clearly expressed interest in engaging with GEO on SDG activities.

## Suggested Subgroup 1 Supported or Coordinated Activities for Work Programme Review and Management Leading to Executive Committee and October Plenary

- A communication distributed by the Secretariat and EO4SDG coordinated with the Program Board Subgroup 1 should be sent to all Flagships, Initiatives, Foundational Tasks to once again request information on SDG work currently underway and access coordination and policy impact opportunities (see 3 above) that can be used by the Program Board in its Work Programme analysis;
- Another iteration of the “light analysis” of SDG opportunities and cross-cutting applications with Work Programme activities completed in Fall 2016 should be compiled with collected information including identification of gaps;
- An on-going coordination role regarding efficient integration of GEO SDG activities should be established, the EO4SDGs Initiative is suggested;
- Best practice examples using Earth observations and geospatial information integrated with statistical practice currently emanating from engagement with UN Custodial Agencies, engagement with national governments, global partnerships and GEO activities should be compiled and promoted for re-use;
- EP4SDGs should compile information based on experience regarding how to engage with the UN SDG process and other global policy activities as a basic foundation for effective action and provide to other GEO activities, a webinar program has been proposed;
- The newly release ICSU report entitled “*A Guide to SDG Interactions: from Science to Implementation*” should be reviewed for insights to assist GEO SDG activities analysis and integration including the food, energy, water nexus; <https://www.icsu.org/publications/a-guide-to-sdg-interactions-from-science-to-implementation>
- These recommendations may be modified and others included during Program Board meeting deliberations.