



GEO PLENARY XII SIDE EVENT

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: EARTH OBSERVATIONS IN SERVICE OF GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

10 November 2015 • 08h30 – 17h40 CST
Hotel Hilton Reforma • Room Don Genaro

Annotated Agenda – 9.11.15

Well-being, economic growth, hunger, sanitation, poverty, energy, disease, fresh water, disasters, air quality, biodiversity, deforestation, hygiene, urbanization, food security, environmental challenges These all happen somewhere in space and through time. A significant opportunity exists to address these challenges by bringing together data and applying information about people and places into national monitoring and evaluation systems to improve human and environmental conditions.

In September 2015 the United Nations General Assembly endorsed “Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,”¹ a new and universal development agenda for all countries and stakeholders to use as a blueprint of action for people, planet and prosperity. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will guide the way we collectively manage and sustain activities through to at least 2030. The agenda will be anchored by 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), associated targets, and a global indicator framework. Collectively, these items will assist countries and the global community to measure and monitor progress. It will also capture specific and separate global UN system outcomes on disaster risk reduction, climate change, and financing for development.

The 2030 Agenda specifically demands new data acquisition and integration approaches to improve the availability, quality, timeliness and disaggregation of data to support the implementation of the new development agenda at all levels. The agenda includes efforts to exploit the contribution to be made by a wide range of data, including earth observation and geospatial information, while ensuring national ownership in supporting and tracking progress.

To achieve the Goals, geospatial information and Earth observations – collected at local, national and global levels, and supported by the best science, tools and technologies – can serve critical, insightful roles in monitoring targets, tracking progress, and helping nations and other stakeholders make more informed, integrated decisions and on-going adjustments that will contribute toward achieving the agreed Goals. Combined with demographic and statistical data, these sources enable nations to analyze and model conditions, create maps and other visualizations, evaluate impacts across sectors and regions, monitor change over time in a consistent and standardized manner, and improve accountability.

This Side Event is specifically designed for the GEO community – particularly those attending the GEO Plenary – to learn from practitioners directly involved with the SDG indicator discussions, especially as a way to understand needs, process, opportunities, and pathways. The event includes organizations, such as NGOs and development banks, which use Earth observations as indicators to track and encourage economic and social development and environmental sustainability. The Event aims to produce a set of recommendations on specific approaches and identify a set of activities for GEO to pursue in supporting and building capacity in using Earth observations in support of monitoring progress on the SDGs.

¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

Side Event Objectives

- Increase awareness and understanding of GEO Community on the significance of Earth observation applications in the 2030 Agenda and the SDG process
- Understand the process for the development, reporting and tracking of robust indicators
- Discuss information sources that United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and countries may need to address the SDGs, including current, improved or new information and methods
- Identify lessons learned from similar efforts using Earth observations to develop and implement policy-relevant indicators and assess progress toward policy objectives
- Identify pathways for Earth observations to support SDG goals, targets and indicators
- Reach agreement on establishing a partnership between GEO and SDG stakeholders
- Make concrete refinements to a dedicated GEO initiative on the SDGs, addressing both GEO contributions overall and GEO support to countries on SDG tracking and reporting

Planned Outcomes

As results and outcomes from the event, GEO expects that:

1. Attendees can document concrete actions they can take (near-term and longer-term) to influence their national governments (or participating organizations) to encourage the use of Earth observations to support the SDG indicators, monitoring, and reporting.
2. GEO Community has a characterization of the process and rules of engagement on indicator development and reporting and subsequent monitoring of these, including the activities conducted by the national bodies, those led by the UN and other international organizations, and potential roles of scientific and data communities.
3. Attendees discussed and produced/refined a GEO initiative on the SDGs, examined options, made specific revisions, and made decisions on recommendations to bring to Plenary on GEO's contributions to the SDG process.

10 November 2015

Gathering and Set-up

Session 1: Welcome and Sustainable Development Goals

08h30 – 09h00

Welcome - The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: The Opportunity for Earth Observations

Rolando Campo, *INEGI and UN GGIM-Americas*

Barbara Ryan, *Group on Earth Observations*

Meeting Overview & Objectives

Lawrence Friedl, *USA/NASA*

Introduction to the Sustainable Development Goals: How We Got to This Point and What Happens Next

Ambassador David Donoghue, *Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations*

Co-Facilitator of UN General Assembly Sustainable Development Agenda Process (via video)

Background

This session introduces and sets the context and expectations for the Side Event. The session will efficiently familiarize people with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, including some of the unique terminology and organizations associated with them (Session 2 provides much more information and details). The session will briefly describe potential linkages of Earth observations to support the SDGs specifically and the 2030 development agenda more generally. In addition, this session will also introduce a planned GEO Initiative on the SDGs, identifying specific issues that the attendees should contemplate during the day in preparation for the Session 6 discussion period and needed decisions by end of the event.

Session 2: SDGs, Targets and Indicators

09h00 – 10h00

SDGs, targets and global indicator framework: The What, Who, and How

Enrique Ordaz Lopez, *INEGI/IAEG*

Greg Scott, *UNSD*

Arnold Dekker, *Australia/CSIRO*

Questions and Plenary Discussion

Background

This session provides detailed information about the SDGs, especially the process to develop indicators to be used in tracking the goals and targets as well as the reporting process. The speaker will describe the process led by the UN Statistics Division to determine the indicators, including insights and guidance on what data and information is planned to support the indicators. The session can address what current, new, or improved data and information products that the UNSD and countries may need to serve the SDG indicators, targets, and goals. In describing the process, the speaker can explain the rules-of-engagement and opportunities-for-

engagement on indicator development and reporting (e.g., by GEO, countries, participating organizations).

In describing the process, the speaker can help attendees understand: What parts the UN/UNSD does, what it recommends, what services it provides; What activities the national bodies conduct; What freedom and variety exist in how countries can report; How prescriptive is the UN in the reporting; What is the form and timing and periodicity of reporting; What the repercussions are for not reporting; What support countries can receive from international organizations on their reporting; and, What types of assistance are planned for and permitted under the SDGs.

Break

Session 3: Perspectives from Nations, Development Banks, and International Bodies

10h25 – 12h30

Statements by National/Organizational Representatives (list TBC; order TBD)

Japan: Shinichi Higuchi, *Japan/MEXT*

Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data: Ania Calderón Mariscal, *Mexico*

Switzerland: José Romero, *Switzerland/DETEC*

Sustainable Development Solution Network: Bob Chen, *CIESIN*

Skoll Global Threats Fund: Sylvia Lee, *Skoll Threats*

Chandan Deuskar, *The World Bank*

Questions and Plenary Discussion

Background

This session provides perspectives from countries, development banks, and organizations in using data-driven approaches and indicators to support their decisions, encourage economic and social development, and monitor environmental sustainability. Each speaker will describe their nation's or organization's approaches and experiences, including successes, smart practices, and lessons learned. They will describe the data and information sources used and any notable achievements and shortcomings. In particular, the speakers will address what their nation/organization plan to do for the SDGs, what types of challenges they foresee, and what capacity building they desire or will conduct. They will also address how Earth observations and the GEO community can support their activities, including what data and information they plan to use or would like to have available to support their and indicator development and SDG planning, monitoring, and reporting.

Lunch Break

12h30 – 13h30

Session 4: Natural Capital Accounting

13h30 – 14h00

Natural Capital Accounting John Matuszak, *USA/State Dept.*

Questions

Background

The speaker will address the topic of natural capital accounting, which allows for the value of nature in national and corporate planning and reporting practices, policies, and programs. The session will describe natural capital accounting to allow for the value of natural systems, which can complement GDP and corporate performance indicators. The session will address ways that Earth observations could aid in setting baselines, goal setting and fulfilling commitments of each participating country to report annually on the condition of its natural capital. The speaker will address the use and need for relevant data and the need for capacity building to utilize it.

(Note: There are some significant similarities between the information needed for natural capital accounting and for monitoring the SDGs and indicators.)

Session 5: A Water Resources Example

14h00 – 14h40

Global Water Partnership: Sustainable Development and Management of Water

Rifat Hossain, *World Health Organization*

Stuart Minchin/Arnold Dekker, *Australia*

Questions and Plenary Discussion

Background

This session will provide a specific example related to water and the use of Earth observations in the SDG activities. The speakers will describe the Global Water Partnership as an illustration of international efforts on sustainable development and work to determine indicators. The session will provide suggestions on concrete steps GEO countries and participating organizations can take to advance the use of Earth observations as part of the indicators.

Break

Session 6: The GEO Initiative on SDGs

15h00 – 17h00

Session Introduction and GEO Initiative Lawrence Friedl, *USA/NASA*

Discussion Group Confabs

Plenary Discussion: Report from groups, Decisions, & Recommendations to GEO Plenary

Background

This session will focus on the planned GEO Initiative for the SDGs. As the side event's primary purpose is for the attendees to identify major elements of the dedicated GEO Initiative GI-18, this Session 6 is the period for the attendees to synthesize the information from the side event to scope and refine the GEO Initiative.

Following a brief description of the initiative, the session will mostly be held in small discussion groups. Drawing on information and lessons from the speakers earlier in the day, the small groups will discuss key aspects about the initiative to address options, decisions and actions. Following the discussions, the attendees will meet again in plenary to review the input from each discussion group to reach consensus on recommendations to take to the GEO Plenary about the initiative.

The small groups will focus on one of the following four topics: Roles for GEO; Scope and Pace of the GEO Initiative; Partnership Approach; and Engagement with National Statistical Practices. All the groups will identify major elements of GI-18 and initial projects and activities to pursue in 2016, particularly on how to make the integration of Earth observations in the SDG process happen.

Session 7: Side Event Resolutions

17h00 – 17h40

Recap of the Side Event and Next Steps

Background

This session provides a wrap-up period for the Side Event. The session will provide a summary of the major items addressed during the sessions, including highlights from the speakers. This session will also summarize the major findings and decisions and provide the attendees with information on what activities are planned in the near-term, including the upcoming GEO Work Programme.

Adjourn

17h40