2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Overview of Side Event at GEO-XII Plenary on November 9, 2015

Follow-up and Opportunities

**GEO XII Side Event on SDGs**

This GEO Side Event on the SDGs aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the GEO Community about the significance of and opportunity for Earth observations in the 2030 Agenda and the SDG process.

One of the expected outcomes was also to refine the GEO Initiative on SDGs (GI-18) and identify recommendations to bring to Plenary on GEO’s contributions to the SDG process.

All material from GEO-XII side event are posted at:

<http://www.earthobservations.org/me_sevent.php?seid=439>

The session was well attended and produced fruitful discussions.

At the GEO Plenary Session, an intervention from Australia followed by a supporting intervention by CEOS on the importance of SDGs (aatached). As indicated in the interventions, the two main observations arising from the side event are:

* The strong alignment of many SDGs with GEOs SBAs, and the clear opportunity this presents for GEO to actively contribute to the SDG measurement and monitoring effort.
* The critical need for the GEO community to work with national statistical offices at a national level to build awareness of the power of earth observations and geospatial information to transform traditional statistical methods for measuring many of the SDG areas.

**Follow up Activities**

Since the November side event, the same coalition of the willing kept working on moving this file forward.

The group is supported by Bob Samors from GEO SEC and composed of:

* UN Organizations: Gregory Scott (UN-GGIM); Rifat Hossain (WHO); Luc St-Pierre (UNOOSA)
* Australia: Arnold Dekker(CSIRO); Jonathon Ross (CEOS, GA)
* Canada: Marie-Josée Bourassa (CEOS, CSA); Rick Lawford
* Ecuador: Mónica Martínez Menduiño
* Japan : Chu Isida (CEOS, JAXA); Toshio Koike (U of Tokyo)
* Mexico: Jose Eduardo de la Torre Barcena (INEGI)
* US: Lawrence Friedl (NASA, USGEO); Bob Chen (Uof Columbia); John Matuszak (State Dept); William Sonntag (EPA)

It is expected that a representative from Denmark will soon join the group.

The ongoing activities are:

1. UNSD has created a new SDG/Geospatial Information Forum as a permanent fixture of the annual meeting of the UN Statistical Commission. The first forum will be held on 7 March and will be organized by UNSD and GEO. An early version of the description of the event prepared by Greg Scott is attached.

The event will be sponsored by Mexico and Denmark.

The detailed program and list of speakers are under development. It is expected that it will unfold in three parts:

* Official opening with high level messages from Mexico and Denmark permanent representatives
* Capabilities, integration. Means and mechanisms including with big data
* Specific tangible examples. The objective is to demonstrate what is needed and how the geospatial data can be integrated with other statistics data. It needs to demonstrate what it means and that it can be done.

1. GEO Initiative

It is still under development but we can foresee that it will consist of two parts:

* Awareness and capacity building
* Pilot project – under definition for 2016

GEO Sec still has not been able to identify a lead for the initiative. This poses an important risk for the conduct of the initiative and the possibility of delivering something tangible in 2016.

The latest on Indicators:

The pdf file dated November 2, 2015 is the latest draft of the SDG indicators as agreed at the last IAEG meeting in Bangkok at the end of October. The indicators in Green are generally agreed; those in Grey are still under consideration. Some version of this document will be forwarded to the Statistical Commission to be finalized in March.

**Opportunities for CEOS**

The first step is to identify a few examples where space-based could make a useful contribution to measuring progress on specific indicators. We already have the water one presented by Arnold but we need to identify a few more. The list of green indicators will be of great help. It would be good to collaborate with others (OOSA, GGIM, ..) to build stronger examples.

Following that, we can influence the pilot project(s) that will be developed until GI-18 and maybe participate in the March briefing in NY.

GEO is still looking for volunteers to lead GI-18. I would rather see users stand up and CEOS stay in a supporting and collaborative role, unless someone from CEOS is ready to step up and invest the resources.

The connections with the national statistical divisions also remain a priority and a challenge.

The April 2016 SIT would be a good opportunity to hold a side event.