

Availability of Fundamental Geospatial Datasets for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa

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Abstract:

The United Nations General Assembly (GA) resolution on 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in its paragraph 48, states that quality, accessible, timely and reliable, disaggregated data for the measurement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are needed. It is also stated, in paragraph 76 of the same resolution, that required data must be country-owned, ensuring that ‘no one is left behind’¹.

Geospatial information has been shown to be critical data required to measure and monitor the Indicators of the SDGs, in paragraph 76 of the GA resolution¹. The current status of the availability of the required geospatial information of African countries is determined through an inventory of such geospatial information as a baseline.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in its effort to strengthen the capacities of African member States, promotes and supports countries in building their fundamental datasets in order to make geospatial information readily available and easily accessible. In this regard, ECA conducted a study in the identification of fundamental geospatial datasets that are relevant for the SDGs. This study is published, in November 2020, as technical document titled: ‘Geospatial Data Taxonomy for the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa’². The study identified geospatial datasets that are important for the SDGs indicators. The taxonomy organized geospatial information into geospatial feature classes based on the global fundamental geospatial data themes.

ECA continues this work and recently undertook an assessment on availability of geospatial datasets in African countries for monitoring and reporting the SDGs. From the inventory of the availability of geospatial information for the SDGs only five of the countries that responded completed the information required for all of the geospatial features. Six countries have more than 50% of the feature classes fully available. This indicates a low level of availability of geospatial information across African countries.

This inventory of available geospatial information provides the current status of the geospatial information in the countries and will assist them to determine the gaps. The gap identified in the availability of the required geospatial information will assist countries in developing and prioritizing their programmes of geospatial information management.

This presentation will discuss in detail the result of the assessment on availability of geospatial datasets in African countries.

References:

1. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Resolution of the Seventieth session of the United Nations General Assembly, 21 October 2015
2. Geospatial Data Taxonomy for the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, November 2020