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OPERATIONALIZING CLIMATE SCIENCE FOR HEALTHCARE IN AFRICA

Abstract

Climate science is an aspect of meteorology that has gained relevance as sound evidence is sought to guide decision and policy making in combating the effects of the earth's climate on health and livelihood. This paper contains an analysis of the activities and stakeholder communities involved in making the advantages of earth observation applications become of operational benefit to healthcare needs. The experiences gathered from activities around parts of Africa are used as examples. This is dependent on satellite earth observation data, augmenting other data sources, and being used in statistical modelling of diseases and other hazardous events. Predictive information must then be communicated to communities to help them adapt. This process comes under the influence of varied factors and influences that challenge its success. It is however crucial for climate adaptation and disaster mitigation.

An analysis of the involved scientific, technical and social cultures and how their integration can be optimized to yield operational benefits for healthcare is described. Some key questions were addressed in the paper: What is needed to make satellite data of operational benefit in healthcare down to the lowest community level? What has being achieved using satellite imagery for climate adaptation in healthcare? What roles do integrated space applications play in this process? What is the future outlook for this field of space applications in global health security? These discussions draw on lessons learned from ongoing activities and collaborations in Africa and make recommendations on improving the relevance of space technologies to human needs.