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50 years of Earth observation: The contribution to sustainable development goals and plans for the future (6)

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EARTH OBSERVATION USES TO SUPPORT COUNTRIES IN ACHIEVING THE GLOBAL GOALS

Abstract

The comprehensive nature of the United Nations (UN) Agenda 2030 requires all countries and the global community to catalyze a broad range of stakeholders – governments, civil society, academia, charitable foundations, development agencies, private sector - in tracking, monitoring, and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also presents a unique opportunity to apply Earth Observations (EO) and geospatial information in support of efforts to promote more sustainable, risk-informed, and resilient societies. This paper reviews examples of how EO experts are working with end-users to apply EO data in support of global environmental and societal policy across a wide span of domains, including land degradation, food security, wetland preservation, water quality, and human settlements, among others. The discussion illustrates good practice examples, including use cases where countries and other stakeholders are applying EO in SDG analysis, monitoring, and reporting on local to global scale. The paper also reflects on efforts by the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) Earth Observations for Sustainable Development Goals (EO4SDG) Initiative to demonstrate practical and innovative EO uses for the SDGs, build capacity, promote data access, and support country adoption, in hopes of enabling the widespread, sustained use of EO to inform decisions and actions.