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REPORT ON AFRICAN GEOSPATIAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROGRESS

Abstract

Despite the growth of the African economy and the technological advances observed in recent decades, many socio-economic challenges still need to be overcome to improve human development. Geospatial technologies are critical to harnessing the innovations of the Fourth Industrial Revolution for the public good and socio-economic progress. Policymakers and decision-makers use geospatial information and accurate data provided by satellites to understand trends, assess needs, and design sustainable development policies and programs in everyone's best interest. The African Union, involving over 55 Member States, has developed the Agenda 2063 with socio-economic development goals. The role of geospatial technologies is recognized by the African Union in supporting the achievement of these socio-economic goals. The efforts of the African Union, the United Nations, and the European Union in terms of infrastructure deployment and market adoption have resulted in the launch of the GMES Africa operational services, Africa's GIS Initiative, as well as the United Nations Programme on Space Applications. These services serve an increasing number of users in many market application areas: from transportation-related services and consumer solutions to professional applications. With the global COVID-19 crisis threatening the African economy and the livelihoods of its citizens, governments and industry leaders are called upon to use all available data to respond, recover and advance efforts that have been established to achieve global development priorities. This is why the democratization of data is so important, especially in countries whose economies suffer from a lack of relevant and available data. From this perspective, geospatial data can be one of the most valuable assets that Africa can count on. Geospatial technologies provide vast amounts of satellite data to monitor and manage Earth's natural resources, as well as the human and climate impact on them. Big data is essential for building resilient systems. Thus, when barriers to access and use are removed, the potential of the continent to respond to critical development priorities and challenges will be unleashed. This report examines how geospatial technologies are supporting the achievement of the socio-economic goals of the Agenda 2063 of the African Union.