

Item 5 “Space for sustainable development: technology and its applications, including the United Nations Programme on Space Applications”_ESCAP

ESCAP facilitated countries to leverage digital innovations to achieve sustainable development and implement the Jakarta Ministerial Declaration on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, adopted at the 4th Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in October 2022.

Through enhanced South-South and Triangular cooperation, nationally demanded training and tailored operational tool development were delivered to customize and apply geospatial tools and systems for resilient agriculture, air pollution, urban planning, flood and wildfire hotspots mapping, and drought management. For example, to help countries manage the impacts of the ongoing El Niño, the ESCAP secretariat and the regional service nodes of the Regional Drought Mechanism in China, India, and Thailand delivered a webinar series for Southeast Asian countries. Nearly 150 participants from 23 countries attended the webinar and shared their experiences and operational tools in utilizing satellite-based data solutions for providing early warning on the adverse impacts of El Niño on rainfall, water resources, and crops.

The Jakarta Ministerial Declaration conveys a solid commitment to increase the involvement of young people and other major stakeholders in the space sector to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs. In 2023, ESCAP secretariat provided sponsorship for young professionals from five developing countries to attend Participants of the 27th Post Graduate Course on Remote Sensing & GIS at the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific.

In addition, the secretariat organized the Youth Forum on Innovative Geospatial Information Applications in Chiang Rai, Thailand, this week, in collaboration with the Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency of Thailand, Multi-GNSS Asia under the Cabinet Office of Japan, Aerospace Information Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, National Agency for Research and Innovation of Indonesia, United Nations Satellite Centre, and ASEAN Research and Training Center for Space Technology and Applications. The Forum focuses on supporting young professionals in integrating geospatial information applications into actions to achieve the SDGs by leveraging data from satellites and ground sources for resilient agriculture, disaster risk reduction, and innovative technologies for the future.

In December 2023, the secretariat collaborated with the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health and started the online course entitled "Introduction to Geospatial Data Analysis with ChatGPT and Google Earth Engine", attracting over 2,000 enrolments from 110 countries. Among these, 30% of participants are female, with over 70% from Asia and the Pacific. The average age of participants is 32 years, indicating its popularity among young professionals and researchers.

Geospatial innovations, driven mainly by emerging digital technologies and increased availability of big Earth data as analysis-ready data through data cubes, present new opportunities for countries to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. To date, nearly 3,500 good practices in six thematic areas (i.e. disaster risk reduction, natural resources management, social development, sustainable energy, climate change and connectivity) which are collected from over 30 countries and territories captured in the ESCAP Geospatial Good Practices Database and Dashboard, an online regional knowledge-sharing platform, demonstrate how space applications, geospatial information, and digital innovations are already being used in countries to support implementation of the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018-2030).