



# AfricaGIS 2017

## CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

Geospatial and Statistical information imperatives for the *'Africa We Want'*

DAY  
TWO

20-24 November 2017



## GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION ESSENTIAL FOR AFRICA'S PLANNERS AND DECISION MAKERS, SAYS ETHIOPIAN MINISTER

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Printed by the ECA Printing and Publishing Unit.  
ISO 14001:2004 Certified

Africa has taken significant steps to devise and implement an inclusive, accelerated and sustainable development strategy following the launch of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 'Africa We Want' declaration, says Mr. Getachew Adem, Ethiopian State Minister and Deputy Commissioner of National Planning Commission.

Speaking at the ongoing AfricaGIS 2017 conference in Addis Ababa, Mr. Adem said the theme of the conference; Geospatial and Statistical Information Imperatives for the 'Africa We Want' was befitting to the African Union's vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa driven by its own citizens.

"Amongst the innovative and multifaceted approaches required for the successful implementation of the strategy to sustain our Africa rising, it is evident to all of us here that the

availability of up to date, accurate and authoritative geographically referenced geospatial information is imperative," he said.

He said the conference and exhibition create a unique opportunity for African geospatial community to exchange ideas, share knowledge and experience on applications and lessons learnt, as well as innovations and advancements in the field of geospatial information technology.

"I do hope that this continental geospatial information conference will, among other things, provide insights on measures for promoting future development of geospatial application in Africa and support the strategic use of geographic information," the Minister said.

Mr. Adem shared with the delegates what Ethiopia is doing in line with the AU Agenda 2063 and the UN's Agenda 2030 for sustainable development using geospatial information, adding his country was now widely recognized to be one of the fastest growing non-oil and non-mineral economies in the world.

"This rapid and sustained economic growth has been broad-based, pro-poor and inclusive as it has been accompanied by significant and accelerated poverty reduction," he said.

Conference outcomes, Mr. Adem said, are vital to drive Africa's development agenda.



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## AFRICA URGED TO USE INFORMATION EFFICIENTLY FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT AGENDAS - By Sandra Nyaira

Africa needs to use information efficiently if it is to successfully implement the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the African Union's Agenda 2063, says Sultan Mohammed Alya, Director General of the Ethiopian Mapping Agency.

In opening remarks to the AfricaGIS 2017 conference that opened in Addis Ababa Tuesday, Mr. Alya said the theme of the conference; Geospatial and Statistical Information Imperatives for the Africa We Want, highlights the important and critical role information plays towards the sustainable development endeavours of the continent.

It is my hope that we will have fruitful and productive deliberations over the next four days as this conference is expected to identify key lessons and put forward recommendations on how geospatial and statistical information would influence and affect transformation processes in our continent and in our countries," he said.

Mr. Alya said according to estimates, more than 80 percent of all the data and information used in all forms of planning and decision-making were related to geographic space, typically involving geo-references locations or positional data generally referred to as geospatial information.

Hence it is evident to all of us here that the availability of up to date, accurate and authoritative geospatial information is imperative for sustainable and accelerated development efforts of our rising Africa," he said.

EIS-Africa's Sives Govender said the key objective of the AfricaGIS conference was capacity building, networking and business development.

Today, we are faced with many challenges, where understanding the real value of our continent's natural resource assets, will drive how our leaders make their development planning deci-

sions. We need to integrate geospatial and statistical data; we need to integrate remotely sensed data with a rich in-situ sensor network and best understand Africa's assets for Africa's development and growth," said Mr. Govender.

"I challenge all of you, to use your experience as Geospatial professionals to look at innovative ways to meet these socio-economic and development challenges and ultimately improve the lives all Africa's people."

He said this conference had brought together the world best geospatial companies, academics and professionals to Africa and "we also get to show-off the amazing talent that this continent has to offer", adding the conference was also about learning, teaching, collaborating and sharing, but most importantly, networking and incubating future partnerships.

AU's Tidiane Ouattara, a space-science expert, said the conference is critical for Africa's development. "We need to always bring African professionals who are in the geospatial and statistics fields to discuss the way for Africa to get where we want to be. The political agenda is clear and we scientists have to get there too," said Mr. Ouattara.

The conference is being attended by the world best geospatial companies, academics, representatives from member States and professionals to discuss how geospatial and statistical information are imperatives from Africa's growth and development.

UN-GGIM: Africa, EIS-Africa, the Ethiopian Mapping Agency, AfricGEOSS, Group on Earth Observations, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the ECA organized the conference.

### GEO-INFORMATION: A KEY PILLAR FOR MODERN-DAY DECISION MAKERS, SAYS WILBER OTTICHILO

One of the primary roles of every politician is to make decisions that benefit those who put them into office. Realizing most politicians in his country did not use geo-information to make decisions, the Governor of Vihiga County in Kenya, Mr. Wilber Ottichilo, an expert in the field, decided to use geo-information that saw him land the position of authority he finds himself in today.

On Tuesday he shared, through a keynote presentation, with delegates attending the ongoing AfricaGIS 2017 conference just how geospatial information and statistics were crucial for him to win the elections and how he continues to use geo-information in making decisions in his county.

Geospatial information contributes to decisions by both societal decision-makers and individuals, said Mr. Ottichilo, adding he has become a champion for the use of geospatial and statistical information as imperatives for development all counties in Kenya through the Council of Governors (CoG). "And I can champion this on the broader continent too as we work hard for the Afri-

ca We Want," he said, adding geospatial data and analysis were vitally important for development purposes and efficient management.

Concerned about energy, education, health, infrastructure and transport, agriculture, environment and natural resources, commerce and industry challenges in his country, he says he has successfully used his County Development Information System (CDIS) framework to find solutions to address these issues.

He gave examples of how he has used geo-information technologies in decision-making and planning. In his Emuhaya Constituency and Vihiga County, he launched GIS / ICT Centres that are helping him deliver.

His wish is to make Vihiga a model county in Kenya in the application of geospatial technologies in the implementation of sustainable development goals and be a GI Champion on the continent.

## ON THE SIDELINES By Andre Nonguierma



*Delegates engage each other on the sidelines of AfricaGIS 2017*

The AfricaGIS 2017 conference continued in Addis Ababa Wednesday with participants continuing to discuss the importance of geospatial and statistical information on the continent in the various breakaway sessions they had.

The third session of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information for Africa (UN-GGIM: Africa) opened with Oliver Chinganya, Director of the ECA's African Centre for Statistics, reminding delegates that addressing geospatial information coordination challenges in Africa required the promotion of advancement in science and technology supported and backed by political commitment.

The main aim of the meeting is to review progress achieved on the implementation of UN-GGIM in Africa. Delegates are sharing knowledge and best practices on the development of geospatial information on the continent; raising awareness on benefits to be derived through utilization of geospatial information for sustainable development; looking at policies, measures and steps that African countries could take to ensure a successful implementation of global geospatial information management in the region.

The meeting officially launched the strategic document on Geospatial information for sustainable development in Africa (GI4SD), an African action plan on global geospatial information management, making Africa the first region all over to developed such a plan.

Through the Action Plan, Member States have agreed on a basic set of concepts, practices, standards and guidelines for the development and management of geospatial information in Africa.

Meeting outcomes will contribute to consolidate the

consensus and drive political will in leveraging the enabling capabilities of geospatial information technology to meet Africa's development agenda and in support of emerging global challenges.

The UN-GGIM Regional Committee discussed the issue of integrating geospatial and statistical information. This will benefit Member States in the provision of services that are of the greatest value to users, with a particular focus on Agenda 2030 on SDGs, Africa's Agenda 2063, the 2020 Round of Census and national regional priorities.

There was also an Expert Group Meeting on Geospatial Standards for Africa which reviewed and discussed a position paper prepared by ECA on geospatial standards for Africa.

Participants concluded that there were many standards and specifications, enforced by implementation in software that should be adopted and endorsed at national and global level. Equally, construction of special standards, formats, should be minimized in order to capitalize on global investment in common standards.

The African Geodetic Reference Frame (AFREF) Workshop on Building a Harmonized Geodetic Infrastructures for Africa continued with participants discussing an action plan for revamping the AFREF Programme coordinating arrangement, operational protocol, resources mobilization and global partnership for implementation; share their experiences and knowledge on modernization of geodetic networks and discuss the establishment and maintenance of modern geodetic networks for Africa.

# ONE ON ONE By Ernest Cho Chi



DEREK CLARKE, Chief Director, National Geo-Spatial Information, South Africa

Today we've been engaged with the UN-GGIM Africa meeting, which is very important in Africa's context because of the fact that we need to be working together as African countries in fostering national initiatives for the management of geospatial information, particularly in the contexts of the SDGs and the African Agenda 2063.

Unfortunately, only 13 countries were represented at today's meeting and this is not a good thing. Some countries are consistently absent from these meetings. That's a problem because the SDGs are about 'leaving no one behind.' So if we can't get these countries in a meeting like this it would be extremely difficult to engage with them, know what issues are going on in their countries and find ways of cooperating with them to provide advisory services or capacity building.

I'm hoping, therefore, that by the end of this conference many of those attending would have understood that we do have a lot in common and should try to work together. 'Leaving no one behind' means going together and not some people trying to drag others along.



SIVES GOVENDER, Executive Director, EIS Africa

At EIS Africa, we promote the use of geospatial science and technology for sustainable development. So it's not about technology for technology sake. It's about solving problems in Africa and improving people's life.

Broadly speaking, my role is to bring the best from around the world so that we can all see what's going on elsewhere in terms of technology but more importantly showcase Africa's talents the rest of the world. You know there's the misconception that Africa is data-poor, technology-poor and science-poor. But, clearly, that's not true because what we have here are fantastic African experts geospatial experts.

Bringing these global technology experts to interact with each other helps build networks for collaboration between talents from Africa and other parts of the world. You know international organizations are often skeptical about who they are going to partner with, especially when there's funding involved. But here we have legitimate national and subregional entities. So this is about networking and business development.

## AROUND THE VENUE

