



Report on WSIS2021 Special Session

DRR and SDGs Information Deficits

-Disaster Risk Reduction Management and Sustainability Synergy-

virtual, 24 February 2021 at 12:00-13:00 CET
Presentations and session recording available from
<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2021/Agenda/Session/105>

Moderator/Convener Horst Kremers, CODATA-Germany, Berlin

This session is subsequent to our session in WSIS2020¹ where we talked about coherence and mutual synergies from holistic information management for the global programs and conventions of United Nations².

Comprehensive cross-organizational information management before, during and after crisis and disaster situations as well as in aspects of sustainable development is of core interest to Information Society.

Information management best practice methods support the principles of “critical thinking”, enabling extensive reporting, transparent analysis, compliance to regulations and other boundary conditions. Information control obligations include phases of retrace, audit, reexamination, analysis, avoidance of malpractice, and indications on weaknesses/vulnerabilities. Improving / Enabling just-in-time foresight, situation management and ex-post evaluation. Application of informatics state-of-the-art methods and technology that meet the demands of complex multi-actor and cross organizational information management is urgently required for organizationally as well as technically implementing treaties, frameworks and programs and for granting coherence in the required holistic way.

In all domains touching the aforementioned fields of actions, developments and improvements are reported but there are also large deficits in information management resulting in substantial drawbacks in goal-reaching.

In this session we want to indicate on selected action fields information management deficits and their potential avoidance to indicate on the importance of comprehensive information management and its effects in goal-reaching for UN Disaster Risk Reduction DRR and Sustainable Development Goals SDGs.

¹ <https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2020/Agenda/Session/140>

² Paper on Information Coherence and Synergies:

http://www.susgis.net/LNIS_9_Geoinformation_for_Sustainable_Development__Berlin_2020.pdf#page=93

Presentation of Prof. Liu Chuang (China):

Prof. Liu Chuang presents the current development and future plans in establishing a global repository for information supporting „**A New Mechanism for Poverty Free Geo-Ecosystem Protection and Sustainable Development**“. Currently, there are more than 800 datasets published, including more than 400,000 data files that were accessed by more than 60,000 IP from 97 countries and by more than 5M visitors.

Extensive metadata, dataset and data research and analysis papers are composites of the big data platform. Peer reviewed digital dataset publishing on global change studies is the key for quality data sharing and to assist users to understand how to make assessments and informed decisions upon these digital data.

Presentation of Dr. Rachida Houssa (Morocco)

Dr. Rachida Houssa draws attention to the consequences of information deficits in reaching goals in international agreements – here in the case of „**Protecting the Ocean through AMPs**“ (**Aires Marines Protégées – Oceans Protected Zones**) based on the 2018 Convention on Biodiversity and Protocols, the Global Biodiversity Forum GBF recommends to protect at least 30% of marine and coastal areas by 2030. These goals are also supported by information from the UN „Decade of Ocean Science“³ in order to amplify and improve knowledge about our Oceans, their health and conservation.

The sea is essential to feed humanity, hence the importance of preserving biological resources through sustainable exploitation.

However, seas and oceans are exposed to overexploitation of biological and mineral resources, the effects of climate change, environmental degradation and many other effects threatening sustainable development.

Presentation of Dr. Kassim Mwitondi

The work of Dr. Kassim Mwitondi is devoted to „**Filling Information Gaps in Big Data Modelling of Sustainable Development Goals**“. Each SDG can be viewed as a source of Big Data, but success in reaching the defined goals will depend on our levels of information availability, open sharing of data, interdisciplinary skills development, resources and mandatory implementation of FAIR principles (Free, Accessible, Interoperable, and Re-Usable)⁴ in all information management tasks.

While it is possible to capture key metrics on indicators and their dynamics in time, triggers of their spatio-temporal variations remain buried in data. Identifying them, in an interdisciplinary context, is a major step towards attaining the 2030 Agenda⁵.

Big Data methods and technologies offer challenges, give opportunities and they relate to influential policies for improving decision making at institutional, national, regional and global levels.

³ <https://www.oceandecade.org/>

⁴ <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>

⁵ https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

Presentation of Dr. Daisy Selematsela

Dr. Daisy Selematsela highlighted the importance of **Knowledge Management with special reference to SDG #3 Education and SDG #4 Health** support. Adequate complex information and knowledge management as expected by information society in first priority needs to clarify responsibility and accountability on the complex and inter-related issues of availability, accessibility, acceptability, affordability and adaptability of knowledge resources according to the right to education as depicted in General Comment #13 of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UN CESCR)⁶.

There are several key open questions that need to be answered:

- How do we organize Knowledge Practitioners to better support the knowledge economy for sustainable development?
- How do we demonstrate the data driven / knowledge management value through impact and usage measurements?
- How do we promote good data driven knowledge management practices?
- How do we capture & communicate the value of artificial intelligence and data driven practices within the Sustainable Development Goals?

Presentation of Giacomo Mazzone

Giacomo Mazzone reports on a **UNDRR – WBU (World Broadcasting Unions) project to train media professionals in DRR Disaster Risk reduction**⁷. The project consists of 40 modules in online sessions

Block 1	Introduction to the course. Why and Who.
Block 2	The basics of DRR - 8 Modules
Block 3	The basics about early warning systems - 6 Modules
Block 4	Early warning systems : tools and protocols - 20 Modules
Block 5	News and current affairs - 7 Modules
Block 6	Documentaries, Educational Programs and Planning - 5 Modules

Eligible for experts' support are the LDC Least Developed Countries more exposed to the risk of climate change. The project reaches out across four world regions, each one with its own DRR special focus: Central and Latin America (hurricanes), Asia (tsunami), Africa (floods) and Arab Region (droughts).

The project aims at supporting 100 media organizations and Media Experts / Journalists served in the first stage of the project are from Anguilla, Belize, Barbados, Bangladesh, Niger, Benin, and Tunisia.

⁶ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/cescr/pages/cescrindex.aspx>

⁷ Statement of Commitment by World Broadcasting Unions implementation of the Global Media For DRR Project
<https://worldbroadcastingunions.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/WBU-STATEMENT-OF-COMMITMENT-TO-UNDRR-GLOBAL-MEDIA-FOR-DRR-10-May-2020-FINAL.pdf>

From the discussions with session attendees:

Prof. Milan Konecny (Masaryk University, Brno Czech Republic) indicated on the importance of Geoinformation as a basic asset for doing any DRR&SDG assessment and decision support. He especially refers to the work of UN GGIM (United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management)⁸ as the apex intergovernmental mechanism for making joint decisions and setting directions with regard to the production, availability and use of geospatial information within national, regional and global policy frameworks and to address global challenges regarding the use of geospatial information, including in the development agendas. Prof. Konecny stresses the importance of seeking synergy with large intercontinental projects like the “Digital Silk Road”⁹ and Sino-European Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency (SINCERE) project¹⁰. In these aspects he also draws attention to improvement and participation in DRR&SDG indicators definition.

Media / Journalists: There are expectations towards future involving media/journalists in DRR&SDG in an advanced way, not just for providing reports on meetings or publications. It is a special role of journalists to cooperate and discuss extensively with the stakeholder groups and mediate in the science/practitioners/citizens information, communication and knowledge generation.

IGF United Nations Internet Governance Forum: There is a proposal to install a best practice forum on the governance of environmental data¹¹. Governance of environmental data in United Nations sense is participative and all stakeholders groups have to be involved in a permanent strategies guidance process (including recursive assessment and adjusted steering as result of adaptive goal-reaching control mechanisms and audits).

The report released by the UN Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation¹² on “The Age of Digital Interdependence” needs to gain practical/operational importance and consideration in implementations on national and international levels.

Conclusions:

- This initiative on DRR&SDGs Information Deficits serves Information Society essential interest in all topic fields of Disaster Risk Reduction, Sustainable Development Goals and related United Nations Instruments and Programs.
- There is sparse (but growing) concern to indicate on what information is really missing. All types of information (not just the data tables) are under question and in many situations of DRR&SDGs not treated in a way that can be considered as adequate to current methods and technologies of applied Informatics, let alone adequate to the expectations of Information Society.
- The DRR and SDGs holistic and systemic approach broadens the view from “Resilience-as-a-service” to “whole-of-society mutual responsibility and action”. In consequence, synergy in governance of strategies, roadmaps and in technical terms can be reached.
- The current pandemic shows in a drastic way how massive the consequences of missing, sparse, false, incompatible information are influencing every detail in „real life“.

⁸ <https://ggim.un.org/>

⁹ <https://merics.org/de/analyse/digital-silk-road-development-issue>

¹⁰ <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/sincere/index.html>

¹¹ Proposal https://www.intgovforum.org/multilingual/filedepot_download/11160/2421

¹² Report of the UN Secretary-General’s High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation
<https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/DigitalCooperation-report-for%20web.pdf>