

Date

Tuesday 14th July 2009

Title of session

Workshop: Capacity Building

New pieces in the geography Jigsaw: are developing countries building the appropriate capacity?

Name of presenter/chair

Dr Chukwudozie Ezigbalike, Secretariat, African Centre for Statistics, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa - Chair

Dr Neil Stuart, Lecturer in Geography from the University of Edinburgh - Presenter

Name of rapporteurs

Jevon Snell & Gillian Horner

Neil discussed the findings of a recently published report, of which he was a contributing author, which looked at the potential opportunities for improving mapping infrastructure across Africa.

He explained that in the last decade there have been a variety of initiatives by developed countries which have aimed to build geo-information and skills within Africa.

Having described the methodology used in the survey, Dr Stuart went on to talk about the findings of the survey. The response rate to the survey was stated as being about 10%, which equalled about 60 responses.

The first findings highlighted were the key constraints identified by respondents in Africa in taking up and developing GI. A shortage of funding and a lack of buy-in from decision makers were the two most common cited factors. Dr Stuart also drew attention to testimony from GI practitioners in Africa that indicated there was a tendency for one person with a public sector organisation to see themselves and be seen as the only 'GI person' within that organisation, and the difficulties this poses.

Having discussed some other insights derived from the study, Neil stated that despite being slightly disappointed at responses received, one could summarise that there was a need for capacity building at both an individual and organisational level.

Summing up, the Chair noted that one issue with questionnaires in Africa relates to the internet. If a questionnaire is long, it may be difficult for practitioners in Africa to complete, given that access to the internet is primarily through internet café's which increases cost and reduces privacy when responding.

Questions/Comments	Answers
Muhammad Bashar Nuhu – Nigeria What efforts have been made to replicate the survey?	Dr Neil Stuart: responded that they had underestimated how hard it was to access practitioners. He also accepted there was unfortunately bias in the survey and that it would be good to apply it to a single country.