

Date

Tuesday 14th July 2009

Title of session

Workshop: Spatially Enabled Government Societies
Towards Guidelines for Africa

Name of presenter/chair

Magnús Guðmundsson, Managing Director, National Land Survey of Iceland - Chair
Dr Chukwudozie Ezigbalike, UN Economic Commission for Africa - Presenter

Name of rapporteurs

Gillian Horner & Peter Standen

The UN Economic Commission for Africa has been working towards an SDI since 2001, but is it working? In his presentation Dr Dozie Ezigbalike comments on the approaches used and how they could be improved.

- Creating an SDI has become an end in itself sometimes losing focus on the day to day activities of the practitioners.
- Financial resources are limited and priority is given to more pressing needs (Dams, Hospitals etc.) without realisation of how GI could help meet these needs.
- Policy members and the general public are unaware of the importance of GI.

An initial response to these problems was to organise committees with stakeholders to draft strategies but in many cases the committees met without obvious effect. Five huge metadata training workshops were held, but equipment and resources for training are limited and effects can be minimal as technology changes and people move jobs. Attempts to integrate NSDI (National Spatial Data Infrastructure) with NICI (National Information and Communications Infrastructure) were met with trepidation. From this, the UN Economic Commission for Africa has learnt that it is best to emphasise the benefits of spatial data in solving a particular user problem rather than focusing on the SDI per se. Once the need for spatial data has been established, the policies, standards etc. can follow.

Some analysis has taken place looking at spatial data use both in the health service and land administration, but this has still focused on the geospatial professionals. If spatial data is to be fully integrated into the decision making process the onus must shift from the user to the service provider. The geoinformation community must ensure that the relevant spatial information is easy to access and use.

Questions/Comments	Answers
Dave Watt - Defence Geographic Centre (DGC) UK Have you had any successes you could share with us?	Dr Chukwudozie Ezigbalike Work is still in progress, but we have had some success with pilot projects. We worked with people over three days to create a hypothetical database containing the spatial information needed to manage a Bird Flu Epidemic.