

The Role of Tomorrow's Technology in the SDGs



The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are considered an important compass for our professional sector. To create a better world by 2030, the geospatial sector can play an excellent role in providing the information and technology for managing, monitoring and planning global activities in the most optimal and sustainable way. Almost a dozen of the 17 goals can be related to our profession, according to Kees de Zeeuw from Kadaster International.

(By Kees de Zeeuw, Director, Kadaster International, The Netherlands)

Of course, I am preaching to the converted. And, to be honest, I think that even the World Hairdressing Federation could make a case for a good haircut and the right colour of your

hair being essential in achieving the SDGs. But therein also lies the power of the SDGs. They allow everybody to get involved and to make a valuable contribution.

I truly believe that geospatialists and geospecialists can make a difference. Our profession matters – but not with the state of play as I experience it today. With only 13 years still to go, our present practice, technology and knowledge is impressive, but not enough. The intelligence that geospatial information adds to our society and management systems still needs another push, another leap. In transportation, in creating smart cities and in taking climate change measures, for example, we need more geospatial intelligence than we have right now.

In the administration of land, too, more progress is necessary than we are making today – much more progress. If we truly want to register land rights for all by 2030, we are talking about billions of parcels that must be registered in areas where circumstances are still poor and where it is difficult to work. Tomorrow's technology is needed to ignite and accelerate the registration of land rights. This must be expressed in solutions we haven't thought of yet, at prices and costs that are way below the current levels.

Let me give you an example of what I've learned in Suriname (South America) recently. The country is large but has a low population density, with the majority of people living in the capital city, Paramaribo. The forested area is difficult to access but is of high value in terms of 'people, profit and planet'. Although the development of the cadastral system is being taken up professionally and ambitiously in Suriname, the present pace of work will not result in land rights for all and sustainable management of the land by 2030. Yes, satellite images are available that can accelerate the process of mapping and land management. But unfortunately the costs of these images – both purchase and handling – are still too high for them to be a real option for use by local governments in speeding things up. The same holds true for IT systems, mobile services and measurement devices.

By continuing geospatial development and innovation, we have to create better options, resulting in solutions that can create the speed, considerably reduce the cost and are of a quality that fits with the SDGs. So now, finish reading *GIM International* and then get back to work. Keep in mind that we need your contribution of tomorrow to achieve our global goals by 2030!