

US Ambassador Addresses GIS Conference



More than 200 attendees from the United Nations, academic fields, non-governmental organisations and the private sector participated in the GIS for the United Nations and the International Community Conference held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 3 to 5 April 2012, at the World Meteorological Organization headquarters. The conference opened with a keynote from Ambassador Betty E. King, the United States' permanent representative to the United Nations Offices in Geneva. Ambassador King spoke on the role of technology and information as a transformative tool empowering local actors to address global challenges and development opportunities.

"On behalf of the US government and President Obama, I applaud your use of technology in your work," stated Ambassador King. "The world's current resources are insufficient to address all the major global development and humanitarian crises that we face. Through the use of science and technology, including innovative uses of GIS applications, we can become more effective and efficient in this endeavor and stretch the power of limited resources."

Attendees participated in 10 sessions focused on advancing the use of GIS and spatial analysis for the missions that humanitarian and international agencies commonly undertake. A post conference workshop demonstrated how organisations can collaborate online to create and share hundreds of mission-focused maps using Esri's ArcGIS Online cloud solution.

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT) and Esri jointly organized the conference. Astrium, Esri Suisse SA, GeoEye, and TomTom sponsored the event.

The conference will be held next year and will include humanitarian and development senior executives, practitioners, researchers, non-profit consortia, and others.

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