Space+ for our Earth and Future

THE 4TH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON SPACE APPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Wednesday, 26 October 2022
09:00 -16:30 hours (Jakarta time)

ESCAP 75
MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

BRIN

UN conference explores new frontiers on space applications for sustainable development

Countries from across the Asia-Pacific region are gathered in Jakarta this week to assess the potential of innovative space applications to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and other development-related activities.

The Fourth Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, jointly organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Government of Indonesia, will meet on 26 October under the theme “Space+ for our Earth and Future.” The Conference is expected to adopt a ministerial declaration recognizing the importance of innovative space applications and deepening regional partnerships to support countries in their recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises.

The Conference will also discuss concrete, country-needs driven regional cooperation to support the implementation of the second phase of the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018-2030), which addresses 14 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

For more information and the full programme:

KEY MESSAGES & EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Ministers and Heads of Space Agencies meeting under the theme of Space+ for our Earth and Future committed to strengthen their collaboration for scaled-up contributions of space applications to sustainable development.

a) The Ministerial Conference is expected to conclude with the adoption of the Jakarta Ministerial Declaration on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific.

b) The Ministerial Conference is convened under the theme “Space+ for our Earth and future” to scale up space applications to advance sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. Space+ comprises four foundational elements:

- leveraging innovative digital applications;
- engaging end users, including the private sector and youth;
- managing data and information more effectively; and
- enhancing partnerships with national, regional and global stakeholders.

Taken together they transcend traditional approaches by promoting innovative applications of space technology and geospatial information in tandem with digital innovation, research, knowledge-sharing and capacity-building.

c) Regional cooperation is indispensable in meeting many of these emerging needs and demands. The demand for knowledge-sharing, technical support and expert training remains consistently high for many member countries to make geospatial information and space applications available, accessible, affordable, and actionable. China, Japan, India, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation are all active providers of data, expertise, capacity development and resources to other countries in the region. Thailand is a unique case as it is both a provider and a receiver.

d) The conference host, Indonesia, will be join the ranks of providers soon as it announced its support to three regional cooperation initiatives namely (i) virtual constellation of satellites for disaster risk management; (ii) rapid mapping of disaster hotspots through machine learning and digital innovation tools; and (iii) youth forum on Space+ for our Earth and future.

Ministers and Heads of space agencies appreciate the results delivered during the first phase of implementation of ESCAP's Plan of Action for Space Applications.

a) ESCAP-facilitated cooperation shows the tangible benefits of the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action on Space Applications for Sustainable Development (2018–2030). It enhanced the alignment between the demand for and supply of financial and technical contributions among ESCAP members and associate members. Put together, member States provided approximately $4 million in extrabudgetary funds to the ESCAP secretariat to increase capacities on innovative digital applications and integrated spatio-temporal data for monitoring progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals; build resilient agricultural practices by integrating geospatial information; improve land accounting and monitoring by integrating geospatial and statistical data; monitor air pollution; and build resilience to drought through drought information systems.

b) In addition to the financial contributions of member States, from 2018 to 2022, member States provided satellite images and service free of charge on request for an estimated value of $1 million to $1.2 million per year through the Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development (RESAP). Some member States also contributed technical expertise, services, data and analysis, and capacity development opportunities while others have made standing offers remote sensing applications for cadastral mapping, land and forest monitoring, fire and flood monitoring and subnational development.

c) The independent evaluation of the Phase I implementation of the Plan (2018-2022) finds that

- the design and implementation of the Plan of Action (Phase I) is highly relevant to the strategic development needs and priorities of the member States;
- the results achieved through the implementation of the Plan of Action and its interventions are tangible with definite scale-up potential;
- the Plan of Action served as a blueprint for accumulating and sharing knowledge on issues and building member States' capacity; and
- the capacity-building activities offered by the secretariat within each of the thematic areas of the Plan of Action proved to be a successful model for further replication to cover existing and potentially new areas (including resilience and recovery from the impacts of COVID-19).

d) The diversity of space applications for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific has increased since ESCAP first tracked them in 2019. This is a result of concerted efforts by Government and stakeholders to enhance integrated geospatial information applications to SDGs. Collectively, members and associate members reported carrying out 156 out of the 188 actions identified in the Plan of Action for Space Applications for Sustainable Development across six priority thematic areas.

e) Alongside well-established space applications in drought prediction and monitoring, we see emerging applications of space science and technology that improve the spatial mapping of poverty incidence; increase the availability and accessibility of air pollution data; accuracy and tracking of greenhouse gas emissions; and enable evidence-based accounting of land and other natural resources. In the ongoing effort to manage the COVID-19 pandemic, space applications proved useful in understanding, tracking, and targeting the response to the epidemiological aspect of the pandemic, as well as its socio-economic impacts.

a) One of the foundational elements of Space+ is engaging the youth of the region. ESCAP is committed to supporting this ambition and has been hosting youth-focused capacity building in space and geospatial information applications across the region.

b) In the Jakarta Ministerial Declaration (set to be adopted at the close of the Ministerial Conference), ESCAP commits to support national and international initiatives that inspire the interest of young people in space activities to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.