

Panel I: Harnessing Big Data on the Environment for Sustainable Development

Short description:

The Panel will engage formidable corporate and technological players, including start-ups in the information, telecommunications, and digital technology space to identify avenues for using big data and artificial intelligence to drive eco-innovative changes in various local and global supply chains.

Overview:

We are living in a new era with exponential increase in generation of data. It creates both an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity is to improve the level and quality of the decisions by basing them on evidences provided by the data, as well as using the data to verify whereas new policies are improving the situation. The challenge is to deal with this big data. This requires automated procedures for transforming data into relevant information as well as to generate new tools allowing disseminating this information to policy makers and other end-users.

Not a single country can claim having achieved sustainable development. Most developed countries are generating high pressure on natural resources through their consumption, while developing countries are struggling to bring the basic level to secure education, health and sanitation, air and water quality for their population. Achieving sustainable development requires a revolutionary change in the way we are dealing with development. This is needed given to limit our demand of natural resources to what is sustainable for our climate, biodiversity, and level of pollution, at the same time improve the living conditions to achieve an acceptable Human-well-being for all, leaving no-one behind, and doing this in the context of an increasing world population.

This triple challenge requires UN Environment, and the UN as a whole, to also make the necessary data revolution, which will allow to accompany this journey toward sustainability.

To help addressing this issue, UN Environment is aiming at developing the "World Environment Situation Room" (WESR) which is not only a new data platform, but also a new way of accessing data, via a worldwide partnership model with multiple data-centers. The WESR will help harnessing big data on the Environment for Sustainable Development, such as satellite imagery, geospatial data, observation, models and scenarios. As well as statistical data, reporting data and will help to access all documentation and reports produced by UN Environment.

**THINK
BEYON**

**LIVE
WITHIN**

Possible outcome/impact:

The implementation of the WESR needs to be done with internal support from the entire UN Environment, but also with a worldwide partnership model that connects various environmental data providers and users. This panel can help identifying pathway for a rapid and efficient development of WESR.

This can inform the Draft Ministerial Declaration for UNEA 4 and its vision: “Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production”. Among other things, ensuring the transparent and open access and use of environmental data, developing a global environmental data strategy, and, improving environmental monitoring systems.

Moderator:

- Pascal Peduzzi, Director of Global Resource Information Database (GRID) - Geneva

Panellists Invited:

1. Brian Sullivan, Deputy Director, Google Earth
2. Dr. Dongmyun Lee, President of Future platform Business Group, KT Corporation
3. Prof. Fang Chen / Prof. Guo Huadong, Institute of Remote Sensing and Digital Earth (RADI), Chinese Academy of Science
4. Derek Gliddon / Jane Glavan, Environment Agency Abu-Dhabi
5. Hugh Weldon, Evocco
6. Dr. Astrid-Christina Koch, Copernicus Programme, The European Space Agency (ESA)
7. Craig Hanson, Vice President for Food, Forest, Water and the Ocean, World Resources Institute
8. Mr. Matthew Pennells, Manager for Business Development for Digital Transformation, Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI)
9. Sarah Chandler, Senior Director, Operations and Environmental Initiatives, Apple
10. Ahmed Alhaddad, CEO, Swishhair Project Management Consultancy
11. Gerry Rasugu, Director, Sub-Saharan Africa Office, Global System for Mobile Communications (GSMA)

For more information on UN Environment’s Big Data initiative, please contact Pascal Peduzzi (pascal.peduzzi@un.org).