

ISDE DIGITAL EARTH INITIATIVE FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

28 October 2025



ISDE DECLARATION ON DIGITAL EARTH AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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Distinguished colleagues, Excellencies, and friends.

We meet at a moment that calls for both wisdom and courage.

Across the world, the Sustainable Development Goals stand as our collective promise, yet that promise is under strain. The complexity of climate, water, energy, food, and social systems now exceeds the capacity of any single nation or discipline to address alone.

The International Society for Digital Earth (ISDE) affirms that the tools of our age: data, models, computation, and imagination. These must serve a deeper purpose: to illuminate interconnection, reveal consequence, and support decisions worthy of our planet and its people.

Digital Earth is not a single platform, but a shared infrastructure of understanding through an evolving federation of systems that sense, simulate, and support life on Earth as one. It provides the *decision space* in which sustainable futures can be designed, tested, and agreed together.

OUR VISION

The Digital Earth Initiative for the Sustainable Development Goals seeks to turn insight into action. It will establish pilot Strategic Intelligence and Decision Theatres across key SDG domains of climate resilience, water security, food systems, energy transition, and sustainable cities.

In these Decision Theatres, data from satellites, sensors, and citizens will merge with models, narratives, and ethical evaluation to illuminate choices and trade-offs.

They will operate as transparent, evidence-based decision cycles while maintaining indicator baselines, running scenario-to-policy sprints, and publishing open dashboards and policy briefs.

Through these pilots, Digital Earth will demonstrate that the SDGs are not static targets, but living relationships among nature, technology, cultures and societies. These are relationships that can be continuously measured, learned from, and improved.

OUR COMMITMENTS

The International Society for Digital Earth commits to mobilising its global network of scientists, institutions, and practitioners to make this initiative an operational reality.

We will:

- Build shared and interoperable resources with open indicator libraries, simulation environments, scenario catalogues, and governance toolkits.
- Embed ethical transparency and decision provenance, ensuring that models remain explainable, data trustworthy, and consent respected.
- Convene Decision Theatre Collaboratories that unite governments, research institutes, and civil society in participatory governance and cross-border cooperation.
- Align our work with UN and UNESCO programmes, the Group on Earth Observations, and the International Science Council, advancing a common agenda for digital cooperation and planetary stewardship.

OUR CALL FOR ACTION

We now call upon governments, international organisations, research institutions, industry partners, and communities to join us to co-develop and host Decision Theatre pilots that demonstrate how Digital Earth can directly accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

By working together, we can turn data into dialogue, and dialogue into decision.

Each theatre, each pilot, each open dataset becomes part of a greater planetary knowledge infrastructure that is a civic fabric through which humanity can learn to live within planetary boundaries while expanding opportunity and wellbeing.

A SHARED FUTURE

As affirmed in the *1999 and 2009 Beijing Declarations on Digital Earth*, Digital Earth has a strategic and sustainable role in addressing the major challenges facing humanity : resource depletion, food and water insecurity, energy transition, environmental degradation, disaster resilience, and climate change.

Those declarations described Digital Earth as “*a global strategic contributor to scientific and technological development and a catalyst in finding solutions to international scientific and societal issues.*”

The ISDE continues this mission by strengthening cooperation among governments, international organisations, scientific institutions, and citizens, and advancing Digital Earth as an essential framework for sustainable development.

Sustainability is also cultural, grounded in the knowledge, values, and traditions that shape how communities understand and care for their world. Digital Earth should therefore promote cultural diversity and Indigenous knowledge as integral to global understanding and shared responsibility.

Digital Earth brings together science, policy, and society to turn data into decisions and knowledge into public value. Through cooperation and open exchange, it supports wiser resource management, stronger resilience, and long-term planning for future generations.

Our shared purpose is to realise Digital Earth as a practical framework for collective intelligence, cultural understanding, and sustainable governance.