



Expert Group Meeting: Population Dynamics and Climate Change

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Linking satellite and population data for climate change analysis

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Abstract

This paper draws largely on paper 3, in session 4. Global climate change requires that we know who lives where – that is, to know enough about the locations and characteristics of the people who will be facing climate change for the most vulnerable among them to be identified and given priority. Planning for improvements in urban drainage or sanitation requires both spatial and population data; so does projecting where migration will swell the populations of towns and cities that lie in the path of risk; and national economic strategists need to be made aware of the implications of locating special economic zones and promoting coastal development in what will become environmentally risky sites. Yet, until recently the data needed to create a global map of populations and risks had not been drawn together, and even then, these current efforts do not include climate forecasts as none are available at a scale meaningful for urban analysis.

Advances have been made on all fronts: satellite data are increasingly available and some are rendered in formats easily accessible to the non-specialist, demographic data are increasingly spatially rendered, and environmental data are increasingly being collected or produced with interdisciplinary inquiry in mind. This presentation will highlight the areas where recent progress has been made (and where more is needed) at global and local scales in terms of data availability and methods for data integration noting issues of data resolution, scale, extent, and format as well challenges arising from current practices. Current shortcomings in and recommendations for demographic, administrative and environmental urban data (satellite and otherwise) will be discussed.