

The countries where significant progress has been made are: Belize, Bahamas, Brazil, Ecuador, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Saint Lucia and the United States of America.

As we can see, the progress made over one year remains limited. The main reason for this is that we are still in the process of making the SALB project reflect the present which is very time consuming. It is estimated that once this first step will have been reached, the yearly update of the NMA contact information, of the historic changes as well as the map will not take more than 6 months for the 35 countries located in the Americas.

In terms of cost, it is estimated that US\$60,000 was necessary in bring the project to the current status for the Americas, and that a further US\$25,000 will be needed in order to make the SALB data set reflect the present situation.

Nevertheless, it is also estimated that once this is done, the yearly update of the database for the Americas would only cost US\$15,000.

Conclusion

The experience and lessons shared in this paper demonstrate that it is possible to put a collaborative process in place for the generation of a globally consistent georeferenced database of the administrative boundaries.

It also demonstrates that it is possible to make the data set publicly accessible, a key element in ensuring wide usage and consequently possible improvement of data integration among the users.

The return on investment once the process has reached the phase of the yearly update is important (reduction of the duplication of efforts, of the costs,...), and therefore justifies the use of resources and effort which were necessary at the beginning of the process. This type of data set will improve data analysis capacities, since the international community will be using information provided by the country itself. It will also increase the interoperability of the data collected at the sub-national level by different UN agencies, as it allows the data for each country to be integrated into the regional picture in a seamless way.

This project also demonstrates that the participation of the National Mapping Agencies is crucial in order to insure the validity of the information and data provided to the users, and that this participation is possible.

The questions that we can therefore legitimately ask are why did we not start this process earlier, and also why is it not already in place for other layers?

The most important part of the answer is the difficulty that institutions, such as the UN agencies, have in committing resources at the beginning of this type of process. The SALB project would never have taken off if the World Health Organization and the

United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIPS) had not provided the necessary resources at the inception. It was only after the project has reached a certain level of maturity, that it was possible to find other sources of funding within and outside the UN.

In addition to that, the notion of data preparedness did only appear within the UN these past years. Before that, the system tended to be mostly responsive, looking for data only at the time of a humanitarian crisis. This situation has now changed and many UN agencies, such as WHO or OCHA, are now integrating a preparedness component in their activity.

It is therefore hoped that this project will serve as an example for the development of other globally consistent and publicly available layers to form the data set necessary for the proper functioning of a global SDI at the service of the population. As there are challenges that we will have to face in the future, this process should start as soon as possible and must include a coordination system to ensure the compatibility between these layers.

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- the WHO Office of the Legal Counsel for their help regarding the representation of disputed areas and borders in question and other related issues
- the International Steering Committee for Global Mapping (ISCGM) for its support in contacting countries,

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Annex 1 - Resolution accepted during the 8th UNRCC-A Conference, New York July 2005

Resolution VI -Global mapping and Second Administrative Level Boundaries projects

The Conference,

Recognizing that the availability of fundamental framework data set, such as national administrative divisions, are crucial for the analysis and management of socio-economic phenomena,

1. **Welcomes** the efforts of the Global Mapping project and those of the UN Geographic Information Working Group (UNGIWG) Second Administrative Level Boundaries project (SALB) in the generation of global seamless data sets of importance for the Americas;
2. **Recommends** that Member States, particularly through their National Mapping Agencies (NMAs) and notably with the help of the Permanent Committee on Spatial Data Infrastructure for the Americas (PC-IDEA) and the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH), support and participate actively in the SALB and Global Mapping projects by providing the necessary data and information they require;
3. **Further recommends** member states in the Americas take full advantage of participating in the Global Mapping project for capacity building to help establish National and Regional Spatial Data Infrastructures in the region."