



**ICSU**

International Council for Science

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Workshop Report on Socioeconomic Data  
in Relation to the Integrated Global  
Observing Strategy Partnership  
(IGOS-P)

# Meeting details

- Date: September 20, 2004
- Location: CIESIN, Columbia University
- Chair: Roberta Balstad, CIESIN
- ICSU representative: Leah Goldfarb,  
Science Officer for Environment and  
Sustainable Development

# Meeting details

- Purpose: Address the terms of reference approved at the IGOS-P-11 meeting in 2003
  - What is meant by socioeconomic data?
  - How are these data collected?
  - Why does IGOS need to integrate socioeconomic data?
  - What are the highest priorities for this integration?
  - What are the difficulties in linking socioeconomic and biogeophysical datasets?
  - What are the steps necessary to achieve this integration?

# Meeting Context

- Capacity to observe and quantify physical environment has increased dramatically.
- Realization that human activities have dramatically altered the natural environment.
- Awareness of the need for integrated, coupled human/geophysical models at local, regional and global scales.

# Meeting Context

- Examples of integrated approaches:
  - Millenium Assessment:
    - evaluated direct and indirect human-induced and natural drivers of change
  - ICSU strategic Priority Area Assessments
    - 2003: Examined ICSU environmental initiatives and their relation to sustainable development
    - 2004: Focused on Scientific Data and Information

# What are socioeconomic data?

- Cover a wide variety of themes (health, governance, poverty), content (political, demographic, economic), format (spatial, tabular, textual) and scales (individual, household, local, regional, global).
- Have similarities to biogeophysical data (monitoring, collection, modeling requirements) but significant differences as well (confidentiality, aggregation/disaggregation).

# Challenges to integration

- Infrastructure and funding insufficient
- Inadequate institutional support
- Issue of resolution, confidentiality, standardization and dissemination

# Benefits of integration

- Reducing loss of life and poverty from natural and human-induced hazards
- Understanding, assessing, predicting, mitigating and adapting to climate variability and change
- Improving resource management and environmental protection.
- Supporting sustainable agriculture and development.



# Meeting Recommendations

1. IGOS should appoint social scientists to work with existing themes and nominate individuals to develop new themes.
2. IGOS Themes should begin by incorporating already available socioeconomic data, ie. population distribution and wealth/poverty statistics.
3. The IGOS Partnership should enlarge its membership to include organizations such as IHDP, WHO, World Bank...

## Recommendations (cont'd)

4. IGOS should work closely with GEO, national governments and multilateral organizations.
5. Governments should commit to full open and equitable access to data.
6. Data should be collected in a manner that allows its use for scientific purposes while maintaining appropriate confidentiality.

# Recommendations (cont'd)

7. Governments should emphasize long-term financial support for data collection and capacity building.
8. Priorities need to be set regarding data collection, comparability, dissemination and access.
9. Socioeconomic specialists need to document strengths and weaknesses of datasets and develop comprehensive metadata and catalogues.

# Final Remarks

- Capacity building is central to implementing these recommendations.
- Interdisciplinary education and research are key to the sustainability of this effort.