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Realisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in geoscientific projects

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The global conservation and sustainable use of georesources is one basis for sustainable development worldwide: without mineral resources, no technology; without energy resources, no energy; without soil, no food; without water, no life. In many countries around the world – not only in Africa – poor management of georesources (e.g. water, soil, energy resources and mineral resources) leads to manifold social and ecological problems. Because of the continuous population growth and the accompanied growth of consumption and production, people are increasingly using georesources. As a result, for example, water and soil are overused and are not available for major parts of the population, especially the poorest ones

Societies expect answers especially from governmental institutions on how to solve these undesirable developments. Particularly, since it is assumed that many of these challenges will accumulate in future. Key questions in this context are: How can drinking water be provided in sufficient quantity and quality? How can mineral resources be used in an economically, ecologically and socially acceptable way? How can regions with extended risks be protected against disasters?

In this context the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR) is executing several projects of technical cooperation in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The projects are targeted to generate politically relevant impacts on development, especially in support of translating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into practice.

Answers to these questions are not only generated in concrete projects on the spot, but also in high-ranking bodies like the United Nations. Last year the international community decided on a seminal agenda in development policy, which ties up to the Millennium Development Goals (phased out in 2015) and the Rio Climate Conference from 2012, but is reaching far beyond. In the framework of the United Nations the third International Conference on Financing for Development was held in July 2015 in Addis Ababa; in September 2015 the United Nations adopted the post-2015 development agenda; and in December 2015 the United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Paris agreed on far reaching climate policy goals. These processes are in form and content interlinked. If they succeed, they will have impact on geosciences as well. So far, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) already constituted a groundbreaking compass for geoscientific projects with a development political context.

