

Paper Number: 932

Towards Increased Engagement of Geoscientists in Global Development Frameworks

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Geoscientists have the potential to make a significant contribution to tackling some of the major socio-environmental challenges of today, including extreme poverty, sustainable development, disaster risk reduction and climate change. This presentation explores the importance and social responsibility of geoscientists to engage in such work, understanding and supporting key global development frameworks.

During 2015 the international community agreed three important agendas for change. Each framework relates to the intersection of environmental processes with human activities and behaviours, addressing significant challenges affecting society. The frameworks are (i) the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs, Figure 1), (ii) the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and (iii) an agreement on climate change at the Paris Conference of the Parties – COP21. The SDGs, for example, include 17 goals aiming to end extreme poverty, fight inequality and ensure environmental sustainability. Specific goals relate to clean water and sanitation, clean and affordable energy, the development of resilient infrastructure, and the need for climate action.



Figure 1: Sustainable Development Goals, agreed by the international community in September 2015.

Given this context, here (i) a synthesis is presented of the role of geoscience in successfully achieving these major global development frameworks, (ii) the ethical and social understanding that underpins effective engagement by geoscientists in the science-policy-practice interface is discussed, and (iii) this required ethical understanding is placed into the context of geoscience training and development needs. This approach demonstrates the importance of geoscientists from across all sectors and specialisms, engaging in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of global development frameworks. It highlights the importance of a greater awareness and consideration of our ethical responsibilities in order to better support efforts to tackle major societal challenges.

