

US, Mexico sign deal on sharing satellite data directly

November 13 2015, by Peter Orsi



U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell shakes hands with Eduardo Sojo, president of INEGI, Mexico's National Institute of Statistics and Geography, after signing an agreement to share satellite data between the U.S. and Mexico, at the 2015 Ministerial Summit of the Group on Earth Observations, in Mexico City, Friday, Nov. 13, 2015. The U.S. and Mexico have signed a deal for Mexico to receive land-surface imagery and data directly from a U.S.-operated satellite. Officials say that will allow the country to better track environmental change, as well as improve monitoring and preparation for phenomena such as hurricanes. (AP Photo/Rebecca Blackwell)

The United States and Mexico signed a deal Friday for Mexico to capture and process land-surface imagery and data directly from a U.S.-operated satellite.

The agreement means Mexico will be able to get the raw [information](#) from the Landsat 8 satellite immediately instead of waiting for filtered [data](#) to be released by U.S. authorities.

Mexico joins about a half dozen other countries that are already downloading such data directly from U.S. satellites, U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell said.

Officials said that will yield benefits in areas including agriculture, geology, forestry, mapping and [climate change](#) research. It will also help Mexico improve monitoring of hurricanes such as last month's Patricia, a monster Category 5 storm that fortunately avoided making a direct blow on major population centers.

The agreement "acknowledges Mexico's capability and hunger, really, for this real-time data to address the challenges and the opportunities that they have on the ground," Jewell told The Associated Press. "If you look at Hurricane Patricia ... that's the kind of information that Mexico could have been using in real time to help it prepare."

"And it lessens its dependence on the United States for interpretation of that data and enables it to directly integrate it with the data that it has, which can provide it more useful information than perhaps what they could do without that direct download," she added.

Jewell and Eduardo Sojo, president of Mexico's National Institute of Statistics and Geography, signed the agreement in the Mexican capital on the sidelines of the 2015 Ministerial Summit of the Group on Earth Observations.



Panel members participate in the opening session of the 2015 Ministerial Summit of the Group on Earth Observations, in Mexico City, Friday, Nov. 13, 2015. The U.S. and Mexico have signed a deal for Mexico to receive land-surface imagery and data directly from a U.S.-operated satellite. Seated from left, are, China's Vice Minister of Science and Technology Jianlin Cao; European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation Carlos Moedas; South Africa's Minister of Science and Technology Naledi Pandor; U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell; Mexico's Environment Minister Rafael Pacchiano; Eduardo Sojo, president of INEGI, Mexico's National Institute of Statistics and Geography; Maria Eugenia Casar, executive director of AMEXCID, the Mexican agency of international cooperation for development; Enrique Cabrero, general director of CONACYT, the national science and technology council; Barbara Ryan, director of the Group on Earth Observations Secretariat. (AP Photo/Rebecca Blackwell)

Sojo said Mexico will receive downloads from Landsat 8 at a station

operated by the country's space agency in the Caribbean coastal city of Chetumal, on the southeastern border with Belize.

"We also, and this is extraordinarily important, will receive the historical information," Sojo said. "So we will be able to construct models that let us precisely anticipate disasters and model the impact that climate change is having on issues such as flooding, on issues such as agriculture, in the different areas where we use satellite images."

He added that Mexico plans to share the data to federal, state and local government entities as well as researchers and universities.



U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell puts on translation earpieces during the opening session of the 2015 Ministerial Summit of the Group on Earth Observations, in Mexico City, Friday, Nov. 13, 2015. The U.S. and Mexico have signed a deal for Mexico to receive land-surface imagery and data directly from a U.S.-operated satellite. Officials say that will allow the country to better track

environmental change, as well as improve monitoring and preparation for phenomena such as hurricanes. (AP Photo/Rebecca Blackwell)



U.S. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, right, claps alongside South Africa's Minister of Science and Technology Naledi Pandor, center, and European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation Carlos Moedas, at the opening session of the 2015 Ministerial Summit of the Group on Earth Observations, in Mexico City, Friday, Nov. 13, 2015. The U.S. and Mexico have signed a deal for Mexico to receive land-surface imagery and data directly from a U.S.-operated satellite. Officials say that will allow the country to better track environmental change, as well as improve monitoring and preparation for phenomena such as hurricanes.(AP Photo/Rebecca Blackwell)

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