

## **Maps in today's world**

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Maps play a unique and important role in our society. Maps are the interface to our geospatial data. They are serious in helping to find our way, in providing insight in patterns and trends, and support decision making. They are fun too, they can be beautiful, and they let us dream about far away and exotic places.

However, the objective of cartographers to design and create maps that are 'authoritative', and tell a story. This is a challenge. In the past they were expected to do this job based on scarce data. Today, the problem reversed. No longer they have to work with a data deficit, but with a tremendous surplus, caused by for instance (human) sensors used everywhere to monitor the status of our planet. Instead of filling gaps to present the essence of the message, the essence has to be retrieved and summarized interactively.

In our international community the International Cartographic Association has created an environment where knowledge about maps, cartography and GIScience can be exchanged to make sure the above challenges can be met. It offers its expertise and knowledge of technical developments to other organizations via events, meetings, workshops, and publications. With its Commissions and Working Groups it concentrates its activities on a wide range of topics that nearly cover the whole discipline.

During the last ICA General Assembly, a new working group 'Cartography for Global Geographic Information Management' was established which aims to demonstrate how maps can support reaching the new Sustainable Development Goals by showing good cartographic practice.