



CARIGEO & NERGIST Lunch & Learn Webinar

Concept Note

'Geospatial Intelligence in Action: Jamaica's Response to Hurricane Melissa'

Hosted under the CARIGEO umbrella in coordination with Jamaica's National Emergency Response GIS Team (NERGIST)

Target Significance: GIS Day 2025

Date: Wednesday, 19th November 2025

Format: Webinar (60 - 90 minutes)

Time: 12:00 - 1:30 pm JA/EST

Platform: WebEx Platform

1. Background & Rationale

Hurricane Melissa delivered historic rainfall and widespread destruction across Jamaica, particularly in the western parishes, when it recently impacted Jamaica late October 2025. Many communities suffered significant unrecognizable devastation, many also became cut off, major roadways were blocked, significant coastal changes occurred and critical infrastructure crippled. The human impact has been profound, including the loss of life and human suffering being experienced.

As national teams were mobilized, one of the strongest enablers of coordinated action has been geospatial information. Emergency responders, analysts, drone pilots, international organizations, private sector entities, and volunteers have worked side-by-side to produce real-time mapping, conduct rapid damage assessments, visualize flood extents, and guide humanitarian logistics. Powered by Jamaica's National Emergency Response GIS Team



(NERGIST), the geospatial community activated quickly and collaboratively - demonstrating what integrated geospatial governance looks like in a crisis.

International GIS Day offers the perfect moment to bring this work to the regional stage, highlighting the professionals who made it possible, and showing how geospatial information strategically supports recovery and resilience.

2. Event Objective

To host a compelling lunch and learn GIS Day webinar event that:

- Demonstrates the real, operational role of geospatial information in Jamaica’s Hurricane Melissa response
- Celebrates collaboration between national agencies, CARIGEO partners, and the global geospatial community
- Educates the public and policymakers on how spatial tools inform response, recovery, and long-term resilience
- Provides a platform for field responders, analysts, and leaders to share insights
- Inspires Caribbean-wide investment in geospatial systems and capability

3. WebEx Platform:

The webinar will be hosted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC/CEPAL) using the WebEx platform.

Topic: CARIGEO GIS Day 2025 Webinar: Geospatial Intelligence in Action: Jamaica’s Response to Hurricane Melissa

Date: 19 November 2025

Time: 12:00 – 1:30 p. m. (JA/EST)

Meeting Number: 2305 788 4001

Meeting Password: UmhdkMjw743

Join via PC: <https://eclac.webex.com/eclac-sp/j.php?MTID=m6a39c5b0bb3f212ddef38b3bb1faeb5a>

4. Expected Outcomes

- A shared national narrative on the value of geospatial information in disaster response
- Greater visibility for CARIGEO and NERGIST
- Public appreciation for the scientists, analysts, pilots, and responders behind the maps
- Strengthened momentum for geospatial investment across sectors
- Inspiration for youth and the broader community to pursue geospatial careers

5. Event Format

The event will anchor around a **Mini-Keynote** (three tightly integrated segments) followed by a **high-level panel discussion** during a 60 – 90 mins webinar.

Agenda

Part 1: Welcome & Opening Remarks (3 - 4 minutes)

Delivered by: Simone Lloyd, GISP, *Caribbean Vocal*, *CARIGEO Chair* and *NERGIST Coordinator*

- Background and Context of Jamaica’s observance of Geography Awareness Month and GIS Day
- The purpose of GIS Day in a disaster year
- Context-setting on Hurricane Melissa’s impact and the urgency of geospatial action

Part 2: Mini-Keynote - Geospatial Intelligence in Action (12 - 15 minutes)

A short, powerful keynote with three dynamic segments, tag-teamed by three presenters.

Segment A: Seeing the Storm: Geospatial Situational Awareness

Presenter: Alicia Edwards, *Principal Director, National Spatial Data Management Branch, Ministry of Economic Growth & Infrastructure Development, Jamaica*

How Jamaica leveraged multi-source geospatial data in the earliest hours and days:

- Satellite imagery (optical + SAR) for flood detection, change detection, and inaccessible areas
- Rapid mapping support from international partners
- National dashboards and coordination tools
- The role of open data and volunteered geographic information

Purpose: Show how space-based and near-real-time information shaped early understanding.

Segment B: Eyes in the Sky: Jamaica's Drone Mapping Operations

Presenter: Dr. Valrie Grant, *CEO, Jamaica Flying Labs*

Highlighting the national drone response coordinated by **Jamaica Flying Labs**, in collaboration with **NERGIST** and the **JCAA**:

- Drone deployment to heavily impacted and cut-off communities
- Flight planning, risk assessment, and operational workflows
- Outputs: orthomosaics, 3D models, flood outlines, road accessibility analysis
- Supporting agencies & partners (WeRobotics, Flying Labs Network, Humanitarian Open Street Map (HOT), Skydio, Wingtra, Esri, etc.)

Purpose: Show the value of drone data and the power of partnerships.

Segment C: From Response to Recovery: Data-Driven Rebuilding

Presenter: Nadine Brown, *Director, Sustainable Development, Planning Institute of Jamaica*

How geospatial information is informing next steps in Jamaica's recovery:

- What is the DALA Methodology ?

- Damage and Loss Assessment process
- Damage Classification
- Sector Prioritization
- Next Steps after DALA Completion

Purpose: Communicate that geospatial data is integral in the process of assessing damage and loss after a disaster event and thus forms the foundation for resilient development.

Part 3: Panel Discussion (20 - 25 minutes)

Why Geospatial Data Matters: Lessons from the Melissa Response

Moderator: Dr. Valrie Grant, *CEO, Jamaica Flying Labs*

Panelists:

- **Simone Lloyd, GISP** - *NERGIST Coordinator, National Spatial Data Management Branch, Ministry of Economic Growth & Infrastructure Development, Jamaica*
- **Ronald Jackson** - *Head, Disaster Risk Reduction & Recovery for Building Resilience, Crisis Bureau, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*
- **Nadine Brown** - *Director, Sustainable Development, Planning Institute of Jamaica (PIOJ)*
- **Matthew Webster** - *Head of Geospatial Technologies, Spatial Innovision Ltd.*

Discussion Themes:

- How spatial data improved coordination and safety
- Investing in geospatial capacity: people, systems, partnerships
- Vision for future Caribbean disaster-response geospatial readiness

Part 4: Q&A Session (10 minutes)

Part 5: Vote of Thanks & Closing Remarks (2 minutes)



Organizers:

The Caribbean Geospatial Development Initiative (CARIGEO) Steering Committee of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management Americas Regional Committee (UN-GGIM: Americas), in collaboration with Jamaica's National Emergency Response GIS Team (NERGIST), with technical support from the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (*UNECLAC/CEPAL Headquarters, Santiago de Chile*).

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