



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
2 July 2012

Original: English

Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management

Second session

New York, 13-15 August 2012

Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

Strategic consideration of future trends in geospatial information management: five- to ten-year vision

Future trends in geospatial information management

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

This document contains the report of the working group established to consider technological and substantive advances in geospatial and interrelated information infrastructures and to provide a strategic vision to address emerging trends over the next 5 to 10 years.¹ The report describes the process by which the working group was formed and the mechanism of deliberation. A background paper entitled “Future trends in geospatial information management: five- to ten-year vision” provides a detailed analysis of the main themes and trends identified by the working group. The seven broad themes are as follows:

- (a) Future direction of data creation, maintenance and management;
- (b) Uses of geospatial data;
- (c) Trends in technology (including future delivery mechanisms for geospatial data);
- (d) Legal and policy developments;
- (e) Skills requirements and training mechanisms;
- (f) Future role of national geospatial information authorities;
- (g) Role of the private and voluntary sectors.

The report aims to provide important technical background to guide the future work programme of the Committee of Experts and invites the Committee to express its views and to discuss the future trends in geospatial information management and their relevance to the work programme of the Committee.

* E/C.20/2012/1.

¹ The full report is available in the language of submission only from http://ggim.un.org/ggim_committee.html.

I. Introduction

1. At the first session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, the topic of “strategic considerations of technological and substantive advances in geospatial and interrelated information infrastructure” was extensively discussed. The Committee recognized that there was a need to document the emerging trends in the geospatial information world over the next 5 to 10 years. Such trends would help guide the work programme and frame the technical discussion of the GGIM Committee.

2. The Committee established a working group to document the future trends and development in geospatial information management for the Committee’s consideration at its second session. In particular, the Committee was interested in how these developments will contribute to the local, national and global strategic agendas of economic growth, social cohesion and wellbeing, environmental sustainability, disaster management, public safety and good governance.

3. The present report summarizes the process by which a working group was formed and the mechanism of deliberation. A background paper “Future Trends in Geospatial Information Management: the Five to Ten Year Vision” provides a detailed analysis of the main themes and trends identified by the working group members. The Committee is requested to express its views and discuss the future trends in geospatial information management highlighted in the background paper. Points for discussion are provided in paragraph 8.

II. Activities of the Visioning Group on Future Trends in Geospatial Information Management

4. At the conclusion of the first session of the Committee of Experts, the co-chairs of the Committee wrote to a number of experts across different aspects of the geospatial community in early December 2011 seeking assistance in providing input. A short note from the experts was requested.

5. Inputs were sought from a) data collection experts including those in remote sensing, image analysis, crowd sourcing, geodetics, National Geospatial Information Authorities, and surveying; b) users involved in open data, applications development, mobile and web usage, visualization, decision support, infrastructure, and disaster management; and c) technology leaders involved in geospatial software, open source software, database processing, sensor technology, and general computing.

6. Twenty nine written submissions were received from experts and country representatives by February 2012. These submissions were then summarized by the working group into seven broad themes covering major aspects of the geospatial world as follows:

- (a) Future direction of data creation, maintenance and management;
- (b) Uses of geospatial data;
- (c) Trends in technology (including future delivery mechanisms for geospatial data);

- (d) Legal and policy developments;
- (e) Skills requirements and training mechanisms;
- (f) The future role of the National Geospatial Information Authorities; and
- (g) The role of the private sector and voluntary sector.

7. As many of the government and private sector contributors, and other interested stakeholders, were attending the Geospatial World Forum in Amsterdam in April 2012, an informal workshop based on the initial inputs was organized to further debate the emerging trends. A summary document covering the main themes and trends identified in the responses was presented and discussed. At the same time, the summary document was circulated to all Member States and international organizations for global consultation. Outputs from the workshop and global consultation were used to further develop the background paper by the working group.

III. Points for discussion

8. The Committee may wish to:

- (a) Take note of the work done by the working group on future trends in geospatial information management;**
- (b) Consider the trends detailed in the background paper provided by the working group;**
- (c) Provide guidance on areas that require further discussion and attention.**