



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
2 July 2012

Original: English

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## Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management

### Second session

New York, 13-15 August 2012

Item 8 of the provisional agenda\*

### Study on the status of mapping in the world

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### Report of the Secretary-General

#### Summary

This present paper summarizes a preliminary progress report<sup>1</sup> of the study on the status of mapping in the world, conducted by the United Nations pursuant to resolution 3 of the ninth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas, held in New York in 2009. The survey-based study was carried out with the support of the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing and involved all national geospatial information authorities in the world. The report sets out the main content of the questionnaire, the status of the responses and the timeline for the completion of data analysis and dissemination. The information collected will eventually be used to develop country profiles, good practices and lessons learned in the dissemination and use of geospatial data. The Committee is invited to take note of the report and to express its views on the study and on possible options for reporting on the status of mapping in the world.

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\* E/C.20/2012/1.

<sup>1</sup> The report is available in the language of submission only from [http://ggim.un.org/ggim\\_committee.html](http://ggim.un.org/ggim_committee.html).

## I. Introduction

1. In the past, the UN Secretariat had undertaken several surveys on the status of world topographic mapping (1968, 1974, 1980, 1987) and on the status of world cadastral mapping (1980, 1987). The results of these surveys up to 1987 were published in volumes of the *World Cartography*, a UN publication, with the last volume XX published in 1990 (ST/TCD/14). The UN Cartographic Conferences have subsequently passed a number of resolutions to update this effort within existing resources<sup>2</sup>.
2. In pursuance of resolution 3/IX of the ninth United Nations Regional Cartographic Conference for the Americas<sup>3</sup>, held in 2009 in New York, tasking the United Nations to prepare a study on the status of mapping in the world, a survey-based study has been carried out, involving all official national geospatial information authorities in the world. The International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS) offered its technical support to the GGIM Secretariat, for the conduct of this survey and the related study.
3. The report provides an overview on the content of the questionnaire, the status of the responses and the proposed timeline of the completion of data analysis and dissemination. The report concludes with an invitation to the Committee to express its views on the usefulness of this study and the possible actions ahead.

## II. Design of the questionnaire

4. The questionnaire was designed to collect geospatial data at country level, taking into account the recent developments in digital mapping and remote sensing, to capture baseline global metrics on the status of mapping in the world. In addition to the background information on the national geospatial information authority, the content of the questionnaire is composed of 27 questions covering four parts on: national topographic mapping coverage (7 questions); national imagery acquisition (7 questions); national surveying and cadastral coverage (7 questions); and organizational/institutional arrangements (6 questions). (See the questionnaire attached to the ISPRS background paper).
5. The questionnaire is intended to provide an overview and take stock of the current status of mapping in the world, without going into detail about all the aspects of mapping, aerial and satellite imagery, surveying and cadastre, and institutional arrangements at national level.

## III. Status of the responses

6. The questionnaire was prepared and sent out to all the national geospatial information authorities on 27 April 2012. The original questionnaire was in English, accompanied by versions in French, Russian and Spanish, to support its use by a wider technical audience. As of the writing of this report in mid-June, the GGIM Secretariat has received about 50 responses. At this point in time an intensive process of follow-up is being undertaken with the support from the regional permanent committees in order to encourage additional responses from the countries.
7. The International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS) has initiated the analysis of the responses to the questionnaire and will submit a more detailed progress report on the preliminary results and findings to the Committee in the form of a technical background document. ISPRS will also suggest a timeline for the completion of the data analysis and dissemination.

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<sup>2</sup> For example, The tenth UNRCC-AP, held in Bangkok in 1983, has recommended periodic reviews of the world cartographic status and the eleventh UNRCC-AP, also held in Bangkok in 1987, recommended to collect and publish data at regular intervals on the status of world mapping.

<sup>3</sup> “*Recommends* that the United Nations conduct, within available resources, a new study of the status of mapping by country and region throughout the world. The study should take into consideration official national mapping agencies, other institutions, and the private sector, including both the status of technological and legal issues pertaining to geospatial data” (See Report of the Conference, E/CONF.99/3).

8. The information collected will eventually be used to develop country profiles and to identify good practices and lessons learned in the dissemination and use of geospatial data.

#### **IV. Points for discussion and decision**

9. The Committee may wish to:

- (a) Express its views on this study and provide inputs and advice regarding the finalization of the analysis and the subsequent dissemination of the results;

- (b) Discuss the usefulness of this type of survey in general and provide guidance regarding possible future surveys, which could be conducted periodically by the GGIM Secretariat as part of the GGIM knowledge base.