



**OPENING REMARKS
BY**

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**ON
SECOND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE OF
EXPERTS ON GLOBAL GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

New York, 13 August 2012

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates and Observers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to join you on the occasion of the second session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM).

Thank you for taking the time out of your summer schedules to participate in this important meeting.

The area of Global Geospatial Information Management is very new for the United Nations family. It was only one year ago that the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) took the historic decision to create a UN Committee of Experts.

This decision comes at a time when few new bodies are being created within the United Nations system. It also reflects ECOSOC's vision that building effective geospatial infrastructures and promoting greater use of geospatial information, are part of a new frontier in harnessing science and technology for advancing sustainable development.

Clearly, this new committee can play an important role in sharing best practices among Member States and key stakeholders. Indeed, it can also help advance international cooperation in geospatial information. Making accurate and authoritative geospatial information readily available – in support of development efforts – must be the starting point of this collaborative effort.

Your meeting here today provides an opportunity to build on the outcomes of the first global debate, held last year in Seoul, Republic of Korea. Let me reiterate our thanks to the Government of the Republic of Korea for hosting the First Global Forum on GGIM, as well the Inaugural Session of the Committee.

The global geospatial information management issues were also discussed extensively in the Hangzhou Forum on UN Global Geospatial Information Management, organized in China, in May 2012. I would also like to take this opportunity to express the United Nations appreciation to the Chinese government for

the support to UN initiatives in GGIM. These events demonstrate the commitment from Member States in support of the GGIM process.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the last decade, new technologies have transformed the availability and accessibility of geospatial information and its potential uses – both in the private sphere, as well as at the policy level.

The amount of geospatial data in our world has been exploding. Understanding and analyzing it has become a key driver of competition. This is underpinning new waves of productivity growth, innovation and services.

The rise of multimedia and internet-based location services provides the public with new possibilities of geospatial information. As its dissemination via the internet has increased exponentially, so have many web-based applications and tools.

Greater technical capabilities are accompanied by many benefits. But make no mistake - they also bring greater responsibilities. In this regard, coordination and cooperation can lead to more effective national strategies and capacities, especially in the context of sustainable development.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20, held last June in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, marked a new milestone. Rio + 20 launched a forward-looking blueprint for international cooperation that fully integrates the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Rio+20 also recognized that solid geospatial information is crucial for both sustainable development and humanitarian assistance. It provided a clear mandate for the future work of the UN Committee of Experts on GGIM. This high-level consensus provides critical momentum for this second session of the UN Committee of Experts on GGIM.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You have on your agenda, important strategic issues concerning geospatial information management. Among these include:

- a statement of ethics for the geospatial community;
- an inventory of major issues to meet the global challenges;
- improving global geodetic positioning;
- the implications of the outcomes of Rio+20, as well as
- developing a global map for sustainable development.

These are very important topics that address the challenges at national, regional as well as global levels.

I wish you a most productive meeting. I expect there will be interesting and lively exchanges, and that you would also strengthen the ties among your community.

Thank you.
