



UN-GGIM: Americas Convenes First Session 24-25 September, 2014, Mexico City, Mexico

The United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas (**UN-GGIM: Americas**) under the leadership of Rolando Ocampo, Vice President of the Mexican Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) successfully staged the first formal session of the regional body, from 24 to 25 September 2014 in Mexico City, Mexico. The session was held in collaboration and in parallel with the Latin America Geospatial Forum, which is staged annually by Geospatial Media and Communications.

This session brought together a total of 58 persons from 32 countries of the Americas. Representatives from Spain and France also attended and shared their experiences. The following seven regional and international bodies also participated:- they were the Association of Caribbean States, URISA Caribbean Chapter, the Caribbean Disaster and Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), GeoSUR, The Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PIAGH), SIRGAS and OGC, whose presence largely affirmed their commitment to support the ensuing project and programmes of UN-GGIM: Americas. This was the largest meeting of the regional body, as the previous regional body, PC-IDEA had a membership of 24 countries as compared to the current membership of 38, an addition of 14 Caribbean Countries.

The meeting was formally opened by the chairman and he gave his annual report on UN-GGIM: Americas work and achievements. This was followed by a key note address from Dr. Antonio Arozarena Villar, of the National Geographic Institute of Spain. He spoke on national institutional arrangements in geospatial information production. A major achievement of the session was the preparation and signing off, on work plans for UN-GGIM: Americas five working groups, the Standards and Technical Specifications led by Mexico, the Geo-data Collection and Management led by Colombia, the Access and Use of GI in Disaster Reduction and Climate Change, led by El Salvador, the Promotion and Evaluation of SDI, led by Chile and the Regional Cooperation and Collaboration led by Mexico. The Caribbean project is a work item of this working group.

Another major agenda item was advancing the work plan for the working group on Regional Cooperation and Collaboration project, on strengthening the spatial data infrastructure (SDI) in the Caribbean. Three key presentations were delivered, each followed by very vibrant and productive discussions. The first presentation featured SIRGAS's work and



proposal for working with the Caribbean, the other was on the findings of a GI assessment questionnaire circulated to the 18 Caribbean countries. The areas covered were proposals for the preparation of a digital map of the Caribbean, capacity building, geodetic work, and the creation of a disaster management application. The final presentation addressed the disaster management component of the project. This section of the meeting ended with the signing of the “Consensus UN-GGIM: Americas –Regional Cooperation and Coordination Group” by all Caribbean states present. The declaration outlined the decisions and actions regarding the action plan for the Caribbean SDI project. From all indicators the meeting was a success as the objectives were achieved and there were many positive feedback and commendations from the participants.



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