



## UN-GGIM REGIONAL COMMITTEES

### The release of the first Action Plan on Geospatial Information for Sustainable Development in Africa

[The Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa \(UN-GGIM: Africa\) held its Third Plenary Meeting](#) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 22 to 23 November 2017. Over 50 participants, including delegates from 14 of 54 African countries, and observers from international organizations attended. The meeting was convened concurrently with AfricaGIS 2017, with both events being hosted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). Prior to the plenary meeting, two expert group meetings were organized: one on Geospatial Data Standards, to review best practices, case studies, and the implementation of international standards; and the other on the African Geodetic Reference Frame (AFREF), to review the progress made on programme implementation at national levels, and to develop an action plan for revamping the project coordinating arrangement, operational protocol, resources mobilization and global partnership.



Sultan Mohammed (left), UN-GGIM: Africa Chair and Director General, Ethiopian Geospatial Information Agency, and Andre Nonguierma (right), Chief GISS Section, UNECA with the Action Plan on Geospatial Information for Sustainable Development in Africa

During the meeting, UN-GGIM: Africa launched the continental action plan on geospatial information management, entitled *Geospatial information for sustainable development in Africa (GI4SD)*; published by UNECA. The Action Plan conceptualizes the overarching principle of holistic geospatial governance that strengthens the significance of geospatial information for sustainable development goals in Africa. It outlines the essential actions with related responsibilities, timescales and costs that will steer the future implementation of the initiative in Africa. Through the Action Plan, Member States have agreed on a basic set of concepts, practices, standards and guidelines for the development and management of geospatial information in Africa.

In acknowledging receipt of the document, the Chair of the Executive Bureau of UN-GGIM: Africa, Mr. Sultan Mohammed, encouraged Member States to take full ownership of the document. He further noted that "...developing the Action Plan is commendable but it must not end there, it must be implemented." Africa is the first of the UN-GGIM regional committees to have developed an Action Plan on UN-GGIM. The Final version of the Action Plan is available in French and English:

- English: [www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/PublicationFiles/un-ggim\\_-\\_geospatial\\_information\\_for\\_sustainable\\_development\\_in\\_africa-20171115.pdf](http://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/PublicationFiles/un-ggim_-_geospatial_information_for_sustainable_development_in_africa-20171115.pdf)



- French: [www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/PublicationFiles/geospatial\\_information\\_for\\_sustainable\\_development\\_in\\_africa\\_fre-20171115.pdf](http://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/PublicationFiles/geospatial_information_for_sustainable_development_in_africa_fre-20171115.pdf)

Drawing from the discussions of the plenary and the expert group meetings, five recommendations were adopted, including geospatial fundamental data themes and standards. The recommendations highlighted the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals as a critical driver for the generation of fundamental geospatial datasets. Further, participants also identified that increased coordination was required at all levels, national and regional, across stakeholders, to increase collaborations, share best practices, and increase the use of geospatial information. At the national level, synergies between the national geospatial and statistical offices were encouraged for the implementation of spatial data infrastructure (SDI). For more information see the report at: <http://ggim.un.org/UN-GGIM-Africa/>

## UN-GGIM: Arab States fosters regional understanding to advance geospatial information management



*The Attendees of the 5th Plenary Meeting of UN-GGIM: Arab States, Oman, 19-21 February 2018*

Thirteen Member States, international, and regional stakeholders attended the 5th Plenary Meeting of UN-GGIM: Arab States, hosted by the Sultanate of Oman through its National Survey Authority, in Muscat, on 19 – 21 February 2018. The meeting received the annual report of the Regional Committee, with updates and contributions towards strengthening of the regional geospatial information agenda from the Secretariat of UN-GGIM, UN-ESCWA and the World Bank. The meeting discussed the progress in four of its agreed work areas, namely, institutional arrangements, legal and policy issues, awareness and capacity building; fundamental data and geo-standards; geodetic reference frame; and integration of geospatial and statistical information. The host and a few Member States made national presentations that further aided the exchange of knowledge and experience that is so valuable in fostering regional understanding and advancing the global geospatial information management agenda.

Key outcomes from the meeting included agreeing to prioritize a set of 11 fundamental data themes for the region and progress its work on coordinating and implementing the ArabREF initiative, a regional geodetic reference frame that is a part of the Global Geodetic Reference Frame (A/RES/69/266). The meeting also agreed to continue pursuing the implementation of the five principles of the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework. The development of a UN-GGIM overarching integrated geospatial information management framework that Member States can reference and be guided by when strengthening and modernizing their national geospatial information management and systems was welcomed. UN-GGIM: Arab States confirmed their support for the United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress to be held in Deqing, China from November 19 – 21, 2018. Additional information is available on the UN-GGIM: Arab States website at <http://www.un-ggim-as.org/> or contact the Secretariat at [unggimas@gcs.gov.sa](mailto:unggimas@gcs.gov.sa).



## Update on the Second Administrative Level Boundaries Programme (SALB)



The current focus of the SALB programme is to publish more boundary submissions including those from EuroGeographics. A fundamental principle on which the SALB database is created is to collect and use administrative boundaries and their names from authoritative sources such as from the National Geospatial Information Authorities. The standardized SALB data, at 1:1million scale, will be published in accordance to the SALB Data Product Specifications which is available on the website under: <https://www.unsalb.org/methodology>. Updates on available datasets and participating Member States in SALB will be provided during the Eighth Session of the Committee of Experts on UN-GGIM in August 2018 in New York. For more information contact: Guillaume Le Sourd at e-mail [salb@un.org](mailto:salb@un.org).

## UN-GGIM WORKSHOPS

### Understanding the legal and regulatory environment for geospatial information



*Attendees of the International Workshop on Legal and Policy Frameworks for Geospatial Information, Tonga, 10-13 April 2018*

The International Workshop on Legal and Policy Frameworks for Geospatial Information was convened in Nuku'alofa, Tonga, from 10-13 April 2018, and hosted by the Government of the Kingdom of Tonga through its Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources of Tonga. Support was provided from the Regional Committee on Global Geospatial Information Management for Asia and the Pacific (UN-GGIM-AP) through its Working Group 1 – Geodetic Reference Frame, and the Pacific Community (SPC) through its Geoscience, Energy and Maritime Division. SPC co-located the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Pacific Geospatial and Surveying Council with the workshop. At its meeting the Council, comprising fourteen national representatives from amongst the Pacific Island States and Territories, elected Ms. Rosamond Bing, Ministry of Lands and Natural Resources, Tonga as its Chair and Ms. Meizyanne Hicks, Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources, Fiji as its Vice-Chair.

The International Workshop raised awareness and introduced and informed participants on practical approaches to improve the capacity of national geospatial information authorities to address legal and policy issues that have an impact on the availability, accessibility and application of geospatial information. The goal was for participants to be better aware and informed on how a country's legal and policy framework impacts geospatial information



management, including the collection, production, sharing and use of geospatial information. The workshop brought together a total of 46 participants, 34 of whom were chief executives or senior officers, from 12 Member States and one Territory in the Pacific. Of the 34 participants who were representatives of national agencies, 32 of the 34 were from Pacific Small Island Developing States.

With 31 presentations being delivered over the four days, participants acknowledged the value of the workshop, appreciated the opportunity to participate and the efforts to bring key national and regional actors together to improve exchanges and networking. Participants also confirmed that they gained and improved their awareness and understanding of legal and policy considerations needed to strengthen national geospatial information management, including in the collection, sharing and application of geospatial information. Many participants expressed a desire to improve their national approaches to share and disseminate information within national governments and stakeholders, including with neighboring countries and for regional initiatives.

For more information about the workshop, please visit: [http://ggim.un.org/meetings/2018-International\\_Workshop\\_Tonga/](http://ggim.un.org/meetings/2018-International_Workshop_Tonga/)

## Promoting the 14 Global Fundamental Geospatial Data Themes in Africa

At its seventh session in August 2017, the UN-GGIM Committee of Experts adopted a minimum and agreed list of 14 Global Fundamental Geospatial Data Themes as a tangible means to enable the measurement, monitoring, and management of sustainable development in a consistent way over time, facilitate evidence-based decision-making, and support policy-making. The Committee of Experts further suggested the need to consider measures to implement the data themes, to promote and apply the agreed data themes regionally, and to detail each theme with descriptions. Africa has for a long time advocated for the need to establish a pan-continental and common definition of what constitutes a minimally necessary core of geospatial data and information products in order to continue with the capacity building and further development of the region.



*The 14 Global Fundamental Geospatial Data Themes*

In this spirit the UN-GGIM Secretariat, collaborating with the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the UN-GGIM Working Group on Global Fundamental Geospatial Data Themes, and UN-GGIM: Africa, convened an International Workshop on Global Fundamental Geospatial Data Themes for Africa from 25 to 27 April 2018 at UNECA's Conference Center in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Workshop provided the opportunity to: promote and implement the 14 Global Fundamental Geospatial Data Themes; consider how these themes will improve the availability, accessibility and application of geospatial information, including the integration of statistical and geospatial information; and discuss the implementation and usefulness of geospatial information in support of Africa's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This will enhance data interoperability, and thus increase the availability, accessibility and application of geospatial information in Africa and the world. For more information and course material, please visit: [http://ggim.un.org/meetings/2018-Addis\\_Ababa/](http://ggim.un.org/meetings/2018-Addis_Ababa/)



## UNSD and World Bank Collaboration on the Framework for Geospatial Information

At its seventh session in August 2017, the UN-GGIM Committee of Experts welcomed a new Collaborative Agreement between the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the World Bank's Global Practice on Social, Urban and Rural Development and Resilience (GSURR). The basis of this collaboration was a reflection and recognition of the growing need to explore and develop possible mechanisms for geospatial data, infrastructure and policies to be embedded more holistically within concessional financing, technical assistance and knowledge sharing services, and their subsequent implementation in developing countries. A key deliverable of the collaboration is an overarching geospatial information management framework that Member States can reference when implementing integrated evidence-based decision-making solutions that maximized and leveraged national systems tailored to their own situations. The intent is to have the geospatial framework adopted by UN-GGIM at its eighth session in August 2018.

Recognizing the sense of urgency, in September 2017 UNSD and the World Bank commissioned a body of work to outline and document aspects and requirements, including context and understanding, for the development of the overarching geospatial framework for consideration by Member States and key stakeholders. A first draft of an 'Integrated Geospatial Framework' was discussed with a small group of invited global experts at a Consultative Workshop on 19 March 2018 on the margins of the 2018 World Bank Land and Poverty Conference in Washington DC, and hosted by the World Bank. The Framework will continue to be refined in a number of further consultations during April and May 2018, including in Africa and Europe, prior to a global consultation which will be initiated by the Secretariat from end of May through to late June 2018. It is expected that the final Framework will be completed and posted on the UN-GGIM website (as a Background Document to the formal technical report) by Friday 13 July 2018. The Secretariat and World Bank will convene a Side Event on the Geospatial Framework on the margins of the eighth session of UN-GGIM on Tuesday 31 July 2018.

## UN-GGIM WORK PROGRAMME

### Member States are invited to participate in UN-GGIM Surveys

UN-GGIM Member State representatives are invited to complete the following three surveys.

#### 1. 2018 UN-GGIM Geospatial Standards Survey

The questionnaire is available on line at: <https://goo.gl/rLNMrM>

**The deadline for completion is 30 April 2018**

The objective is to gather information on the use of the Standards Guide and companion documents, as well as geospatial standards related practices within countries. The responses will inform a review and update of the Standards Guide and companion documents.

The Standards Groups, the Open Geospatial Consortium, the International Organization for Standards (ISO) Technical Committee 211 Geographic information/Geomatics, and the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), are initiating and managing this survey. Should you have questions or comments please email: Christina Wasström [christina.wasstrom@lm.se](mailto:christina.wasstrom@lm.se), ISO/TC 211, Anthony Pharaoh [info@iho.int](mailto:info@iho.int), IHO, or Denise McKenzie [info@opengeospatial.org](mailto:info@opengeospatial.org), OGC.

#### 2. The Status of Topographic Mapping in the World

The questionnaire is available in four languages on line at:

English- <https://goo.gl/YTLUkL>

French - <https://goo.gl/Wc2tWy>

Russian - <https://goo.gl/Mu6xJQ>

Spanish - <https://goo.gl/pz49ho>



The objective is to update the 2013 report on the Status of Mapping in the World prepared by the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS), and to assist UN-GGIM with global policy formulation in relation to global initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals, and regional initiatives such as Africa's 2063 Agenda.

The survey is being coordinated by ISPRS. Should you have any questions please email: [breitkopf@ipi.uni-hannover.de](mailto:breitkopf@ipi.uni-hannover.de)

### **3. Geodetic Reference Frame Competency Survey**

The survey is available on line at: <https://goo.gl/forms/xhs1WxK8OjP0G4gr1>

**The deadline for completion is 5 May 2018**

The objective is to establish a global outlook of geodetic infrastructure and capacity. The responses will help shape the actions and strategic development of the global geodetic reference frame, identify areas for capacity development and knowledge transfer, and to ultimately strengthen the global geodetic infrastructure. Member States, national agency representatives, decision-makers, and leaders of the geodetic communities are encouraged to participate in the survey.

The UN-GGIM Subcommittee on Geodesy Education, Training and Capacity Building Focus Group is administering this survey. Should you have questions please email: Mikael Lilje (Sweden/FIG) - [Mikael.Lilje@lm.se](mailto:Mikael.Lilje@lm.se), or Allison Craddock (NASA JPL) - [Allison.B.Craddock@jpl.nasa.gov](mailto:Allison.B.Craddock@jpl.nasa.gov).

## **Draft Resolution on “Strategic Framework on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters 2016-2030” ready for consultations**

At its seventh session in August 2017, the UN-GGIM Committee of Experts adopted the ‘Strategic Framework on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters’ and endorsed the consideration for drafting a resolution that will present the Framework for adoption by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

***What is the Strategic Framework?*** It is a guiding document to be used by countries to assist them in preventing and reducing the impact of disasters through the effective use of geospatial information and related services. The Framework was prepared on a collaborative basis under the leadership of the UN-GGIM Working Group on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters. The document details five guiding principles and priorities for action: governance; awareness raising and capacity building; data management; a common infrastructure and services; and resource mobilization. Each outline activities that may be implemented by countries to ensure that timely, comprehensive and authoritative geospatial information and services are available and accessible across all phases of the emergency management cycle to support decision making.

***The process to the Strategic Framework being adopted by ECOSOC.*** The first pre-zero draft of the resolution was prepared by the Working Group, and has now been provided to the Permanent Missions of Jamaica and the Philippines, whom will sponsor the carriage of the resolution through to ECOSOC. It is expected that the Permanent Mission’s will facilitate the informal information and consultative discussions to review and revise the draft resolution, until a final agreed text is produced. These activities are scheduled to be conducted in May 2018. Member States are encouraged to inform their Permanent Missions to New York to participate in the consultations. This ECOSOC resolution will provide an internationally agreed framework/guide that will anchor the collection and use of geospatial data across all phases of disaster risk reduction and management.

## **Statistical-Geospatial Integration Forum during 49<sup>th</sup> Statistical Commission**

As a major side event of the [49th Statistical Commission](#), the Statistical-Geospatial Integration Forum brought together actors and experts to consider the delivery of integrated, timely, reliable and quality data to support, track and inform on progress of the implementation of the SDGs. Titled ‘Integrating Statistical, Geospatial, and other Big Data to leave no-one behind’ the Forum explored the opportunities and challenges to the integration



of statistical and geospatial information as inputs into the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda's targets and indicators. All relevant presentations and materials are available at the Integration Forum website here: <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/49th-session/side-events/20180305-1M-statistical-geospatial-integration-forum/>

With panel discussions on: Addressing inequalities and safeguarding public health; Linking people to place; Satellite observations for sustainable development goals; and Geography for the 2020 Round of Census; the Forum recognized that there is a vast opportunity in linking people, business and the economy to a geographic location. This can result in a fuller understanding of social, economic and environmental issues than is possible through a socio-economic information lens on its own. The geographic dimension is a key enhancement to virtually all national statistics, as it provides the geospatial framework and structure for collecting, processing, storing, aggregating and dissemination of statistical data. This is especially important with the upcoming 2020 Round of Census. A key instrument in this is the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework (GSGF), developed by the UN-GGIM Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information. The five principles provide a common method to bring these communities together.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- 25-27 April:** International workshop on global fundamental geospatial data themes for Africa, *UNECA, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*
- 6-7 June:** Fifth Plenary Meeting of UN-GGIM: Europe, *Brussels, Belgium*
- 1-3 August:** Eighth Session of UN-GGIM Committee of Experts on UN-GGIM, *UNHQ, New York, USA*
- 19-21 November:** United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress, *Deqing, Zhejiang Province, China*

### Eighth Session of UN-GGIM, 1-3 August 2018

The Eighth Session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) will be held from 1-3 August 2018 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The report of the seventh session was adopted by ECOSOC on 18 April 2018, providing the mandate to issue the Note Verbale to Permanent Missions for the convening of the eighth session of UN-GGIM. The Note Verbale will be issued in the coming week, and will be followed by the announcement letters to Member States, observers, and the international geospatial community. Please visit the session website regularly for updates and further information: <http://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/8th-Session/>. As in past years, the formal Committee of Experts session will be accompanied by a lively and growing programme of side events that will include meetings, workshops, and learning events during the week of 30 July to 3 August 2018.

### Preparations underway for the United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress

Preparations for the **United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress** (UNWGIC), to be held 19-21 November 2018 in Deqing, Zhejiang Province, China, are well underway. The UNWGIC will be hosted by the Government of China through the Ministry of Natural Resources, in collaboration with the Government of Zhejiang Province, and in partnership with the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), as the Secretariat for UN-GGIM. With an overarching theme *'The Geospatial Way to a Better World'* the UNWGIC will be a truly global event bringing together more than 1000 participants and stakeholders at the highest level to



address and ensure that geospatial information has its widest and fullest utility in service of social, economic and environmental development. The aim of the Congress is to provide a convening, participatory and inclusive environment to enhance the communication, understanding, knowledge and application of geospatial information management to address local, regional and global challenges.

### ***UNWGIC Planning and Coordination***

The planning and preparation for the UNWGIC is being guided by two governance groups, a Steering Committee and an International Advisory Committee (IAC). The Steering Committee provides the oversight and governance for the organization of the UNWGIC and is Co-Chaired by the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, the Vice Minister, Ministry of Natural Resources of China, and the Governor of Zhejiang Province of China. The IAC is responsible for guiding and advising on the development and implementation of the programme, structure and content of the UNWGIC. Its membership is comprised of the UN-GGIM Expanded Bureau, senior representatives of United Nations system agencies and regional commissions, major governmental and non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. The IAC is Co-Chaired by Ethiopia and the United Kingdom, while UNSD and representatives from the Ministry of Natural Resources of China provides secretariat services.

On 11-12 April 2018 the IAC held its first UNWGIC planning meeting at the Naked Castle in Deqing County, Zhejiang Province, and was followed by the second meeting of the Steering Committee on 13 April in Hangzhou, China.



*The first meeting of the UNWGIC International Advisory Board in Deqing, Zhejiang Province, China, 11-12 April 2018*

### ***UNWGIC Structure and Programme***

At its meeting, the IAC decided on the overall structure and programme, including side events and exhibitions for the Congress. The UNWGIC will feature a high-level Opening Session and 4 Plenary Sessions each day dedicated to: 1. Attaining Sustainable Development; 2. Sharing the Digital Economy; 3. Building Smart Societies; and, 4. Growing International Cooperation. Through 6 dedicated thematic areas and 36 technical sessions, the UNWGIC will then discuss: 1. Measuring and Monitoring the SDGs; 2. Digital Economy, Location Analytics and Big Data; 3. Smart, Resilient and Sustainable Societies; 4. Growing Global Geospatial Capability and Capacity; 5. Geospatial Innovation, Science and Technology; and, 6. Digital Silk Road and International Partnerships.



Approximately 200 speakers will be needed to fill the plenary and technical sessions, they will be sourced via a call for Session Proposals, which will require application, evaluation and selection.

At the conclusion of the IAC meeting, participants were escorted through a tour of the construction of the new Congress venue, which is due for completion at the end of July 2018.



*The UNWGIC Conference Centre under construction*

#### **Important UNWGIC Dates to Note**

- Call for session proposals – opens April and closes 31 May 2018.
- Selection of speakers – 30 June 2018.
- Official announcements and registration will be made available in the coming 2 weeks.
- Congress Program issued - 30 September 2018

For more information on the UNWGIC, visit the UN-GGIM website at: [http://ggim.un.org/meetings/2018-1st\\_Congress\\_Deqing](http://ggim.un.org/meetings/2018-1st_Congress_Deqing). The website will be updated regularly with additional information as it becomes available over the coming months.

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