

UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT

**Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Statistics Division**

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UN-GGIM for the Arab States Meeting¹

Amman, Jordan
5-6 February 2014

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INTRODUCTION

Objectives of the Meeting

1. The regional meeting was organized by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), in collaboration with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the Royal Jordanian Geographic Center of the Government of Jordan. The purpose of the Seminar was to provide a forum for sharing national practices and experiences in the use of geospatial information and the building of national geospatial infrastructures, and particularly to facilitate the process of the establishment of the UN-GGIM for the Arab States. The Seminar provided a prospect for reviewing existing national geospatial information capacities and challenges for meeting the increasing requirements of geospatial data users, and the need for coordination at national and regional levels. Furthermore, the ideas generated by the discussion and the recommendations made by participants are expected to contribute towards the drafting of a report on the establishment of the UN-GGIM for the Arab States to be presented to the fourth session of the UN-GGIM, to be held in New York in August 2014.

Attendance

2. The regional meeting was attended by 33 participants of whom 24 were from the following 13 countries in the region: Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Qatar, Oman, State of Palestine, Sudan, Syria and Tunisia. Also in attendance was the Director General of the Statistical Centre for the Cooperation Council for the Arab Countries of the Gulf (GCC-Stat), as well as representatives from the UN-GGIM-AP, UN-GGIM-Europe, UN-GGIM, UN-ESCWA, and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD). A complete list of participants is presented in the Annex.

Opening

3. Mr. Amor Laaribi, UNSD representative, opened the Meeting by welcoming the participants. He noted that the meeting is in fact the second, since the first one was held in Doha, Qatar in February 2013, aiming to offer a venue for participants to share the experiences with colleagues from other countries in the areas of geospatial information and its integration with statistical information, and particularly to discuss the organizational aspects for the establishment of the UN-GGIM for the Arab States, as the regional coordinating mechanism in geospatial information, in accordance with resolution 3/114 of the third session of United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), held in Cambridge in July 2013. He further noted that we realize benefits from building and

developing national geospatial infrastructures, but the benefits become enormous when we cross borders and begin working at the regional and global levels. He stressed that the moment is optimum to organize this Meeting, as other regions had already established a regional committee and some more will have it by the end of this year, and the UN-GGIM secretariat will provide support to the UN-GGIM for the Arab States.

4. Mr. Juraj Riecan, Director, Statistics Division, UNESCWA, delivered opening remarks by acknowledging the close collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division in organizing the Meeting and the facilitation to establish this new regional committee. He explained that UN-ESCWA carried out a number of geospatial information-related activities in support of the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Census, and reaffirmed his commitment to work closely with the Member States in the region to support their activities in census mapping operations. He informed the participants that his Statistics Division is involved in the United Nations Expert Group on the integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information and will reach out to the ESCWA Conference of Ministers about the importance of the use of geospatial information in support of national, regional and global development and the emergence of geospatial information as an integral driver of the economic growth. He then wished participants a successful deliberation.
5. Ms Vanessa Lawrence, Director General and Chief Executive of Ordnance Survey of United Kingdom, attended the Meeting in her capacity of co-Chair of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM). She noted that this event, which is in fact the second meeting, is in line with the UN-GGIM's mandate to promote cooperation and dialogue among countries and among countries and regional and international organizations, as well as the use of geospatial information in support of sustainable development. She recalled the first meeting in Doha, a Seminar on Regional Cooperation held on February 7 2013, in conjunction with the Second High-Level Forum on GGIM, which aimed to deliberate on the need to establish a regional UN-GGIM committee to coordinate geospatial information in the ESCWA region. She stressed that overall vision UN-GGIM share is to make accurate, reliable and authoritative geospatial information readily available to support national, regional and global development.
6. After the opening remarks, and upon proposal from Iraq, the participants agreed to elect Mr. Awni Al Khasawneh, the Director General of the Royal Jordanian Geographic Center, as the Chair of the Meeting. Mr. Al Khaswaneh welcomed the participants and thanked them for taking some time from their busy schedule to attend this important meeting, and for their confidence in appointing him as chair of the Meeting. He provided some information on the logistics and informed the participants about the organization of work for the meeting. Three substantive sessions followed as summarized below and reflected in the meeting agenda which is attached in Appendix.

SESSION 1: UN-GGIM – INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL COORDINATION IN GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION

7. Session one examined international/regional coordination in geospatial information, with an overview of UN-GGIM followed by presentations from Asia-Pacific and the European regional UN-GGIM committees. It began with the presentation by the UN-GGIM co-Chair on the role of UN-GGIM and its architecture. She noted that this event is in line with the UN-GGIM's mandate to promote cooperation and dialogue among countries and among countries and regional and international organizations; to work with governments to improve policy, institutional arrangements and legal frameworks; to address global issues and contribute collective knowledge, and to develop effective strategies to build geospatial capacities. The UN-GGIM for Asia and the Pacific representative highlighted the process that led to the establishment of the regional committee and provided information on the organizational aspects of and the activities carried out by the Committee. The UN-GGIM Europe representative also stressed the on-going process to establish the regional committee, mentioning that the process is steered by two co-chairs, the DG of Ordnance Survey of United Kingdom and the President of Eurostat, with the help of three clusters (Cluster 1 on Data Definition and Access Conditions, led by France; Cluster 2 on Interoperability and Data Infrastructures for Geospatial Information, led by Sweden; and Cluster 3 on Institutional Arrangements supporting the globalization of UN-GGIM, led by Italy).

SESSION 2: NATIONAL EXPERIENCES

8. Session two offered participating countries a forum to share their national practices and strategies on the use of geospatial information and the building of national geospatial infrastructures. The session included presentations by representatives of the following countries: Jordan, Bahrain, State of Palestine, Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait, Tunisia, Morocco, Lebanon, and Oman, and also from the Republic of Korea (an invited country out of the region). What is worth noting is that participants actively engaged in vivid discussions showing that the Member States are aware of the importance of geospatial information and the use of geospatial methodologies and technologies. All the countries are undertaking geospatial information activities, and are either building or developing their national geospatial information infrastructures. However, the level of implementation, development and maturity are variable. Indeed, Member States have applied geospatial information in a variety of areas ranging from census taking and atlases, urban systems, buildings and establishments, cadastre mapping and land information administration, etc.

SESSION 3: FUNCTIONS, MANDATE, STATUES AND WORK PROGRAMME

9. The third session, which in fact deals with the main issue to be addressed by the meeting, examined and discussed the guiding principles of the mission and functions of the Committee

under formation, its statutes and what would be the major issues the Committee should address in the incoming years. In this regard, the meeting was provided with information about the existing statutes of similar regional committees and advised that the geospatial information issues to be addressed by the Committee should be identified among the major GGIM issues that are relevant to the countries in the region. It was also noted that the issues to be identified, which in fact constitute the work programme of the Committee, should also take into account the key findings of the pre-seminar questionnaire discussed in the first meeting in Doha in 2013. In this regard, two working groups were formed: the first working group to cope with the Mission and Statutes of the Committee and the second working group to cope with the Work Programme (see more details in the para. below).

SESSION 4: CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

10. The participating countries represented a wide spectrum of national experience in geospatial information as well as statistical activities. This variety of experiences enriched the discussions as countries were interested to learn from the experience of others. Countries showed their keen interest in the building of national geospatial infrastructures, and the use of geospatial information, particularly its integration with statistical information. However there are still some challenges, including on new technologies and reaching various categories of geospatial data users or potential users. Based on the interactive discussions, participants identified and proposed a set of recommendations to improve geospatial information development at national and regional levels:

1. Participants recommended that a Transitional Bureau should be formed. Participants agreed that the Transitional Bureau for the UN-GGIM Arab States will be led by Mr. Awni Khasawneh from Jordan, Director General of the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre (RJGC), representing the national mapping agencies of the region, and Mr. Sabir Al Harbi, from Oman, Director General of the Statistical Centre for the Cooperation Council for the Arab Countries of the Gulf (GCC-Stat), representing the national statistical offices in the region. Participants also agreed to form two working groups:
 - Working Group 1 on Mission and Statutes of the UN-GGIM for the Arab States, to be represented by Bahrain, Jordan, Palestine, Kuwait, Qatar, Sudan, Lebanon and Syria.
 - The Work Group 2 on the Work Programme to be represented by Jordan, Iraq, Morocco, Libya, Oman and Tunisia.
2. The working groups will work on the status and the work programme, based on good practice from UN-GGIM: Asia-Pacific and UN-GGIM: Europe, and report back to the Transitional Bureau.

3. The Transitional Bureau will, by mid-April, prepare the report to be submitted to the 4th session of the UN-GGIM, to be held in August 2014, in New York.
4. UN-ESCWA will report to the UN-ESCWA Ministerial Conference to be held in May 2014, about the importance of geospatial information in support of national, regional and global development, the work of UN-GGIM: Arab States in the region and the creation of the regional coordination body.
5. The UN-GGIM co-Chair Ms Vanessa Lawrence CB is prepared to assist in this important work in the Arab States to establish UN-GGIM: Arab States successfully at the 4th session of UN-GGIM in August 2014.
6. All Arab UN Member States are strongly encouraged to send significant delegations led by Ministers and/or the Directors General to New York for the entire program of the UN-GGIM from 3rd -8th August 2014.
7. UN-Secretariat (UN Statistics Division and UN-ESCWA) will continue to provide support and process to establish and assist the long term work plan of UN-GGIM: Arab States.
8. Thirteen Member countries asked the Transitional Bureau to encourage the nine Other Arab Member States to be involved in this important work and to attend the UN-GGIM: Arab States meetings (these meetings should be periodic and frequent, at least one annual meeting).

CLOSING

11. Ms Vanessa Lawrence, UN-GGIM co-Chair, expressed her pleasure to be part of the meeting, as she knows quite well the region. She thanked the participants and the organizing team for their tireless efforts throughout the meeting which contribute to its success. She also reiterated her commitment to providing her help for the establishment process of the UN-GGIM for the Arab States.
12. Mr. Juraj Reican, UN-ESCWA representative, thanked all participants and resource persons for their valuable contributions. He also reiterated the UN-ESCWA's commitment to continue assisting the member states in establishing the regional committee and in carrying out its work.
13. Mr. Amor Laaribi, UNSD representative, then made concluding remarks, expressing his appreciation to participants for their active participation, to Mr. Awni Al Khasanwh and his team for hosting the Meeting and providing efficient support throughout the meeting as well as for their outstanding hospitality. He also thanked Ms Lawrence, the co-Chair of UN-

GGIM, and Mr. Reican, the representative of UN-ESCWA, for the help they provided in facilitating the work of the meeting. He hoped that the set of recommendations just adopted would be a useful guide for participants and their colleagues to further their geospatial information activities. He wished to continue to work with them and look forward to seeing all of them and their colleagues at the UN-GGIM events to be held in New York, from 3rd - 8th August 2014. He then declared the Seminar closed.

ANNEXES

Annex I. Agenda of the Workshop

Annex II. List of participants

ANNEX I. AGENDA OF THE MEETING

Second Meeting of the UN-GGIM for the Arab States

Amman, 5 – 6 Feb. 2014

Provisional Agenda (and timetable)

<i>Schedule</i>	<i>Agenda item and session</i>	<i>Proposed time</i>
Day 1 (Wednesday, 5 Feb.)		
Morning (9:00-12:30)		Session 3:30
Item 1	Opening of the meeting - Opening and objectives of the meeting (UN Secretariat/ UN-GGIM co-Chair) - Election of the Bureau - Opening statement by Chair - Introductions	1 hr 15 mins
Item 2	Agenda and other organisational matters - Agenda and organization of the meeting (UN Secretariat)	15 mins
	<i>Morning Coffee</i>	15 mins
Item 3	UN-GGIM Architecture - Presentation on UN-GGIM and its architecture (UN-GGIM Co-Chair) - Regional Committees on GGIM Introduction of UN-GGIM-Asia & the Pacific activities (UN-GGIM-AP representative) Overview on UN-GGIM-Europe (UN-GGIM-Europe representative) (Discussion)	1 hr 15 mins
	<i>Lunch (12:30-14:00)</i>	1 hr 30 mins
Afternoon (14:00-17:30)		Session 3:30
Item 4	National experiences in geospatial information - Jordan, Bahrain, State of Palestine, Iraq (Discussion)	1 hr 30 mins
	<i>Afternoon Tea</i>	15 mins

	Item 4	ational experiences (cont.) - Qatar, Kuwait, Tunisia, Morocco (Discussion)	1 hr 15 mins
<i>Schedule</i>	<i>Agenda item and session</i>		<i>Proposed time</i>
Day 2 (Thursday 6 Feb.)			
Morning (9:00-12:30)			Session 3:30
	Item 4	Review of Day 1, National experiences (cont...) Lebanon, Oman, Republic of Korea	1 hr 15 mins
	5	Revisit the process of the establishment of the UN-GGIM for the Arab States (including the Minutes of the Doha Meeting-the First Regional Meeting)	
	Item 6	Discuss the Mission and Functions of the UN-GGIM for the Arab States - Workshop session (UN-ESCWA) (Discussion)	30 mins
<i>Morning Coffee</i>			15 mins
	Item 7	Discuss the Statutes - Workshop session (UN-GGIM) (Discussion)	1 hr 30 mins
<i>Lunch (12:30-14:00)</i>			<i>1 hr 30 mins</i>
Afternoon (2:00-5:30)			Session 3:30
	Item 8	Discuss the Work Programme - Workshop session (UN-ESCWA) (Discussion)	1 hr 30 mins
<i>Afternoon Tea</i>			15 mins
	Item 9	Next meeting inclusions (Jordan)	1 hr 45 mins

ANNEX II. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

UN-GGIM for the Arab States Meeting

Amman, Jordan, 5-6 February 2014

List of participants

	I. Countries	Names of Participants	Organization
	Bahrain	Mr. Khalid A. Hameed Al-Hammadi	Central Informatics Organization (CIO) <i>(Acting Director of GIS)</i>
	Iraq	Mr. Fouad A. Mahmood	General Authority of Survey/Ministry of Water Resources Republic of Iraq <i>(General Manager)</i>
		Mr. Mudher N. Abdullah	General Authority of Survey/MOWR <i>(Senior Chief Eng., Training Department)</i>
	Jordan	Mr. Awni Al Khasawneh	Royal Jordanian Geographic Center <i>(Director General)</i>
	Kuwait	Ms Mariam Aqeel Alaqeel	Central Statistical Bureau-Kuwait <i>(Assistant Under secretary for Admin. Support & Information)</i>
		Ms Rehab Ahmed	CSB- Kuwait <i>(GIS Officer)</i>

	Lebanon	Mr. Sarkis Fadous	Arab Union of Surveys <i>(President)</i>
	Libya	Mr. Mabruk Eshtewi	Surveying Department of Libya <i>(Head of Geodetic Survey)</i>
	Morocco	Mr. Youness Hmamouchi	Agence Nationale de la Conservation Foncière, de Cadastre et de la Cartographie (ANCFCC) <i>(Director of Cartography)</i>
	Qatar	Mr. Mansoor Al Malki	Ministry of Development Planning & Statistics <i>(Director of Information Technology Department)</i>
		Mr. Mohamed Al Miri	Ministry of Municipality and Urban Planning, GIS
	Oman	Mr. Sulaiman Abdulrahim Alzadjali Mr. Sameh Saeed Alaraimi Mr. Zahir Sulaiman Almahroqi	National Center for Statistics and Information
		Mr. Rabea Sulaiman Alaghbari (Lt-Colonel) Mr. Mahfoodh Jummah Alaraimi (Major)	National Survey Authority
		Ms Jamelah Saeed Albosaeedi (Officer)	Public Authority of Civil Defence & Ambulance
		Mr. Hilal Abdulrasoul Alzadjali	General Secretariat of Supreme Council for Planning

	State of Palestine	Ms Amal Jaber	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics(PCBS)
	Sudan	Mr. Mohamed Galal	National Center for Research, Sudan <i>(Director General)</i>
	Syria	Mr.	Syrian Embassy in Amman
	Tunisia	Mr. Ahmed Adouni	Office of Topography and Cadastre <i>(President-Director General)</i>
		Ms Beya Souissi	Member of Arab Union of Surveys
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Junghoon Ahn, Ms Songyi Jung, Mr. Sangoh Yi	NGII
	II.Regional and International Organization		
	Statistical Centre for the Cooperation Council for the Arab Countries of the Gulf (GCC-Stat)	Mr. Sabir Al Harbi	GCC-Stat (Director General)
	UN-GGIM-Asia & the Pacific	Mr. Sang-hoon Lee	National Geographic Information Institute, Republic of Korea

			<i>(Deputy Director of International Cooperation Section, Planning and Policy Division)</i>
	UN-GGIM-Europe	Steven Ramage	Ordnance Survey <i>(Head of Ordnance Survey International)</i>
	UN-GGIM (Co-Chair)	Ms Vanessa Lawrence CB	Ordnance Survey <i>(Director General and Chief Executive)</i>
	UN-ESCWA	Mr. Juraj Riecan	Statistics Division/UN-ESCWA <i>(Director)</i>
	UNSD/UN-GGIM Secretariat	Mr. Amor Laaribi	United Nations Statistics Division/DESA <i>(GGIM Coordinator)</i>
		Total: 33	