

**AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS**  
**Opening Statement**  
**International Workshop on the Integration of Geospatial and Statistical Information**  
**NASG, Beijing, China, 9-12 June 2014**

Your Excellency Mr. Kurexi Maihesuti, Vice Minister, Ministry of Land and Resources, Director-General, National Administration of Surveying, Mapping and Geoinformation of China;

My colleague Mr. Rolando Ocampo, Vice President, National Institute of Statistics and Geography, Mexico and co-chair of the United Nations Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information;

Mr. Greg Scott, United Nations Statistical Division, UN GGIM Secretariat

Dr. Li Pengde, Deputy Director General, National Administration of Surveying, Mapping and Geoinformation of China, President of UN-GGIM Asia-Pacific;

Dear Participants and Colleagues,

As the co-chair of the United Nations Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information, I also extend a warm welcome to all delegates attending this International Workshop on the Integration of Geospatial and Statistical Information. The formal global partnership between statistical and geospatial communities is only very new, but the interest and importance of this partnership is reflected in the excellent level of attendance at this workshop. It also reflects the good relationships that already exist between the geospatial and statistical communities in many countries.

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the Chinese Government, and particularly NASG, for the fantastic job they have already done in setting up this workshop and welcoming us all to China and the impressive city of Beijing. The commitment made by the Chinese Government in establishing the GGIM China Trust Fund Project represents a farsighted investment in not only its own country but in all countries within the region.

I would also like to acknowledge the great work the United Nations Statistical Division have done working with the Chinese organising committee to bring us all together here. I am sure the combined efforts of our Chinese hosts and the UNSD over the remainder of this workshop will help to progress the goals of the Trust Fund and the Expert Group, as well as forge strong relationships among delegates and countries for the future.

The United Nations Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information was formed in 2013 from collaborative decisions of the United Nations Statistical Commission, known as the UNSC, and the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, or UN-GGIM. The Expert Group was established in response to recommendations from an International Program Review titled "Developing a statistical-spatial framework in national statistical systems" which my own organisation, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, conducted on behalf of the global statistical community and which was also considered by the global geospatial community. The program review recommended that better linkages be established between the geospatial and statistical communities, and that a global statistical-geospatial framework based on the ABS Statistical Spatial Framework be developed.

Mr. Rolando Ocampo and I co-chaired the first meeting of the Expert Group in New York between 30 October and 01 November 2013. There was good representation at the meeting with 24 representatives from 16 countries from both geospatial and statistical communities. The terms of reference for the Expert Group were agreed to at the first meeting, and included four key objectives and functions:

- To provide a forum for both statistical and geospatial communities with a view to developing a global statistical-geospatial framework as a standard for the integration of statistical and geospatial information;
- To propose workplans and guidelines to advance the implementation of a global statistical-geospatial framework;
- To address various technical, institutional and information policy issues related to the implementation of a global statistical-geospatial framework, especially issues related to confidentiality;
- To pursue the implementation of the statistical-geospatial framework in the 2020 round of censuses with the understanding that it would apply to other initiatives.

The Expert Group also agreed on a work program at this first meeting and much of the agenda for this workshop is centred on the main work program topics, including:

- examining current and planned practices in geocoding, data linking and integration, and geographic classifications;
- comparing grid-based versus population-based approaches to geographic classifications;

- influencing the 2020 Round of Population Censuses, broad statistical-geospatial information uses and the Post-2015 Development Agenda; and
- coordination between communities on metadata frameworks and spatial data infrastructures (SDI).

By addressing these issues, in forums such as this workshop and by the work of the Expert Group, we will ensure that data can be integrated both within and across the geospatial and statistical domains. By doing this we can then truly create meaningful and useful information to inform decision making on critical issues of concern within our own countries and across the international community. The information requirements of the post-2015 development agenda, with its links to sustainable development, make this an even greater priority for us as producers of data and information.

I agree with Greg Scott's suggestion that we need to work as a single geostatistical community. That is, statisticians and geospatial professionals working on a common goal of making data and information more relevant and accessible to our users. Ultimately, this will help inform the decisions that individuals, organisation and governments make – decisions that are big and small, global and local.

So, I encourage you to:

- engage with the speakers and other knowledgeable delegates at this workshop, both at the formal sessions and during breaks and the other events;
- think about the ideas and issues that will be presented and how you can advance these within your own countries and in international forums;
- discuss your ideas and the ideas presented here with decision makers and colleagues to influence their understanding and bring about change;
- maintain the contacts you make here to ensure you can continue to share ideas and solutions in the future.

I also encourage you to consider attending the United Nations Global Forum on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information, which will be held 4-5 August 2014 in New York.

Mr. Kurexi Maihesuti and Dr. Li Pengde - thank you again for taking the initiative to organize and host this ambitious and timely workshop here in NASG's headquarters. It is a pleasure to join you here in Beijing and my sincere thanks for your excellent hospitality over the next few days.

I wish everyone a successful and enjoyable conference.

Thank you.

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