

**Committee of Experts on
Global Geospatial Information Management
Tenth session**

New York, 26- 27 August 2020 and 4 September 2020

Item 10 of the agenda

Geospatial information and services for disasters

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

Distinguished Delegates, Observers and Colleagues,

We are honoured to have the opportunity to greet you all for the first time, albeit virtually, and to introduce the report of the Working Group on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters (WG-Disasters).

The Working Group's primary objective is to provide a forum for coordination and dialogue, in addition to guidance to Member States, international organizations, and other stakeholders and partners in the management of geospatial information and services in all phases of disaster risk management: emphasizing sustainability, accessibility, and interoperability of geospatial information.

We have seen a transformation in the way we view hazards, emergencies, and disasters throughout the world and this is evident with the response to the **Global Pandemic** SARS CoV 2 otherwise known as **COVID 19** currently facing us all.

Within the intersessional period, the Working Group developed a revised Terms of Reference to provide guidance for its activities and facilitated various information exchanges in relation to Geospatial Information and Services applied in support of COVID 19 response efforts. Importantly, the Working Group has rolled out the Strategic Assessment Survey Tool which is intended to gauge the level and status of geospatial information and services landscape across all phases of disaster risk management and how we can strengthen this critical area with geospatial information and expertise. Gratitude is extended to all Member States and Bodies who have taken the time to complete the Assessment Survey. We look forward to receiving the full support of all other members of UN-GGIM with the submission of their responses by the extended deadline of October 2, 2020.

The Working Group extends gratitude to UNGGIM: Americas, UNECA, UNECLAC and UNESCAP, and the related UN-GGIM Regional Committee for Africa, Asia and the Pacific, in addition to the Member State of Jamaica, for the collaborations forged in jointly hosting virtual seminars and webinars on geospatial response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have taken action in response to decision 9/109 from the 2019 UN-GGIM session which asked the Working Group to ensure greater coordination and collaboration with the activities of relevant disaster risk reduction actors. We are encouraged by the collaboration discussions held with UN-GGIM: Americas' Working Group on Disasters and the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites (CEOS) Working Group on Disasters and so look forward to reporting on the outcomes of our future collaborations at the 11th UN-GGIM Session. Additionally, we welcome CEOS to the Working Group.

We wish to extend our appreciation and sincere gratitude to all Working Group members and task group leads for their invaluable contribution and sterling service, and the UN-GGIM regional groups for their commitment and support over the past 12 months in advancing our agenda.

The Working Group seeks to continue the work of advancing geospatial information and services to ensure that quality geospatial information is available and accessible in a timely and coordinated manner to support decision-making and operations within and across all sectors and phases of disaster risk management, and therefore encourage Member States to implement the Strategic Framework on Disasters.

The Committee of Experts is invited to consider the Working Group's report and endorse the revised Terms of Reference. We also encourage Member States to become members of the Working Group and actively contribute to the mandate of expanding the use of geospatial information and services for disaster response initiatives.

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