



UN-GGIM:Americas

REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF
UNITED NATIONS
ON GLOBAL GEOSPATIAL
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
FOR THE AMERICAS

Regional Report UN-GGIM: Americas 2016-2017

June2017

1. Summary

The Regional Committee of Experts of the United Nations on Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas (UN-GGIM: Americas) was created in August 2013, replacing the Permanent Committee for Geospatial Data Infrastructure of the Americas (CP-IDEA). During its first four years of existence, the Committee has worked in the activities of its five working groups, in the incorporation of the Caribbean Region to UN-GGIM activities, while strengthening their national and regional spatial data infrastructures; in the consolidation of cooperation between the institutions of the Joint Action Plan, and in reinforcing new regional and international relations.

2. Introduction, background

In August 2013, the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas (UN-GGIM: Americas) was created. This regional body replaced the Permanent Committee for Geospatial Data Infrastructure of the Americas (CP-IDEA). This significant action was taken in accordance with the new mandate of the regional committee to enhance cooperation and coordination with the Committee of Experts of the United Nations on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM).

This Regional Committee aligned to the global architecture, had better addressed regional and global challenges especially in the context of sustainable development.

3. Objective

The Committee shall determine the relevant regional issues on geospatial information management, wherein it will take the necessary action to maximize the economic, social and environmental benefits derived from its use. This based on the knowledge and exchange of experiences and technologies by Member States, thereby advancing the establishment of the Geospatial Data Infrastructure in the Americas, and other national initiatives, in addition to their contributions to UN-GGIM.

4. Activities, Areas of Work –Achievements

a. Contribution to UN-GGIM activities

During the sixth session of the Committee of Experts on UN-GGIM, Mr. Rolando Ocampo, President of UN-GGIM:Americas, continued his role as Co-chair of the Committee of Experts, along with Mr. Timothy Trainor from the United States of America and Mr. Li Pengde from China. This responsibility contributes to the global vision of the Regional Committee on the agenda on geospatial information management, as well as regional contributions and visions enriching the global UN-GGIM agenda.

The main contributions of the Regional Committee to the Committee of Experts of UN-GGIM are related to the work of its five working groups, aligned with the global agenda of the Committee of Experts.

The main areas of the regional committee's Working Groups (WG) are: Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information; Access and use of geospatial information for disaster risk reduction and climate change; Standards and Technical Specifications; Promotion and Evaluation of Spatial Data Infrastructure, and International Coordination and Cooperation.

The Third Session of the Regional Committee was held in October 05 and 06, 2016 in Mexico City, under the framework of the Latin America Geospatial Forum (LAGF). 59 participants from 31 Members States attended the meeting, together with the following national, regional and international organizations: UN-GGIM Secretariat; United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC); National Institute of Geography and Statistics (INEGI) of Mexico and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE); SIRGAS; the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH); the Association of Caribbean States (ACS); the Urban and

Regional Information Systems Association (URISA), Caribbean Chapter; The University of West Indies (UWI), National Autonomous University of Mexico; Andes University of Colombia; among others.

The Regional Committee of the United Nations on Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas, at its Third Session:

1. Acknowledged the contribution of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History and agreed that this body take responsibility for coordinating the Americas efforts on Fundamental Geospatial Data, in order to address this important issue on the global agenda of the UN Committee of Experts on GGIM and to report to the Regional Committee its progress.
2. Approved the creation of the Academic Network for the Americas, led by Universidad de los Andes, Colombia and the University of the West Indies, St Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago, for which the member countries will send the contact information of universities in order to have a directory of participants and start working together. It was further agreed that at the next session of the Regional Committee, the Academic Network will report and give its recommendations to member countries.
3. Acknowledged the creation and recognized the work done by the Private Sector Network of the Committee of Experts on UN-GGIM and agreed that a Private Sector Network representative should present a report at the next session of the Regional Committee.
4. Noted the work of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and agreed that the Executive Secretary of the Regional Committee will circulate relevant documents of the GEO and its regional initiative AmeriGEOSS, including the strategic plan 2016-2025 and the procedure to be part of this initiative. This will allow member countries access to the benefits of belonging to these platforms for both national priorities and the interaction between UN-GGIM and GEO regional and global levels for monitoring and complying with international agreements and objectives related to the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.
5. Decided to update the SDI Observatory on the website of UN-GGIM: Americas, in order to disseminate the activities of the Regional Committee in the various subjects addressed by its five Working Groups.
6. Acknowledged the efforts made by the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) of Colombia and agreed that for the implementation of the first version of the Statistical and Geospatial Framework of the Americas (MEGA):
 - a) The Executive Secretary shall receive technical documents and the protocol for access to information made by DANE and circulate together with the formal request for coordination and joint participation. Such request will be jointly issued by the President of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, ECLAC and the President of UN-GGIM: Americas, addressed to the national statistical and geospatial authorities of the Americas.
 - b) The National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico will integrate the shape files provided by member countries to be uploaded in the designated Geoportal.

The progress made with this activity will be shared during the next session of the Regional Committee.
7. Recognized the relevance and contribution of the Geodetic Reference System for the Americas (SIRGAS) as the representative for the Americas region on the Working Group on Global Geodetic Reference Frame, and agreed that SIRGAS shall submit its annual work report to the Regional Committee at its annual Sessions.

8. Approved the proposed Work Plans for 2017, presented by the Coordinators of the five Working Groups and, recognized the relevance of the Global Strategic Framework prepared by the Working Group on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters.
9. Recognized and appreciated the effort of the company Planet, for the timely creation and free distribution of satellite imagery mosaic, to support humanitarian actions in the Members States impacted by Hurricane Matthew.
10. Agreed that the Fourth Session of UN-GGIM: Americas will be held from April 03 to 06, 2017 in Santiago, Chile.

During this year of work, the Fourth Session of the Regional Committee was also held in April 4, 2017 in Santiago, Chile, under the framework of the Geospatial Information Seminar, 55 participants from 32 Members States attended the meeting. Also attended the following national, regional and international organizations: UN-GGIM Secretariat; SIRGAS; the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH); GeoSUR; the Association of Caribbean States (ACS); the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA), Caribbean Chapter; The University of West Indies (UWI), National Autonomous University of Mexico; Andes University of Colombia; National University of La Plata, Argentina; among others.

As per the statute of the Regional Committee, the members present elected by acclamation the following officers to the Executive Board for the period 2017-2021.

- President: Rolando Ocampo, México (2° Period)
- Vice-President: Álvaro Monett, Chile (2° Period)
- Executive Secretary: Mónica Aguayo, México (2° Period)
- Vocal for North America: Paula McLeod, Canada (2° Period)
- Vocal for Central America: Max Lobo, Costa Rica (2° Period)
- Vocal for South America: Sergio Cimbaro, Argentina (1° Period)
- Vocal for the Caribbean: Keith Francis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines (1° Period)

Resolutions adopted by the Regional Committee at its Fourth Session

The Regional Committee on Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas:

1. Acknowledged the efforts of the Academic Network of the Americas and agreed that the Executive Secretary will circulate to Member States the Terms of Reference prepared by the Task Force of the Academic Network of the Americas, for comments and approval before the next session of UN-GGIM in August 2017.
2. Endorsed the importance of strengthening national institutional arrangements on geospatial information management and its linkage with statistical information, in particular with regard to the achievement and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals, as approved by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, dated July 27, 2016.
3. Recognized the importance of the work of the National Geographical Institutes and National Statistical Offices of Member States, as producers and managers of the basic/ fundamental geographic and statistical information necessary for decision-making, public policy-making, planning, land management and sustainable development.
4. Requested that the President of SIRGAS participate in the Permanent Sub-Committee on Geodesy approved by the Committee of Experts on UN-GGIM during its Sixth Session in 2016, in the context of the Joint Action Plan 2016-2020 between UN-GGIM: Americas, SIRGAS, GeoSUR and PAIGH, to accelerate the development of the Spatial Data Infrastructure of the Americas,.
5. Agreed to request to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the provision of human resources to fulfill coordination functions at the regional level between this Commission and UN-GGIM: Americas, in order to provide support and follow-up to the integration process between statistical communities/agencies, national cartographic/geographic institutes and agencies in charge of the development of SDI in Member States.

6. Agreed that the agenda of UN-GGIM: Americas and its Working Groups are to be aligned to the issues being addressed by the Committee of Experts at the global level, with focus on the integration of statistics and geography; supporting the implementation of the measuring and monitoring of the targets and indicators of the sustainable development goals; and the use of geospatial information for disaster risk reduction and management.
7. Encouraged Member States to employ measures so that the development and management of their spatial data infrastructures best support and be consistent with their national policies and priority issues.
8. Acknowledged that improved relations and communication is need among Ministries of Foreign Affairs, National Missions to United Nations and National Geographical/Mapping Institutes. National focal points are encouraged to know these representatives and begin dialogue and engagement to increase awareness on geospatial information management and its benefits.
9. Noted that increased and strengthened communication and awareness measures on the use and benefits of geospatial information at the political and policy levels are needed and this would assist in garnering support for the development of national spatial data infrastructures. Focal points are therefore encouraged to report the resolutions from the 4th Session of the Regional Committee for the Americas to their respective Governments.

b. Legal and Policy

The website <http://www.un-ggim-americas.org/> administered by INEGI, Mexico, continues its the work of maintaining and updating the information.

c. Administrative Arrangements

1. PAIGH Pan American Technical Assistance Project 2016: The PAIGH supported the UN-GGIM: Americas project for 2017, which will be used to finance the participation of Member States at the High Level Forum of UN-GGIM to be held in Mexico City in November 2017.
2. Support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, through its Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID), from August 2016 to June 2017, the project activities aimed at strengthening the Technological Infrastructure, added \$313,432 USD. The activities aimed at Building Capacity, added an investment of \$200,872 USD; and finally operative and management activities added an investment of \$98,126 USD. The total investment for the year was of \$612,430
3. Chile-Mexico Joint Development Cooperation Fund- from August 2016 to June 2017, the project activities aimed at Building Capacity, added an investment of \$ 181,781 USD
4. Geospatial Media & Communications: For the third year in a row, agreed with The National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico (INEGI) and UN-GGIM:Americas to host the third session of the Committee during the Latin America Geospatial Forum 2016 in Mexico City in October, financing the attendance of 20 Member States of the Regional Committee.

d. Capacity Development

As part of the Capacity Building component of the *Project for Strengthening of the Spatial Data Infrastructure in the Caribbean (Caribbean Project, for short)*, the following courses were organized and financed:

1. The fifth course of the Caribbean Project was on Spatial Data Infrastructures, held on July 31 and August 1st, at the UN Headquarters in New York, on the margins of the Sixth Session of the Committee of Experts held from August 1st to 5th. Course instructors were Jorge Prado from the Institute of Geography, National Autonomous University of Mexico, and Aarón Villar from INEGI. The course was attended by 15 member states, which actively participated also at the Session Committee of Experts.

2. The sixth course on Use of Geodetic Equipment held in Trinidad & Tobago from August 15 to 19, 2016. Francisco Medina (ECO), Javier Sánchez (INEGI), Hector Parra Bravo (Chilean Military Geographic Institute), taught the course, to which 16 countries participated.
3. UN-GGIM International Forum on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters took place from September 4 to 8, 2016 in Bridgetown, Barbados. Twelve Member States participated.
4. Workshop on Geographic Information Systems within the framework of the Latin American Geospatial Forum took place from October 2 to 6, 2016 in Mexico City. Earl Edwards (UWI) and Valrie Grant (URISA Caribbean Chapter) taught the course. Thirteen countries participated.
5. The ninth Workshop of the Project was on Land Use Classification using MAD-Mex. Was held in Trinidad & Tobago from November 28 to December 2, 2016. Erick Palacios Moreno (CONABIO), Pedro Díaz (CONABIO), Javiera Ferreyra Bucarey (Ministry of Environment of Chile), taught the course. Seventeen countries participated
6. Workshop on Construction of Geoportals using MxSIG. Was held from December 12 to 16, 2016 in Aguascalientes, Mexico. The course was taught by José Luis Capote (GEOCUBA), Jorge Montesinos Camino and Humberto Toledo Cruces (Ministry of National Assets of Chile) and José Luis Mondragón and Aarón Villar Mata (INEGI). Fourteen countries participated.
7. The eleventh course of the Project was on Geospatial Data Quality within the framework of the fourth Session of UN-GGIM: Americas. It took place from April 3 to 7, 2017 in Santiago de Chile. The instructors of the course were Pablo Morales (SDI, Chile) and Joselyn Alejandra Robledo (Aero photogrammetric Service - Air Force of Chile). Fifteen countries participated.

e. Publicity and Outreach

President of the Committee represented the Regional Committee in the following international forums:

1. International Forum on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters and URISA Caribbean Chapter Conference on GIS. September 4 to 6, 2016. Bridgetown, Barbados.
2. Eurostat conference on social statistics “Towards more agile social statistics”. Luxembourg, Luxembourg. November 28-30, 2016.
3. UN-GGIM Bureau Meeting. United Nations Headquarters, New York. December 07-09 2016.
4. Geospatial World Forum, Hyderabad, India. January 21-25, 2017.
5. 48th Session of Statistical Commission and side events related to Geospatial Information. United Nations Headquarters, New York. March 05-08, 2017.
6. Fourth Session of UN-GGIM: Americas and Joint Meeting with the Statistical Commission for the Americas of ECLAC. April 2-6, 2017. Santiago, Chile.
7. UN-GGIM High Level Forum and Expert Group Meeting on Integration of Geospatial and Statistical Information. May 07-12, Kunming, China.
8. Cambridge Conference, Oxford, United Kingdom, July 02-06, 2017.

f. Technical

Under the frame of the Joint Action Plan between The Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH), SIRGAS, GeoSUR and UN-GGIM: Americas, to accelerate the development of the Spatial Data Infrastructure of the Americas:

- ✓ IPGH will take responsibility for coordinating the Americas efforts on Fundamental Geospatial Data, in order to address this important issue on the global agenda of the UN Committee of Experts on GGIM and to report to the Regional Committee its progress

- ✓ SIRGAS will participate in the Permanent Sub-Committee on Geodesy approved by the Committee of Experts on UN-GGIM during its Sixth Session in 2016. and agreed that for the implementation of the first version of (MEGA):

For the implementation of the Project of the Statistical and Geospatial Framework of the Americas (MEGA) of the Regional Committee acknowledged the efforts made by the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) of Colombia. The Executive Secretary received technical documents and the protocol for access to information made by DANE. In March 2017 circulated together with the formal request for collaboration jointly issued by the President of the Statistical Conference of the Americas (SCA), ECLAC and the President of UN-GGIM: Americas, addressed to the national statistical and geospatial authorities of the Americas. The National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico will integrate the shape file provided by Member States and will be uploaded in the ECLAC Geoportal.

As a result of the Joint work with the SCA ECLAC, the Regional Committee agreed to request to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the provision of human resources to fulfill coordination functions at the regional level between this Commission and UN-GGIM: Americas. This with the aim to provide support and follow-up to the integration process between statistical communities/agencies, national cartographic/geographic institutes and agencies in charge of the development of SDI in Member States.

5. Partnerships and Regional and International Collaboration.

For the Project for Strengthening the Spatial Data Infrastructure in the Caribbean under the UN-GGIM: Americas Regional Committee:

- ✓ Collaboration Agreement between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico through its International Development Cooperation Agency, AMEXCID and INEGI: This agreement has been the framework for collaboration between the two institutions to develop the SDI in the Caribbean Member States of UN-GGIM: Americas.
- ✓ The Governments of Chile and Mexico are making another important contribution for capacity building in the region. Through the Chile-Mexico Joint Development Cooperation Fund, formed by the International Development Cooperation Agencies of Chile and Mexico; and with the technical collaboration of INEGI and the Chilean National System for the Coordination of Territorial Information (SNIT), both countries have contributed to continue the efforts of integrating the Caribbean Region to UN-GGIM, and strengthening their SDIs.

Geospatial Media & Communications, an international company serving the geospatial community, has been another important partner for UN-GGIM: Americas, alongside INEGI, to carry out the Third Latin America Geospatial Forum in Mexico City in October 2016. During this important Forum, the third session of UN-GGIM:Americas was held and, and with the joint support of the Caribbean Project, Geospatial Media & Communications and INEGI, 31 member countries from the Americas were supported to participate.

Another important collaboration with Geospatial Media and INEGI will be the UN-GGIM High Level Forum on the role of Geospatial Technology in the context of the SDGs, to be held in Mexico City in November 28-30.

An important collaboration project between the Statistical and Geospatial Communities in the Americas has been framed in resolution 712 (XXXVI) approved in the 36th session of ECLAC, held in Mexico City in May 2016. This resolution, on the Regional Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information, recommends the establishment of a forum for substantive dialogue between the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC (SCA-ECLAC) and UN-GGIM: Americas. This with the aim of coordinate efforts and define a joint agenda for the integration of statistical and geospatial information at the regional level, through cooperation between these two entities.

Under this framework, after the joint meetings between the Executive Boards of UN-GGIM:Americas and SCA-ECLAC, in June 2016 in Santiago, Chile. The Regional

Committee and SCA ECLAC Member States had a joint meeting on April 05 also in Santiago, Chile, where Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of ECLAC described this meeting as historical and the first of its kind in the world.

As a result of this important meeting the Executive Secretary of ECLAC asked the attendees to present the concrete example of integration of geospatial and statistical information of MEGA during the 37th Session of ECLAC in 2018. For that propose UN-GGIM: Americas will continue asking the countries to send their technical focal points for the implementation of the project and for the Member States to send the information to integrate this Frame. It was also agreed that during that Session of ECLAC would be presented a document on the status of the SDI in the Caribbean.

All this collaborations allow UN-GGIM: Americas to continue their work within the region involving the experts on different issues, strengthening the spatial data infrastructure and the geospatial information management in the Americas.

6. Priority Issues and Challenges

Some of the main challenges of the Regional Committee are the need to address the many issues on the agenda and determining whether the regional agenda coincides with the global agenda of the Committee of Experts, to move from the global to the regional and to the national.

One of the priority issues of the Regional Committee is the ownership of the Member States, and the leadership in coordinating and moving forward trough the working groups.

The major challenge is to get the Member States authorities to commit with the Regional and Global Committee and ensure the attendance of the focal points to the Sessions. To date the 4 sessions of UN-GGIM: Americas have been almost fully support by sponsors and in case sponsorships could not be available in the future, the sessions should ensure the necessary quorum.

Another important issue for the Regional Committee is the active participation of Member States in Working Groups and activities related, the challenge is the continuity of representatives, as there are many internal changes within Member States, which not always are informed to the Regional Committee due a deficiency of institutional commitment.

7. Perspectives and Future Plans.

One of the richest discussion of the 4th Session of the Regional Committee had to do with the next steps for UN-GGIM: Americas and the Committee agreed that the agenda and work issues should focus on the following issues:

- ✓ Integration of statistics and geography;
 - ✓ Supporting the implementation of the measuring and monitoring of the targets and indicators of the sustainable development goals;
 - ✓ The use of geospatial information for disaster risk reduction and management
- Further discussions will define the future steps for the Regional Committee and its work agenda.

The immediate plans for the Regional Committee are the activities to be carried out within the framework of the 7th Session of UN-GGIM in New York City in August 2017. A training course on QGIS Free Software Tools will be held under the frame of the Caribbean Project, and a side event for the Regional Committee.

Another two courses will be organized in 2017 under the Caribbean Project, one on “Geo-statistics” and another one in “Verification of the Classification System for the Land Use and Vegetation Map”

Another important activity will be the High Level Forum on UN-GGIM in Mexico City from November 29 to 30 and the topic will be “Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: The Role of Geospatial Technology and Innovation”

8. Conclusions

UN-GGIM: Americas has successfully pass the consolidation stage, and is now in the transition to its version 2.0. The Regional Committee should take advantage of its main strengths as: the strong leadership; the capacity building project; the best practices and professionals available and accessible; the active regional cooperation with GeoSUR, PAIGH and SIRGAS; and a continuous assessment that allows evaluation and monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) progress; to continue working in a single direction as a region.

In order to be able to deliver practical results, the Regional Committee should work jointly and contribute actively. For the Project on the integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information with MEGA, Member States will be asked to send their national information in order to make this integration exercise possible.

The cooperation and coordination work done in the region is the main platform to develop the National Spatial Data Infrastructure in Member States and contribute to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Acknowledgments:

Key players for the significant growth experienced by the Caribbean Project of UN-GGIM: Americas include the regional and international development cooperation agencies from the Governments of Mexico and Chile (AMEXCID and AGCID, respectively), the Technical Committee (ACS, INEGI, URISA Caribbean Chapter, The University of the West Indies and IG-UNAM) and SNIT.

The joint agenda with the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC is possible thanks to the commitment of the Executive Secretary, Alicia Bárcena.

Within the Committee, the active role of the Vice-President of the Regional Committee, Álvaro Monett, has been crucial, as an active coordinator of the Working Groups tasks and a in the development of the region’s General Diagnosis.

A special recognition goes to INEGI’s team for their technical and logistical support at all the Committee activities, their participation in training events and the work during the last year managing the of UN-GGIM:Americas website.

Representatives of Member States that have been active handling high responsibility activities, including the Coordinators of the Working Groups representing the following organisms: Natural Resources Canada; the Geographic Institute Agustín Codazzi and the National Administrative Department of Statistics of Colombia; Ministry of Public Housing, Spatial Planning, Environment and Infrastructure of Sint Maarten; National Territorial Information System of Chile; and the National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico. And also our Vocal Members, representing the following organisms: Natural Resources Canada; National Institute of Geography of Costa Rica; Ministry of Housing, Informal Human Settlements, Lands and Surveys and Physical Planning of St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the National Institute of Geography of Argentina.

Also and finally, our gratitude to the Secretariat of UN-GGIM for coordinating and ably supporting the global and regional efforts on geospatial information management, working closely with UN-GGIM: Americas.

To all of them, our recognition and gratitude

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