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**Opening remarks  
Fourth Session of the United Nations Committee of Experts  
on Global Geospatial Information Management**

**New York, 6 August 2014**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates and Observers,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to welcome you to the United Nations headquarters for this fourth session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM). I commend you all for your continued interest, energy and participation as you embark over the next three days to discuss, deliberate and decide on issues relevant to positioning geospatial information to address global challenges. We as the Secretariat are of course committed to fully supporting you in this process.

It has only been three years since the Committee of Experts started its worthy journey that has already resulted in a number of early achievements. The level of Member State participation has increased, as evidenced by the attendance figures over the past two sessions. The number of work areas has grown, where expert and working groups that have been created; and your work has really drawn much wider attention and support from the international community..

We applaud the preparation of the strategic document “Future trends in geospatial Information management the five to ten year vision”, available now in seven languages. I understand that this document is now being used across the globe in national geospatial institutions, colleges and universities as a leading resource document.

I note that the Committee is proceeding quickly with key global topics such as the geodetic reference frame, for which a resolution asking for enhanced global cooperation is being proposed at this session.

I am also aware that you have just concluded a very successful two days of discussions at the Global Forum on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information. It is foreseen that

the use of geo-statistical data will improve the abilities of governments to examine, monitor, manage, propose and predict development and growth options for a sustainable future.

Distinguished Delegates and Observers,

One of the key objectives of the Committee of Experts is to contribute to the United Nations post 2015 development agenda. In this context, I wish to mention to you a number of ongoing initiatives and programmes at the United Nations which invariably provide excellent opportunities to reflect on the important supporting role that the global geospatial community can play for the sustainable development agenda.

The second meeting of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development was held here in New York just recently in July, under the theme of achieving the Millennium Development Goals and charting the way for an ambitious post-2015 development agenda. The Open Working Group on Sustainable Development has just concluded its work and so will the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing. Both processes will provide key inputs to the formulation of a new United Nations development agenda beyond 2015, with sustainable development at its core.

Next month, the United Nations will organize its Third International Conference on Small Island Development States. In the same month the Secretary General has also invited Heads of State and Government, along with business, finance, civil society and local leaders, to a Climate Summit here in New York.

The many environmental, developmental and humanitarian challenges we are facing today, make it increasingly apparent that location matters. Thus, geospatial information is fundamental to decision making, policy formulation, measuring and monitoring development elements, all critical to the post 2015 development agenda. I encourage you to remain continuously engaged and provide your expert advice for all the processes mentioned above.

Distinguished Delegates and Observers,

The agenda for this session has important new and existing strategic issues progressed from the second and third sessions, now requiring your consideration and agreement. Some of these include:

- a statement of principles for the geospatial community;
- the continued development of the knowledge base;
- trends in national institutional arrangements;
- legal and policy frameworks;
- the implementation of standards for the global geospatial community; and
- determining global fundamental geospatial data themes.

These topics address the challenges at national, regional and global levels. I am confident that you will be focused and concise in your contributions and interventions over the next three days.

In closing, I am pleased to recognise and thank the co-Chairs of your Committee of Experts, all the Chairs and leaders of the working and expert groups, the authors of technical reports and the Rapporteur, without whose essential contribution, a meeting of this size would not be possible. I thank you all for coming to New York from different locations around the world to continue the important work of positioning geospatial information to address global challenges.

I wish you all a productive, but also enjoyable session, and very much look forward to your deliberations and outcomes.

Thank you.

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