

Stronger. Together.

The United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence (UN-GGCE) vision is a future where all countries have strong political support for geodesy which enables them to – together – implement the General Assembly Resolution 69/266 ‘A Global Geodetic Reference Frame for Sustainable Development’, and accelerate the achievements of the Sustainable Development Goals to derive social, environmental and economic benefits.

ggim.un.org/UNGGCE

UN-GGIM 15TH SESSION

Time to act for global geodesy

At the Global Geodesy Forum during UN-GGIM’s 15th session, Member States were reminded of a simple truth: Strategy is not enough. Now we need implementation, resources – and stronger governance.



PHOTO: KÅRE KYRKJEEIDE/KARTVERKET

UN, NEW YORK: *“This forum is not only a celebration - it is a call to renew our commitment and take joint action.” Ambassador Andreas Løvold, Norway’s Deputy Permanent representative to the United Nations.*

At the 15th Session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) in New York this August, the geodetic community marked a significant milestone: Ten years since the adoption of the UN General Assembly resolution on a Global Geodetic Reference Frame for Sustainable Development (A/RES/69/266).

To mark the anniversary, UN-GGIM Subcommittee on Geodesy, UN-GGCE and its International Advisory Committee, together with Member States hosted the side event “Global Geodesy Forum: Celebrating 10 Years”, drawing a full room of Member States delegates.

“A call to renew our commitment”

“This forum is not only a celebration – it is a call to renew our commitment and take joint action,” said Ambassador Andreas Løvold, Norway’s Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, in his opening address.

Ambassador Løvold reminded participants that many of the resolution’s core calls to action remain unfulfilled. The global geodetic reference frame — vital for everything from satellite navigation and climate monitoring to emergency response and infrastructure — still relies on a fragile and underfunded system.

“We must focus on three things: ensuring the stability and quality of the reference frame, supporting the institutions and people who maintain it, and embedding geodesy in global development and data governance agendas.”

“We have strategy – but we need to implement”

During the session, Nicholas Brown, Head of the UN-GGCE Office, echoed the urgency:

“Ten years after the General Assembly adopted the resolution, progress on strengthening this foundation of our lives remains wanting. We have strategy – but we need to implement. This re-

quires resources and stronger international governance,” said Mr Brown.

The Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence (UN-GGCE) was established to help advance the objectives of the resolution.

But as Nicholas Brown noted, “Goodwill alone won’t sustain global geodesy. To build lasting resilience, we must operationalize it – establishing formal governance where Member States actively commit to maintaining accurate and reliable satellite services. The future of our global geodesy supply chain cannot rest on in-kind contributions, unmanaged risks and the goodwill of scientists.”

Exploring future governance models

The forum also turned to future governance options. Ms Laila Løvhøiden, member of UN-GGCE’s International Advisory Committee and representing Norway, offered two potential pathways:

“One is to establish a new intergovernmental organization for geodesy – a long-term, politically ambitious approach. The other, perhaps more immediately feasible, is to explore closer cooperation with an existing UN structure, such as the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), which already manages complex data and infrastructure systems.”

“Both models can help us move from voluntary coordination to shared governance, sustained funding, and institutional resilience.”

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MULTILATERAL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING - MMoU

Stepping towards stronger governance

With 46 signatories already on board, the MMoU is emerging as a key mechanism to build stronger global governance for geodesy.



PHOTO: ADOBESTOCK

By August 2025, 46 government agencies and organizations had signed the Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MMoU) on strengthening the global geodesy supply chain.

This is a clear sign of growing international awareness of the need to act collectively to secure the geodetic foundation that underpins satellite navigation, climate monitoring, disaster response and global infrastructure.

From coordination to governance

The interest from participants in signing the MMoU reflects a growing appetite for structured, shared responsibility in global geodesy.

As national capacity varies widely, there is a need for stronger governance, risk-

management, resource sharing, and accountability to ensure long-term sustainability.

“This is the first step towards stronger governance. Participants who join are effectively saying ‘I can’t do geodesy alone and I need to work with the other participants.’ The MMoU therefore becomes more powerful as more participants join.”

*Nicholas Brown
Head of Office, UN-GGCE*

This collective momentum also lays the groundwork for more formal governance arrangements in the future — as discussed during the Global Geodesy Forum and UN-GGIM’s 15th Session.

MMoU:

Strengthening the global geodesy supply chain

In March 2025, the UN-GGCE launched a Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MMoU) to strengthen the global geodesy supply chain.

The MMoU brings together national geodetic agencies, international organisations, academia and the private sector in a common platform for voluntary but coordinated action.

You can join the MMoU at any time. If you would like to join the MMoU please contact Nicholas Brown on nicholas.brown@un.org

What the MMoU offers

The MMoU outlines a framework for international cooperation that is both flexible and action-oriented:

- Signatories appoint a national focal point to liaise with UN-GGCE and fellow partners.
- Work plans are developed jointly to support the geodetic supply chain.
- Strategic dialogues are encouraged to review progress and guide future directions.

The MMoU does not impose financial obligations.

UN-GGIM Decision 15/106: A mandate to follow-up

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The outcomes of the UN-GGIM session reflect a shared recognition of the need for action. In its draft decisions, https://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/15th-Session/documents/Report-part_I_II_UN-GGIM15_asorallyrevised20250809.pdf, the Committee calls for further considerations of fit-for-purpose governance options for global geodesy, and for Member States and partners to support the work of the UN-GGCE.

As the Centre prepares its next steps — including consultations, partnership-building, technical guidance and exploring governance options — the momentum from this year’s forum and formal session serve as both a mandate and a motivation.

PHOTO: ANNE JØRGENSEN

