



UN IGIF  
INTEGRATED GEOSPATIAL  
INFORMATION FRAMEWORK

# HIGH-LEVEL GROUP OF THE IGIF

February 2023

## Highlights from the World Geospatial Information Congress (WGIC)

### OVERVIEW OF THE WGIC

The Second United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (UNWGIC) was held October 10 – 14 in Hyderabad, India. The Congress was organized by the UN-GGIM Committee of Experts to fulfill the mandate of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations to convene global forums that promote a comprehensive dialogue on the global management of geospatial information with all governments, international organizations, and relevant stakeholders. The congress brought together high-level experts from around the world to reinforce the value of geospatial information and ensure its widest and most complete use in the advancement of sustainable social, economic, and environmental development. The theme for the Congress was *“Geo-enabling the Global Village: No one should be left behind,”* and the IGIF was prominently featured as a means to make that theme a reality.



“We need your geospatial expertise on two fronts: To measure progress – and to make progress. We need you to drive innovation and action through the power of data – focused on the most marginalized and vulnerable communities and places.”

**António Guterres**  
United Nations Secretary-General



The Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, during his video inaugural address: “The possibilities that geospatial technology offers are endless... there is so much that we can do for our planet through this technology.”

### HLG-IGIF CO-CHAIRS' MESSAGE



Co-Chairs Dr. Tulu Beshu Bedada and Ms. Deirdre Dalpiaz Bishop.

We were delighted to participate in the second World Geospatial Information Congress, where we shared the progress of the High-level Group of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (HLG-IGIF) and led sessions and discussions on the many benefits of advancing the IGIF. We have highlighted some of the wonderful sessions in this newsletter and encourage you to view the videos, photos, and presentations [online](#). Thank you to the government of India and its Ministry of Science and Technology for hosting this amazing event and to the United Nations Statistics Division, the UN-GGIM Secretariat, Tim Trainor and the International Advisory Committee of the Second World Geospatial Information Congress for an inspiring week full of geospatial knowledge sharing, collaboration, and cultural events.

## IGIF GLOBAL COOPERATION

During the session on “Global Cooperation for Implementing the UN-IGIF,” Alina Sushchuk, Head of International Cooperation Division, State Service of Ukraine for Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre, [presented](#) background, accomplishments, and setbacks on Ukraine’s IGIF development. She noted strong geospatial needs for security and future re-construction. Alina shared details on a portal for monitoring the state of social and administrative infrastructure, which contains: a register of objects and destructions, a register of restoration objects, and an interactive map. Alina also highlighted key partnerships with Kartverket Norwegian Mapping Authority, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), World Bank, the European Umbrella Organization for Geographic Information (EUROGI), and the Netherlands’ Cadastre, Land Registry and Mapping Agency (Kadaster).



## IGIF REGIONAL COOPERATION

During the “Regional Cooperation for Implementing the UN-IGIF” session, Álvaro Monett of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean [presented](#) on how the implementation of the IGIF is being promoted in the Americas region. Álvaro stressed the positive impacts of the IGIF, including more effective land administration, improved health care delivery and response, better climate change management, and disaster risk reduction. Álvaro also featured the results of a UN-GGIM: Americas survey of Member States on the implementation status and knowledge of the IGIF in the region.



## IGIF AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL

During the sessions titled “Operationalizing the UN-IGIF at the Country-level,” Co-Chair Dr. Tulu Beshu Bedada moderated an IGIF [panel](#) discussion with Chile, Egypt, and the UAE (pictured: Hamed Khamis Al Kaabi, Director General of the UAE Federal Geographic Information Center). Strategic Advisor John Kedar moderated a similar [panel](#) with Cuba,



Germany, Honduras, and India. Each country presented on their unique IGIF experiences. The presentations were followed by discussion with the audience aimed at sharing IGIF knowledge with other Member States.

## IGIF FOR POLICY AND DECISIONS

During the [session](#) “The UN-IGIF for Transformative Evidence-based Policy Development and Decision Making,” Tim Trainor led a discussion with the Co-Chairs of the HLG-IGIF, Thalia Baldwin (Director Geospatial Commission, UK), Sidney Simelane (Ministry of Agriculture, Eswatini), Lee Schwartz (The Geographer, U.S. Department of State), and Rhian French (PR Director, Three Trees and Map PR). The discussion highlighted how strengthening geospatial information management through IGIF can be one of the most powerful tools to transform and improve evidence-based policy development and decision making, providing a common language across all sectors to guide decisions and support policy agendas. Panelists (pictured below) highlighted that geospatial data adds significant value to all other data, making it a critical component of policy and decision making. Many examples were provided on how geospatial data is transforming policy development and decision making, including food security, border security, climate change management, refugee policy, equitable distribution of disaster assistance aid, and combatting wildlife trafficking.





## PROMOTING GEOSPATIAL



HLG-IGIF Communications Co-Lead, Jamie Clark from the UK (pictured at left) moderated a panel discussion: "Promoting the Usefulness of Geospatial Information and Profession" (panelists pictured below). The HLG-IGIF Co-Chairs [presented](#) on the activities and progress of the HLG and the three working groups (Communications, Capacity Development, and Sustainable Funding), encouraging delegates to engage with the working groups. Ruth Cookman, Senior Policy Advisor from the UK Geospatial Commission, [presented](#) on how the UK is identifying skills deficits and advocating for geospatial skills to be recognized as a profession within the public sector (in the same way as statistics or policy), through the creation of their Government Geography Profession (GGP). Alexandre Caldas, Chair of the UN Geospatial Network and Director at the UNEP, [presented](#) on the UN Geospatial Network, created as a forum to coordinate and strengthen the management and use of geospatial data across the UN system, with IGIF providing a common view that enables collaboration and problem solving. Kais Zouabi, Chief of Solutions - Client Solutions Delivery, then [presented](#) the UN Maps platform, which combines commercial data, open source data, and technology, providing a range of geospatial services within the UN system to deliver critical insights to support IGIF and the achievement of the SDGs.



## IGIF FOR NATIONAL PRIORITIES

During the session "Operationalizing the UN-IGIF According to National Circumstances," several countries shared how the principles and pathways of IGIF are being applied to address national priorities. Gabriela García Seco INEGI, Mexico, [presented](#) a project to detect and improve deprived areas or slums. Soumya Ghosh and Pulak Mishra from the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, India, [presented](#) a project on natural resource management and sustainable rural livelihood in the Sundarbans Region of India. Vahagn Muradyan and Lusine Yeghyan, Cadastre Committee of Armenia, [presented](#) on their NSDI development process. Olive Powell, from the Office for National Statistics (UK) [presented](#) information on a strategic partnership between their mapping and statistical agencies, working together to analyze access to public or private gardens during the pandemic and lockdown restrictions, in order to improve the well-being of the public.



## IGIF FOR TRANSFORMATION

During the "Modernizing and Transforming National Geospatial Information Arrangements" [session](#), experts from Australia, Fiji, Indonesia, Senegal, Tonga, and the U.S. shared how they are using the IGIF to guide transformation. They shared how they are engaging a broad group of stakeholders and aligning plans to national priorities to gain national support, endorsement, and funding. John Nyberg, Working Group on Marine Geospatial Information, shared how the marine domain integrates into the larger IGIF. Abbas Rajabifard, University of Melbourne, shared the importance of NSDIs for transformation and achievement of global/national agendas. Budhendra Bhaduri, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, shared how they created annual high-resolution population distribution and dynamics data sets for two decades, recently released publicly as a complete archive. He shared how the data is used to monitor migration in response to emergency situations across the globe.



## IGIF FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

HLG-IGIF Co-Chair Deirdre Bishop gave a plenary [presentation](#) on how the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework is supporting sustainable development and the wellbeing of society. She tied together the overall theme for the congress “Geo-enabling the Global Village: No one should be left behind,” with the nine strategic pathways of the IGIF. She shared how IGIF is geo-enabling Member States to advance effective policy formulation, decision-making, innovation, and achievement of the SDGs. Deirdre also shared a real life example of how the principles and pathways of the IGIF helped Central American countries respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic.



## RESOURCING FOR IGIF

During the session “Implementing and Resourcing for the IGIF,” Kathrine Kelm, Sr. Land Administration Specialist for the World Bank, [presented](#) information on World Bank structure, their Country Partnership Framework approach, and the World Bank templates and tools used to support IGIF implementation. She also shared specific examples from Mongolia and Vietnam. Andy Coote from ConsultingWhere [presented](#) information on the World Bank implementation methodology, with an emphasis on the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) and guidance for quantifying costs and benefits. He shared specific examples from Moldova and Kyrgyzstan, as well as information on different business models and funding options to consider for IGIF implementation. A free e-learning course on sustainable business models and funding options can be accessed [online](#). Kevin Yue, Principal Economic Advisor in the UK (pictured) [presented](#) on how to make the value case for geospatial investments. He highlighted the [report](#) *Measuring the Economic, Social, and Environmental Value of Public Sector Location Data*, which features a 7-step framework of guidance to help governments more effectively drive the case for needed geospatial investments.



## SDG DATA ALLIANCE

Greg Scott from the UN-GGIM Secretariat led the [session](#): “Making the Difference – SDG Data Alliance, International Collaboration and Partnerships.” Strategic partners Stefan Schweinfest from UNSD, Sergio Fernandez de Cordova from PVBLIC Foundation, and Charles Brigham from Esri shared background and an overview of the development of the SDG Data Alliance, a global partnership between the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, PVBLIC Foundation, Esri, and the United Nations to accelerate achievement of the SDGs. Strategic Advisor John Kedar [presented](#) on the process used to implement the alliance at the country level, including the development of both a National SDG Data Hub and an IGIF Country Action Plan. John shared information on the SDG Data Hub development process, as well as the UN-GGIM approach to development of Country Action Plans, including information on the steps and tools. Finally, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, and Mozambique shared progress and challenges advancing the SDGs, and Andre Nonguierma from the UN Economic Commission for Africa provided insight from an overall Africa perspective.



During the Eleventh Plenary Meeting of UN-GGIM: Asia Pacific, Antonius B. Wijanarto of Indonesia (Co-Lead of the HLG-IGIF Communications Working Group) was selected President of the UN-GGIM: Asia Pacific Regional Committee.

*Congratulations Anton and Mimi!*

## LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

During the Eighth Session of UN-GGIM Africa, Maroale Mimi Chauke of South Africa (Co-Lead of the HLG-IGIF Sustainable Funding Working Group) was selected Chair of the UN-GGIM: Africa Regional Committee.

