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July 2016

Dear Colleagues,

**UN-GGIM International Forum on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters
& WG-Disasters Meeting
Bridgetown, Barbados, 4-5 and 8 September 2016**

We are pleased to announce that the UN-GGIM International Forum on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters, in conjunction with URISA Caribbean GIS Conference, will take place in Bridgetown, Barbados, from 4-5 and 8 September 2016. The Forum will be jointly organized by the Secretariat of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) and the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Americas (UN-GGIM: Americas); in collaboration with the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (URISA), Caribbean Chapter, and in cooperation with the Government of Mexico through the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID); with the technical collaboration of the National System for Territorial Information (SNIT), Chilean Ministry of National Assets, and the Government of China, through the UN-GGIM China Trust Fund.

All required geospatial information to support decision-making at the time of a crisis should be of good quality, and accessible from authoritative sources. The stakeholders involved in the process, use the same geospatial information, thus ensuring a common operational picture of the situation during the emergency response, as well as the recovery and reconstruction phases. However, a fact finding and analysis study, conducted by the Secretariat, has revealed that geospatial data, information and services necessary to support decision-making processes were generally not in place, particularly during the response phase. This issue was magnified in recent large scale events, such as Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan, 2013), Ebola outbreak (2014-2015) and the complex emergency situations in Iraq.

Given the above, UN-GGIM adopted decision 5/110 at its fifth session in August 2015, and established a Working Group to develop and implement a strategic framework on geospatial information and services for disasters. The Working Group, co-chaired by the Philippines and Jamaica, has formulated a UN-GGIM Strategic Framework on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters for 2016-2030. As its main goal, the strategic framework defined that quality geospatial information and services are available and accessible in a timely and coordinated way to support decision-making and operations processes within and across all sectors and phases of the emergency cycle. In this regard, UN-GGIM supported the convening of an international forum on geospatial information and services for disasters at an appropriate time in 2016, with a view of taking a more proactive consultation and facilitating a more informed dialogue on the identified issues.

The UN-GGIM International Forum on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters will provide a platform for discussing the means and methods of implementing the UN-GGIM Strategic Framework on geospatial information and services for disasters that could serve as a new global guideline to ensure the availability and accessibility of quality geospatial information and services across the entire emergency cycle.

We are delighted to send you this announcement letter, and kindly ask that you mark your calendars accordingly. In an effort to inform a wide cross-section of the professional geospatial information community and policy makers, we ask that you share this information with relevant government agencies and other stakeholders in your country.

Further detailed information concerning the forum and the meeting of the Working Group will be posted on the UN-GGIM (<http://ggim.un.org/>) and UN-GGIM: Americas websites (<http://www.un-ggim-americas.org/>) respectively in due course.

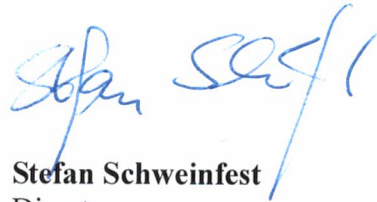
Should you have any questions regarding the forum and meeting, please contact Mr. Timur Obukhov (obukhov@un.org) of the UN-GGIM Secretariat. For information regarding logistical arrangements in Barbados, please contact Ms. Monica Aguayo (monica.aguayo@inegi.org.mx), Executive Secretary of UN-GGIM: Americas.

Together with our co-organizers, we thank you in advance for your attention to this matter and look forward to your positive response and active participation.

Yours sincerely,



Rolando Ocampo
President
UN-GGIM:Américas



Stefan Schweinfest
Director
UN-GGIM Secretariat
United Nations Statistics Division

cc: Mr. Kyoung-Soo Eom
Chief, UN Geospatial Information Section, DFS-ICTD