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**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA

Global Geospatial Information Management (GGIM)
First Meeting

Nairobi, Kenya
23-25 November 2015

**Global Geospatial Information Management
UN-GGIM: Africa**

First Meeting

Concept Note 2.0

1. Background and Justification

At its July 2011 substantive session, following extensive consultation with geospatial experts of Member States, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) considered the report of the Secretary General (E/2011/89) and adopted a resolution to create the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (2011/24). <http://ggim.un.org/about.html>. The United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) initiative was established to create a formal geospatial information coordination mechanism involving Member States as the key stakeholders.

From the preparatory meetings, a general consensus has emerged on the need for a forum to better coordinate the activities of UN agencies, Member States and other international organizations. The various meetings agreed on the need to create a committee of UN experts which/ that will meet to discuss issues that cut across the regions. From Africa's perspective, it was agreed that the continent should develop its own strategy to ensure an active participation in the process.

In August 2011, an African GGIM Preparatory meeting recommended Member States, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Union Commission to finalize and implement an African Action Plan on Geospatial Information Management in meeting the African needs.

The third session of the Committee on Development Information, Science and Technology meeting (CODIST) met on 13th March 2013 and resolved that:

- The oversight and supervisory functions of the CODIST geoinformation subcommittee (CODIST-Geo) be transferred to an equivalent subcommittee of StatCom Africa with the name of UN-GGIM: Africa.
- African countries should participate in and contribute to the work of the UN Committee of Experts on GGIM.

In December 2014, ECA organized in Tunis the inception meeting of the African cluster of UN-GGIM. The meeting was attended by over 30 participants: delegates from 11 African countries, and observers from international organizations including the African Union Commission, the United Nations Secretariat, and the private sector.

The meeting agreed on the practical steps in establishing the UN-GGIM: Africa Committee:

- Setting up a Transitional Bureau with ECA as the Secretariat of the bureau to steer the process toward its international recognition.
- Establishment of four executive working groups and convenors to deal with specific key areas relevant to the continent.
- Organisation of the first meeting to formally endorse and agree on the cluster governance, mechanism and processes.

In August 2015, UN-GGIM: Africa was formally recognized and co-opted at international level during the fifth session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM).

2. Objectives

ECA is providing regional focus and facilitating geospatial information activities in Africa to ensure that it adequately addresses issues, shapes its direction and dimension to reflect the regional interest. In this endeavor, the Commission is organizing the first meeting to develop a common vision and coordinate the contribution for the Africa region to the UN-GGIM initiative.

The United Nations Secretariat has set up (ECOSOC/2011/24) the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management (GGIM) with aims at setting up a formal mechanism under the UN auspices to discuss and coordinate GGIM activities and by involving Member States as the key players. The African cluster (UN-GGIM: Africa) was established during the inception meeting held in December 2014 in Tunis. Member States appointed ECA as the Secretariat of the interim bureau to steer the process toward its international recognition. In August 2015, at its fifth session, UN-GGIM adopted its decision 5/112¹, which formally established UN-GGIM: Africa and confirmed ECA as the Regional Committee's Secretariat.

This first meeting aims at:

- Endorsing formally UN-GGIM: Africa by Member States;
- Discussing the critical aspects and agree on a basic set of concepts, practices, standards and guidelines that are critical to UN-GGIM: Africa operations;
- Reviewing and validating the draft Action Plan being prepared by ECA in conjunction with Member States, and Providing perspectives on the essential activities to be carried out;
- Adopting its rules of procedure and organizational structure with the election of its Bureau, and formalizing the establishment of the working groups that will carry out its work programme for the next few years.

3. Challenges and issues to be addressed

To progress geospatial information benefiting Africans at every level and contribute to the global perspective, requires cohesive and coordinated efforts. This can be achieved by UN-GGIM: Africa implementation, supported by every African country. Five challenges identified are: consensus, political will, leadership, funding and sustainability.

Through its formal endorsement at global level and setting the stage for the development and implementation of UN-GGIM: Africa, the region achieved a key milestone by passing the message that Africa will be a strong partner in developing the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management. It is expected that as part of the larger global organization, this will enable direct transfer of geospatial standards and policies at the regional and national level.

¹ “Noting the excellent progress by the transitional bureau, endorsed the formal establishment of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa (UN-GGIM: Africa) and welcomed UNECA as the Regional Committee's Secretariat;”

ECA is committed to instigating the process by organizing the first UN-GGIM-Africa meeting, in Nairobi over the period 23-25 November 2015. It is critical that as many African countries as possible are represented at this meeting to gain the consensus and drive the political will.

4. Objectives, format and Expected outcome of the meeting

The primary objective of the meeting is to discuss, adopt and endorse a regional body charter to coordinate UN-GGIM activities in Africa.

Specifically, the meeting will review and improve technical documents prepared by ECA and provide perspectives on the essential activities to be carried out. National experts may present a brief perspective on the subject based on current developments in their sector and/or country. The presentations will be discussed and reviewed for relevance, coherence and complementarities in relation to the African situation and international status. These will be taken into consideration in finalizing outcomes, which shall be disseminated to all Member States, as the Africa contribution to UN-GGIM.

Topics

The meeting will review the critical aspects in articulating the UN-GGIM: Africa's:

- Governance structure and modus operandi
- Action plan with framework of priority actions, milestones and related costs
- Terms of reference of the Working Groups

5. Outcomes

The UN-GGIM: Africa meeting is expected to discuss the overarching topic of geospatial information governance and recommend any action, which may be required to guide Member States efforts in achieving a better coordination mechanism for geospatial information management.

The main outcome will be an action plan in a form of check-list of desirable actions for high-level decision-makers so as to steer the future development of the UN-GGIM in Africa.

The first meeting outcomes will encourage that more regionalized progress is made and that every region delivers its responsibility to contribute to the UN-GGIM vision globally. The outcome will lay the path to better geospatial data management, a basis and major component for the spatial data infrastructure development activity. It will strengthen the capacity of African countries to leverage the existing capabilities of geospatial information technology for various socio-economic sectors, environment monitoring, disaster management, etc.

6. Venue and Date

The three-day meeting will take place on 23-25 November 2015. The venue of the meeting is the Headquarters of the Regional Centre for Monitoring Resources for Development (RCMRD), in Nairobi, Kenya.

7. Participants

The following participants will be invited to the preparatory meeting:

- Heads of National Institutions in charge of mapping activities within African Countries, as well as others in the geospatial industry.
- High-level experts selected from academia, research institutions, and the private sector.
- Representatives of sub-regional and regional organizations.
- Partners and other stakeholders' producers and users of geospatial information.

8. Administrative Arrangements and Logistics

Contacted participants are requested to confirm their participation to ECA as soon as possible, but not later than 21st September 2015. ECA will organize the local logistics arrangement including hotel reservations, airport reception and transportation to and from hotels. Participants will be responsible for organising their entry visas and vaccinations prior to their travel.

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