

## **Notes from the UN-EG-ISGI Consultation Meeting<sup>1</sup>**

The UN Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information (UN EG-ISGI) convened a 3-hour consultative meeting in Beijing, on Saturday 25 October 2014, occurring between the High Level Forum on UN Global Geospatial Information Management (22-24 October) and the International Conference on Big Data for Official Statistics (28-31 October). A brief account is reported in the following notes:

### **1. Attendees:**

The meeting had the following attendees:

Graeme Brown (Australia)

Jarid Abdalluyev (Azerbaijan)

Claudio Stenner (Brazil)

Rolando Ocampo (Mexico)

Vincent Osier (USA)

Seung-weon Shin and two other representatives from the Republic of Korea

Denise McKenzie (OGC)

Stefan Schweinfest (UNSD)

Greg Scott (UNSD)

Ayako Kagawa (UNCS)

### **2. Country presentation:**

The Korean representatives started the meeting with a country presentation, mainly focussing on their grid based approach to statistical information.

### **3. Agenda items**

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Rolando Ocampo, co-Chair of the EG-ISGI from Mexico, and Mr. Graeme Brown, representing the second co-Chair of the Expert Group from Australia.

#### **Agenda Item 1 – Review summary report of Global Forum on the ISGI and implications for EG-ISGI Work Programme (WP)**

The meeting focussed on the four conclusion points of the summary report of the Global Forum on the Integration of Geospatial and Statistical Information, which took place in New York in August 2014, in conjunction with the fourth session of UN-GGIM. Two of these conclusion points (using the 2020 round of Population Censuses as enablers, and development of a global statistical-spatial framework (SSF)) were already part of the EG-ISGI working programme. The other conclusion points were:

##### **(a) Coordination and institutional integration between national statistical and geospatial agencies.**

Mr. Rolando Ocampo introduced this point by highlighting that having a country's statistical and geospatial responsibilities co-located in a single agency did not necessarily lead to coordination/integration. Until recently the statistical and geospatial staff in the National Institute of Statistics and Geography in Mexico worked almost independently. Both Brazil and the UNSD said there were similar challenges in their organizations. Mr. Ocampo said this had improved recently, but it was quite an effort.

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<sup>1</sup> These notes, taken by Graeme Brown, from Australia, are not formally edited but just reviewed by UN-GGIM Secretariat.

Mr. Graeme Brown suggested that such coordination/integration between these communities was more a cultural issue than an organizational/structural issue. He suggested that a single global questionnaire could be used to:

- (i) Determine countries perceptions of the true level of coordination/integration
- (ii) Collect best practice examples of how countries had achieved coordination/integration
- (iii) Collect suggestions of untested mechanisms to improve coordination/integration.

There was some support for this suggestion, though Mr. Ocampo expressed some concern about adding to the work programme.

- (b) A common statistical and geospatial community voice in Post-2015 Development Agenda Fora

**It was agreed that the co-chairs of the EG-ISGI should lead this representation of the joint communities.**

Before closing this first agenda item, another possible implication for the EG-ISGI work programme from the summary report was identified. In particular, the issue of privacy /confidentiality was a worthy candidate. Mr. Ocampo reiterated his concern to add to the work programme, preferring to focus on completing the current work programme items. The USA and Brazil were of the opinion that privacy/confidentiality (and many of the work programme items), should be covered by the global statistical-spatial framework (SSF). Mr. Brown, as the lead country for this work programme item, explained that the global SSF was intended to be a high level, overarching, principles based framework, and would not cover the detail contained in many work programme items.

Mr. Stefan Schweinfest, UNSD Director, agreed to include the confidentiality/privacy issue as a work programme item, but cautioned that this would need a lead country to progress. Mr. Brown responded that this would be the case, but it was important to include such items in case there was an EG member country willing to lead. This was accepted.

### **Agenda Item 2 – Review progress on existing Work Programme (WP) items; consider further items and priorities and candidate EG-ISGI members to lead WP items**

The meeting worked through each of the WP items.

#### WP item 1: Develop Global SSF (lead: Australia)

Mr. Brown asked what the process was to have the SSF adopted once finalised. The USA and Brazil again suggested that this would need to wait until the other WP items were complete, and Mr. Brown again re-emphasised the overarching, principles based nature of the framework. Ms Denise McKenzie, from Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC), requested that the current version be sent to her so that she could gain feedback from her constituency (*now provided*). Mr. Schweinfest suggested that the UNSC and UN-GGIM would be the endorsing fora. What this item showed was a lack of clarity regarding the SSF work programme item, but this can be resolved via clarifying notes (see below).

#### WP Item 2: Develop an international Conference Proposal (lead: Australia)

Completed.

#### WP Item 3: Develop a global questionnaire on geographical classifications/practices and geocoding practices (lead: Australia)

The report was almost finished. There was a need to circulate the report to EG members for final comments and then submit it to UNSC and UN-GGIM. Mr. Schweinfest had some concern that the next UNSC and UN-GGIM meetings were 6 months apart, but Mr. Brown said the report was non-controversial, did not require endorsement and was largely for information.

Mr. Vince Osier, from US Census Bureau, requested a copy of the current draft report (*now provided*).

WP Item 4: Research genesis, advantages/disadvantages of grid based vs admin based approaches  
(lead: USA)

Mr. Osier had undertaken quite a bit of research and compiled a bibliography of the approaches. He had also compiled an “off the top of his head” list of advantages/disadvantages. **He agreed to secure feedback from the other five WP item nominee countries and update the EG at the May 2015 meeting, along with a timeline for completing this item.**

WP Item 5: Reach out to metadata standards groups in the statistical and geospatial communities  
(lead: UNSD)

Not a lot of progress on this item. Ms. Denise McKenzie, from OGC, was keen to be involved. She was of the view that the statistical standards were far more progressed than the geospatial standards. Mr. Greg Scott, from UN-GGIM Secretariat/UNSD, mentioned that this was a very broad item with unclear scope (e.g. he felt that standards such as SDMX and the ISO19100 Geographic Information Standards had different objectives and intent). Mr. Brown suggested that SDMX was more a data transfer tool rather than a metadata standard per se. This item clearly needed clarification.

Mr. Brown informed the meeting that the Australian Bureau of Statistics was working with INEGI/Mexico on metadata standards, and this work was including both geospatial and statistical perspectives. While the main purpose of this work was for the High-Level Group for Strategic Developments in Business Architecture in Statistics (HLG-BAS), it may be an appropriate input for this WP item. He undertook to provide this work to UNSD when it is ready.

While it was clear during the discussion on this WP item that greater clarity was required, this didn't only apply to this WP item (see WP items 1 and 4). **It was agreed that a scoping note of a few paragraphs would be prepared for each WP item describing the scope of the WP item, where we are and the plan for completing the item.**

WP Item 6: Determine a common terminology (lead: European Commission)

As the European Commission (EC) was not represented at the meeting and they had not been able to be contacted, no progress report was available. **UNSD agreed to contact the EC to determine the progress.** It was unclear who in the EC should be contacted, and Mr. Brown suggested that the report of the first EG meeting should include the EC representative at that meeting, and they were the likely volunteer.

This was another example of a WP item requiring clarification.

WP Item 7: 2020 Round of Population Censuses (lead: UNSD)

UNSD reported that the relevant 2020 Census Guide chapter was now complete. There was still the opportunity to input to relevant 2020 Census handbooks. It was proposed to invite the UN-GGIM (probably Mr. Rolando Ocampo) to the next 2020 Census round meeting. It was also noted that geospatial guidance was given to the 2010 census round, and **UNSD agreed to find out what the intent was for the 2020 Census round.**

Mr. Brown expressed the concern that progress on this WP item focussed on documentation, which may not be effective ‘on the ground’. For example, will some references in Guides and Handbooks lead to the required geospatial focus? He noted that UNFPA provided considerable technical advisory support to Censuses in developing countries, and suggested that these advisors could be engaged to ensure such geospatial focus. **UNSD agreed to undertake this engagement.**

WP Item 8: Develop WP schedule, with dates and responsibilities (lead: UNSD)

Work in progress (and the main purpose of the consultation meeting).

WP Item 9: Finalise and seek endorsement by UNSC and UN-GGIM of ToR, WP and Conference

Completed (with WP evolving).

**Agenda item 3 - Timing and location of next EG meeting**

Ms. McKenzie made a couple of suggestions re dates to link with geospatial meetings. Unfortunately these were in March and not suitable. Mr. Schweinfest was strongly of the view that a meeting separate to other meetings was highly desirable, so that it wasn't treated as a "side event".

May 2015 (or thereabouts) was felt to be a good time. A European location was favoured (to gain greater EU involvement), but New York was certainly an option. A tele-conference in a few week's time will be organised by UNSD with the co-chairs to progress this issue.