THIRD MEETING OF THE UN EXPERT GROUP ON THE INTEGRATION OF STATISTICAL AND GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION

Paris, France, 25-26-Avril 2016

STATEMENT OF UNSD

Dear colleagues,

On behalf of Mr. Stefan Schweinfest, Director of the United Nations Statistics Division, it is my pleasure to welcome you to this third meeting of the UN Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information. I would like to thank you for taking time of your busy schedule to participate in this meeting and share your experience with your colleagues from other countries and organizations.

The geospatial and statistical professional communities are major contributors of information used as evidence in decision-making processes across many sectors, both public and private. With the increasing complexity of national, regional and global challenges and issues, the need to understand the interrelationships across the economic, social and environmental pillars is becoming critical. In today's global community, there is a clear recognition of the need to and value of linking geospatial information and statistical information to improve the relevance of the evidence on which decisions will be made. **The challenge being faced is how best to achieve this integration in an effective and consistent way, including for mutual benefits for both communities**.

The United Nations Statistical Commission and the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management are addressing the challenges of managing and effectively integrating geospatial and statistical information nationally and globally. In 2013, in each of their

respective annual sessions, they "acknowledged the critical importance of integrating geospatial information with statistics and socio-economic data and the development of a geospatial-statistical framework, especially in the context of the on-going debate on the post-2015 development agenda". They have established our Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information tasked with developing and advancing the implementation of a global statistical-geospatial framework as a standard for the integration of statistical and geospatial information.

The United Nations Statistics Division, in collaboration with the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information, convened the first Global Forum on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information in New York, 4-5 August 2104. As a way of reaching out and developing best practices, bringing together both the statistical and geospatial professional communities, the Global Forum brought together more than 200 senior leaders, from 73 countries, to discuss the strategic vision and goals for the integration of statistical and geospatial information.

The participants in the Global Forum, as well as in the first two meetings of the Expert Group held respectively in New York in 2013 and Lisbon in 2015, have acknowledged that data collection, processing, analysis and operations are important, but more important are the access to and sharing of data, and particularly the communication of related information and knowledge sought by end users. Providing a greater geographic context for population census information was also an important driver that was noted by the participants. In this regard, there was agreement that the 2020 Round of Censuses offer an opportunity to enhance the geospatial capabilities of NSOs, for which institutional coordination and cooperation between the statistical and geospatial agencies within a country are vitally important and key factors to the success of the integration.

Furthermore, in these three events, experts discussed how to best contribute to the Sustainable

Development Goals process. As you may now, the UN Statistical Commission at its last session in March has agreed on a global indicator framework, which includes 230 global indicators proposed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs). Subsequently, two weeks later, IAEG has established, a sub-group on Geospatial Information in recognition that many indicators should be disaggregated by their geographic location. In this context, our Expert Group needs to discuss how it can make contributions to the agreed indicator framework for monitoring progress towards achievement of the SDGs and fit in this process of the implementation of the indicator framework.

Dear colleagues

Let me conclude by expressing, once again, my appreciation for your participation and assuring you that our Co-Chairs Gemma and Rolando and I are committed to assisting you to make this meeting a success. I wish you a very productive and successful meeting.

Thank you