



**Second Meeting of the
United Nations Subcommittee on Geodesy
22-23 November 2018
Deqing, China**

Concept Note

Background

The Global Geodetic Reference Frame (GGRF) is the foundation of virtually every aspect of the collection, management, and use of national geospatial information and global monitoring of the Earth. The GGRF underpins Earth and Climate Science; Economic Development and Sustainability; Public Safety and Disaster Management; Land and Water Administration, and; Environmental Management and many other applications. Considering the importance of the GGRF, in February 2015, Member States adopted General Assembly resolution 69/2661, entitled ‘A Global Geodetic Reference Frame for Sustainable Development’. A road map for the enhancement and sustainability of the GGRF was subsequently developed by then Working Group on Geodesy, which was subsequently elevated to the Subcommittee on Geodesy (SCoG) and was provided to the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) at its sixth session, held in August 2016. At that session, the Committee endorsed the road map and the establishment of a SCoG and requested the SCoG to determine its modalities and methods of work.

At the Eighth Session of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), the SCoG had its revised Terms of Reference endorsed. This provided the SCoG with the following objectives:

- Provide an intergovernmental forum, with equitable regional representation, for cooperation and exchange of dialogue on issues relating to the maintenance, sustainability and enhancement of, and access to, the Global Geodetic Reference Frame (GGRF);
- Provide governmental strategic leadership and vision on the management and development of geodetic strategy and policies;
- Develop an implementation plan for the GGRF road map;
- Develop, as part of the implementation plan, considerations for additional governance mechanisms in order to effectively enhance the implementation of the road map for the GGRF, particularly with respect to those governance mechanisms being owned and driven by Member States, with the aim of eventually implementing the proposed mechanism;



- Encourage open sharing of geodetic data and information that contribute to the implementation of global, regional and national reference frames, and their inter-relationships;
- Advocate for guidelines and standards to advance the interoperability of geodetic systems and data;
- Address various technical, institutional and policy issues related to the implementation of global geodesy;
- Maintain a dialogue between Member States and the non-government international geodetic community;
- Pursue the implementation of the GGRF road map in cooperation with the International Association of Geodesy (IAG) and the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG);
- Encourage and provide mechanisms for capacity development and knowledge transfer in the field of geodesy among Member States;
- Provide, through outreach, advocacy for the global geodesy as the basis upon which all spatial data and positioning activities should be founded; and
- Continue outreach and communication, particularly with appropriate regional initiatives and activities.

The SCoG works closely with the Regional UN-GGIM geodesy working groups, national geodetic agencies, and the global geodetic community to continue the implementation of the road map towards the vision.

Context

At its first meeting in Mexico City, in November 2017, the SCoG collectively discussed and set its work plan for the year, including developing the implementation plan of the roadmap for the GGRF, further establishing the governance plan for the SCoG, and received feedback from its focus groups (Geodetic Infrastructure, Education, Training and Capacity Building, Communications and Outreach, Policy, Standards and Conventions and Governance), now is the time to build on the work of the SCoG.

At its eighth session in August 2018, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 8/103, which:

- a) Endorsed the revised terms of reference for the SCoG in order to provide clearer modalities and working procedures, subject to minor amendments proposed by Member States;
- b) Commended the progress towards the road map implementation plan and the development of a position paper of governance;
- c) Suggested that the consultations on the establishment of an international organization and a convention on geodesy and the consultations on associated financial resources should take into consideration the wider mandate, scope and modalities of the Committee of Experts and should be guided by Member States; and,
- d) Encouraged broader participation in the activities of the SCoG, particularly from African countries.

The “Road Map for the Global Geodetic Reference Frame for Sustainable Development Implementation Plan”¹ is the third step within the UN-GGIM process of improving the sustainability, and enhancing the quality, of the GGRF. The Implementation Plan recognises five key focus areas: 1. Geodetic Infrastructure; 2. Policies, Standards, and Conventions; 3. Education, Training, and Capacity Building; 4.

¹ <http://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/8th-Session/documents/Road-Map-Implementation-Plan.pdf>



Appropriate Governance; and, 5. Outreach and Communication. The items 4 and 5 underpin the infrastructure focus areas of items 1, 2, and 3. Each of these focus areas has a responsible focus group, composed of Member States and Subject Matter Experts. The chapters of the Implementation Plan details measures of successes and recommendations for each of the focus areas.

Complementing the Implementation Plan is the “Position paper – Appropriate governance arrangements²”. The paper discusses attributes of ideal governance mechanisms, examines the Implementation Plan, and provides recommendations with respect to appropriate governance mechanisms.

Objective

The objective of SCoG’s second meeting, in accordance with its terms of reference, will be to discuss, deliberate and collectively work through issues of importance to SCoG including:

- i) Examine and discuss the recommendations and actions described in the Road Map Implementation Plan and the Governance Position Paper;
- ii) Develop the work plan for the SCoG that aims to enact the actions from the implementation plan for the GGRF Road Map;
- iii) Provide a dedicated focus session on Education Training and Capacity Building;
- iv) Plans for outreach and communication, particularly with appropriate regional initiatives and activities; and,
- v) Strengthen ties and arrangements between SCoG and the Regional Committee of UN-GGIM Asia-Pacific’s working group 1 on Geodesy.

The meeting will include an open discussion about national geodetic issues, emphasizing how the SCoG work plan can help to address national geodetic issues and priorities.

Participation

The second meeting of the SCoG is hosted by China as part of the United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (UNWGIC)³ in Deqing, Zhejiang Province, China, 22 – 23 November 2018. The business of the SCoG is closed for members and observers of the SCoG on Thursday morning 09:00am – 12:30pm, with the **meeting of the SCoG open to observers following this**. Registration at the UNWGIC is required to receive the appropriate access passes to the meeting venue.

The UNWGIC has the overarching theme: “The Geospatial Way to a Better World’. The UNWGIC will provide Member States and geospatial information stakeholders the unique opportunity to exchange knowledge, practices and experiences and afford peer-to-peer learning on strategies, approaches and methods to support sub-national, national and regional initiatives towards increasing availability, accessibility and application of high-quality, reliable and timely geospatial information for sustainable development and will hold sessions relevant to the SCoG and the global geodetic community.

² <http://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/8th-Session/documents/Position-Paper-on-Governance.pdf>

³ <http://ggim.un.org/unwgic/>

