

Meeting of the Expanded Bureau
Summary Notes
24 January 2024
INEGI Aguascalientes, Mexico

1. The Co-Chair (Mexico) **welcomed participants and introduced the composition of the Expanded Bureau**, and the Co-Chair (Belgium) added her greetings and reminded that decisions rest with the Bureau and with Member States. Further, she noted that the Bureau is looking for consensus. The Co-Chair (Côte d'Ivoire) added his welcome.

The Director of UN Statistics Division welcomed everyone and thanked the host for all its arrangements, organization and hospitality. He noted the good participation and attendance and informed about the positive development regarding the establishment of the seven regular budget posts for the Secretariat of the Committee of Experts. He thanked Member States for their engagement and efforts to have these posts for the Secretariat. He also recalled the recent side event at the recent SDG Summit in September 2023 which contributed to the awareness and the positive development and establishment of the Secretariat with the seven posts.

The Co-Chair (Mexico) thanked the SDG Data Alliance who contributed resources to the event - sponsored lunches for all five days.

2. The Co-Chair (Mexico) presented the **agenda and organization of the meeting** as follows:

1. Welcome and introduction.
2. Agenda and organization of the meeting.
3. Report of the Committee of Experts on its Thirteenth Session.
4. Resolution E/RES/2022/24 and the UN regular budget proposal for the establishment of a Secretariat for the Committee.
5. Seventh High-level Forum on Global Geospatial Information Management.
6. United Nations Geospatial Centres of Excellence.
7. United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework.
8. Contribution of regional committees to the global geospatial information agenda.
9. UN-GGIM functional groups and the substantive agenda of the Committee of Experts.
10. Geospatial information for climate and resilience.
11. Future Geospatial Information Ecosystem.
12. Contribution of thematic networks to the global geospatial information agenda.
13. Overview of the preparation for the fourteenth session as well as expert, plenary and regional meetings, international seminars and forums, and expert consultations.
14. Other matters.
15. Summary, next steps and close.

The meeting agreed to proceed with the agenda and proposed organization of work for the Expanded Bureau and the participants, noting the 'grounds' to be cover.

3. Report of the Committee of Experts on its Thirteenth Session

The Director, UNSD informed that ECOSOC took note of the report of the Committee of Experts, approved the dates of the upcoming Fourteenth Session (7-9 Aug 2024), the provisional agenda and the documentation of the session. The Director further informed it will work on the preparation and organization of the meetings of the Fourteenth Session.

The Director referred to the Statistical Commission that has a ‘multi-year programme’ and all agenda items are not considered annually. He suggested there could be a case for prioritization of agenda items and for consolidating the agenda.

The Co-Chair (Belgium) mentioned the need to keep the agenda ‘living’ and that considerations could be done for 2025 (Fifteenth Session) given the length of the process to determine the provisional agenda for upcoming sessions. The Co-Chair (Belgium) further suggested that for the upcoming session, reports be provided in a timely manner, and should a report not be available by a certain date, it should not be brought before the Committee for deliberation. Countries needed time to consider and formulate their national positions.

The Secretariat presented the current of activities and work programme and participants noted the achievements of the UN-GGIM, and highlighted, going forward, the need to re-focus all functional groups towards “implementation, implementation, implementation” as Member States wanted guidance and the “how”, against more frameworks and norms.

4. Resolution E/RES/2022/24 and the UN regular budget proposal for the establishment of a Secretariat for the Committee

The Secretariat provided background on the past decade, the development of the work programme and substantive content, and further reiterated the focus must be on implementation for the next period. The Secretariat recalled that in late 2023, seven new posts were approved under the regular budget (RB), two centres were established and one more is proposed for Saudi Arabia, all with extrabudgetary resources (XB). The Secretariat noted challenges with XB posts, as they are limited in time and scope/theme. The Secretariat noted RB posts are critical for the services of the Secretariat and that arrangements until now were not sustainable, as the Director, UNSD had to redeploy resources from other sections of the Division. The new (now formally established) Secretariat of the Committee of Experts composed of seven posts, part of the regular budget, and therefore are grounded in the Organization’s annual budgetary mechanisms. The new Secretariat posts will contribute significantly to the work programme of the Committee.

The Director, UNSD discussed the reform of the Inter-Regional Advisor system and the loss of the post at the senior level (P6/D1) for global geospatial information management. The Director acknowledged the challenges associated with the need for experience, in particular to sustainably lead the Secretariat at the substantive level. The Director presented, beyond the newly approved posts, the current staffing level and organigramme, and noted that there were only three RB posts, the IRA (removed), a Senior Statistician (a project post until 2030), and the recent three recruitments which are XB (UN-GGKIC) posts. The Secretariat further clarified the following:

- the United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence (UN-GGCE) has four XB posts, two national secondments and virtual secondment arrangements.
- the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre (UN-GGKIC) has nine XB posts in China, and three XB posts based in UNHQ, see below.
- the Geospatial Information Management Section in UNSD in New York has three RB posts (P4, P3, G6), three XB (P4, P3, G6 from UN-GGKIC see above) one GTA post (P5 expiring in 2030).
- There will be 7 new RB posts ((P5, P4, 2P3, 2P2, G6) for the Secretariat of the Committee of Experts.
- a deputy director/branch chief position (D1) under RB to lead the Environmental Statistics and Geospatial Information Branch, to be recruited, and to provide the substantive leadership for the geospatial agenda.

- The centre in Riyadh can have up to eight XB posts.
- The new posts, especially under RB, will be advertised for at least 45 days.

The Director noted the length of the administrative process to recruit and that overall, the ‘geospatial workforce’ in DESA/SD could be around +/- 35 positions.

The Director also informed of his impending retirement in June 2025, and that of the Senior Statistician (Geospatial - P5) in December 2024. The Secretariat emphasized that the priority will be on the recruitment of the new ‘leadership team’ in New York, and encouraged Member States to publicize these job opportunities, noting that these senior positions are likely to be filled by external candidates.

The Co-Chair (Mexico) expressed excitement on the start of the new phase for UN-GGIM and over the establishment of a Secretariat for the Committee of Experts. She emphasized the importance of the work done by Representatives of Member States over the past period through their Permanent Missions to support the establishment of the Secretariat.

USA expressed its excitement as well on the establishment of the Secretariat and sought clarifications on the initial ask for 12 professional-level staff, and if the new Deputy Director (D1) of the Environmental Statistics and Geospatial Information Branch would be in effect to replace the departure/discontinuation of the IRA? The Director clarified that the new Branch Chief (D1) would be in charge of Environmental Statistics and Geospatial Information Branch. There are the seven new RB posts and also three XB posts sponsored through the UN-GGKIC, in addition to the existing three RB posts. The Director expressed the hope and the plan to recruit the senior positions by August ahead of the Fourteenth session, and to again, lay the foundation for the next phase of UN-GGIM.

The Co-Chair (Belgium) provided background on process, expressed satisfaction on the establishment of the Secretariat and expressed her disappointment on the discontinuation of the IRA position. She noted the selection process for the D1 is important to ensure appropriate expertise for UN-GGIM. She further noted the challenges in the upcoming transition period that will hinder bringing new priority work streams into UN-GGIM.

The Director agreed with the challenges, the need for leadership, and the sustainability of the Secretariat, and that recruitment will be key.

The Netherlands agreed with the Director and noted that ‘architecture’ is key for the future and highlighted that the selection of strong leadership for the Secretariat is key. He further noted there should be a managing position and a senior substantive position for geospatial. He suggested the management and senior substantive persons should have a say in the selection of the other positions and expressed hope to soon enjoy a stronger geospatial team.

The Netherlands also emphasized the needed leadership of the Co-Chairs, and suggested only one Co-Chair be rotated off each year. He expressed his satisfaction with current Co-Chairs and the hope that they remain on board during this transition period.

The Director expressed similar desire for continuity and experience, and though no rule exists to limit the number of terms for Co-Chairs, there is a need for geographical representation. He remarked that the Statistical Commission is envious of the UN-GGIM’s architecture including an Expanded Bureau, with regional committees and thematic networks.

5. Seventh High-level Forum on Global Geospatial Information Management

The Co-Chair (Mexico) provided an update on the upcoming Seventh High-level Forum (7HLF) to be held in Mexico City from 8 to 10 October (Monday 7 October will be the Eleventh plenary meeting of UN-GGIM: Americas at INEGI Mexico City). She welcomed everyone and encouraged attendance. She provided an update on the ongoing planning and progress to prepare the venue, which is not confirmed for now. She noted that the tender for the venue had started and should be announced in April 2024 and further logistical guidance and arrangements are to be provided then. The 7HLF will be all in plenary at one venue and with opening and closing sessions, there will be 10 plenary sessions. The Co-Chairs requested for three keynote/high-level speakers, one for each day, with a particular focus to set the “tone” for the day. She expected the number of participants to reach 250 and confirmed that the Secretariat will provide the website for the 7HLF. The registration modality will be further defined.

The Co-Chair (Mexico) called for support to the arrangement, planning and organizing the substantive agenda through an Advisory Committee, that need to be done soonest to ensure the agenda and speakers identified, approached and confirmed. She also called for the support of everyone to have international and regional speakers, particularly from outside our traditional geospatial community. The speakers should be at the highest level and be inspirational, such as eminent scientists, global advocates, and climate change experts or leaders in countries. She requested that the 7HLF be an opportunity to showcase the benefits of geospatial information for society, environment, and the economy. She also expressed the opportunity and importance of preparing for the post 2030 Agenda, climate action and the desire to place geospatial at the centre of Post 2030 Agenda. She called for a small and focused advisory committee.

UN-GGIM-AP (Indonesia) wished to have an inter-regional committee meeting at the 7HLF and to be an observer at the Eleventh plenary meeting of UN-GGIM: Americas. The Co-Chair (Mexico) agreed to the request and the need for appropriate arrangement given the smaller number of participants. The UN-GGIM: Europe (Netherlands) seconded the proposal to convene the inter-regional committee meeting and requested a specific segment for Europe. The UN-GGIM: Americas (Chile) agreed to have other regional committees participate in its plenary meeting.

The Co-Chair (Belgium) expressed her preference for the inter-regional committee meeting to be held in New York during the Fourteenth session, in view of the potential challenge of attendance by some countries. She noted the theme of the 7HLF and the role the Task Team on Geospatial Information on Climate Resilience and requested their involvement in the Advisory Committee. The Co-Chair (Mexico) hoped that representatives of Member States would extend invitations to other ministries to attend the 7HLF, given that it represents a good opportunity to showcase to those outside the geospatial community, including space agencies.

The UN-GGKIC (Head) mentioned that the 7HLF is a key event and wished to work closely with or on the Advisory Committee. He offered to support a segment on capacity building at the 7HLF such as a workshop on UN-IGIF, possibly focusing on Latin America. He further expressed interest to support the wider community.

6. United Nations Geospatial Centres of Excellence

The **UN-GGKIC (Head)** introduced the role of the centre and the intention to work closely with the regional committees and thematic networks. He expressed his wish to work in collaborative manner with Member States. He informed that he had discussed with UNDP to understand perspectives for

capacity development and noted the ongoing activities of the HLG-IGIF. He considered key focus of the centre's programme should be how geospatial data can support the SDGs, to share information and best practices on making available data and tools to monitor progress on the SDGs. He offered support to countries, and particularly developing countries, to prepare their country-level Action Plan, and noted that the national circumstances could vary greatly from one region to another and suggested regional workshops on implementing the UN-IGIF. He also aims to have a think tank with international experts to design future geospatial use for next 10 years period.

The **UN-GGCE (Head)** introduced the challenges of the global geodesy supply chain and the focus of the Centre on partnerships. He further informed of the Strategic and Operating Plan, endorsed by IAC in 2023 and its upcoming public release. He noted the establishment of the team and the ongoing staffing (UN recruitment). He noted that strong political support for geodesy is required for 1) SDGs and 2) social, environmental and economic benefits. He informed of his intent to focus on work with Member States to increase impact, to improve political support, and to do more on capacity development and standards. He highlighted the priority of the Centre is to operationalize and sustain, to develop evidence and awareness, and to foster a joint development plan. The UN-GGCE welcomed the inputs from the Expanded Bureau for the development of the joint development plan.

Côte d'Ivoire suggested to have a "Listening Tour" on Geodesy with the UN-GGIM: Africa and UN-GGCE informed the date will be confirmed soon.

The Co-Chair (Mexico) suggested that the centres should play a key role in the upcoming 7HLF which was welcomed by the UN-GGCE.

USA congratulated and appreciated the UN-GGCE strategic and operational plan, and welcomed the opportunity offered by UN-GGKIC for working closely with HLG-IGIF. She further inquired whether UN-GGKIC is developing its strategic and operational plan, and further requested clarification on staffing and the organigram.

The UN-GGKIC clarified that it is currently developing its work plan and directions might depend on activities to be conducted in upcoming years. He informed the Bureau that the first meeting of the IAC of UN-GGKIC will be held in April 2024 to develop the strategic plan. He clarified on staffing, that the staffing requirement should be around 60 staff and would also need voluntary contribution as well.

The USA sought clarification on the structure and organigram presented and the relationship with the national bodies in China. UN-GGKIC clarified there are local-level collaboration given the centre is hosted at a county-level.

A participant (SDG Data Alliance) inquired about the meeting of the UN-GGKIC: IAC, and commented that its Terms of Reference is yet to be adopted. The Director, UNSD commented that the upcoming meeting of UN-GGKIC Steering Committee (in late February) and IAC (late April) should provide the substantive governance for the UN-GGKIC. The participant inquired whether the work programme of UN-GGKIC will be endorsed by the Steering Committee and IAC?

USA wished to receive confirmation of the dates for the upcoming UN-GGKIC IAC meeting. UN-GGKIC indicated it hoped to have the meeting around 14 April 2024. The Co-Chair (Belgium) informed that the exact dates should be confirmed and conveyed as soon as possible.

UN-GGKIC agreed to collaborate on any UN-IGIF implementation and would welcome cooperation with SDG Data Alliance. A participant (SDG Data Alliance) recalled the UN-GGKIC has three mandated priorities with underpinning priorities/key areas.

The Co-Chair (Belgium) concurred that the mandated priorities in the UN-GGKIC are the starting point for the work programme of the UN-GGKIC, and that the IAC can advise on detailing the key areas and activities. She noted further that the IAC can then develop the strategic plan with UN-GGKIC and UN-GGKIC team can then operationalize the plan. The Co-Chair thanked everyone for their contribution to the discussion and look forward to the UN-GGKIC preparing the strategic plan in consultation with the IAC.

Netherlands mentioned some topics and implementation activities of UN-IGIF should be within the scope of the UN-GGKIC as discussed in the HLG-IGIF plenary meeting.

Saudi Arabia provided an update on its initiative to establish a United Nations **Global Geospatial Ecosystem Centre** and expressed that the vision and the role of the Centre must be aligned with the expectations of the UN-GGIM. He outlined three key items and mentioned that efforts to formalizing the Host Country Agreement and the MoU are ongoing. He informed participants that the centre could be dedicated to the implementation of UN-IGIF, to the integration of various components or elements of the geospatial ecosystem, and to promote the future geospatial information ecosystem.

South Africa referred to the updates from the two centres and with the third on the way. She expressed concerns on the potential for duplication of the activities by these centres. The Co-Chair (Belgium) expressed the need to avoid duplication, called for the IAC of the UN-GGKIC to meet and for IACs of both centres to ensure respective work programmes do not overlap, including the centre in Riyadh.

Indonesia expressed need for a repository of information and knowledge for UN-GGIM and UN-IGIF. He noted the challenge of finding the information required on the website. He requested a solution for ensuring information on the website is easily discoverable and with easy navigation.

The Geospatial Societies thanked the presenters for the updates on the centres and suggested that the Societies could contribute to areas such as training and education. The Co-Chair (Belgium) noted that capacity transfer including training falls within the remit of UN-GGKIC. The Private Sector Network wished to support and to bring expertise to the centre and recalled its past work on the future geospatial information ecosystem. The Co-Chair (Belgium) appreciated Saudi Arabia's readiness to fill the UN-GGIM requirement "gap".

The Secretariat noted there is no need to develop solutions to chase problems and suggested that Saudi Arabia should address the pressing needs, in coordination with other centres. He emphasized the need to have a rolling work plan. Saudi Arabia suggested its proposed centre could "think big and start small". He reiterated their availability to support developing countries.

7. United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework

The Co-Chair of the HLG-IGIF (USA) summarized the main outcomes from the Third plenary meeting held earlier in the week. She noted the good attendance and productive discussions during the meeting. She informed of the agreement to have monthly meetings of its leadership team and the Secretariat, and to further extend the invitation, twice a year, to both the Chairs of the regional committees and the UN-GGKIC to ensure coherence and synergies to support countries in the

implementation of UN-IGIF. She expressed the intention to hold its Fourth plenary meeting and commended its three work groups for their progress. The HLG-IGIF decided to move forward with its six strategic goals but to remain with its three work groups. She also noted the request from its work groups on Communication to make information, resources, documentation, and knowledge on the UN-IGIF easier to discover, access and navigate, and requested the support of the Secretariat in this regard. She noted the decision to work closely with the Secretariat and UN-GGKIC toward the implementation of the UN-IGIF. She noted the willingness of the Private Sector Network and Geospatial Societies to contribute to the implementation of the UN-IGIF and expressed her satisfaction on the breakout activities and the outcomes of the plenary.

The Secretariat reported on its current efforts to complete the refinement of all ten ‘chapters’ of the UN-IGIF Implementation Guide and also to upload translated versions of the Overarching strategy and Guide as they become available.

8. Contribution of regional committees to the global geospatial information agenda

UN-GGIM: Africa (Chair) convened its plenary meeting in August 2023 in parallel with the 31st International Cartographic Conference (ICC 2023) in Cape Town, South Africa. The plenary meeting had over 80 participants from 25 African countries, and observers from international organizations including academia. The agenda included workshops on the integration of statistics and geospatial information. UN-GGIM: Africa expressed challenges in establishing working groups and sustaining participation, and therefore will focus on the UN-IGIF, geodesy and land administration. The region needs a modernization programme for national geospatial offices that will be able to perform under evolving situations. She noted the need to engage national treasuries, to demonstrate the value of their geospatial information and to address national priorities. At the SDG Data Alliance workshop, she noted the launch of two SDG data hubs. On implementing the UN-IGIF, she noted the challenges with leadership support. The next plenary of UN-GGIM Africa will be convened together with StatCom Africa, in Addis Ababa later in 2024.

UN-GGIM-AP (Chair) had its Executive Board meeting in Singapore on 13 March 2023; met as a regional committee at the Thirteenth Session of UN-GGIM and convened its Twelfth Plenary meeting in Indonesia from 6 to 10 Nov 2023. He also participated in the plenary meetings of UN-GGIM: Americas and UN-GGIM: Europe and the High-level Seminar on the Integration of Geospatial and Statistical Information held from 28-30 November 2023 in Bangkok. The UN-GGIM-AP website is being updated and the UN-GGCE/UN-GGIM-AP “Listening Tour” for Asia and Pacific will be on 31 January 2024. Discussions are being held with UN-GGKIC to support regional capabilities development for the UN-IGIF and technical support for countries. The next UN-GGIM AP Executive Board meeting will be in Sydney, Australia, hosted by Geoscience Australia.

He also reported on the first meeting of Inter-Regional Committees on 7 November 2023 in Bali, Indonesia and priorities include to strengthen inter-regional engagement and sharing of information, and to consider inter-regional cooperation including ‘bilaterally’, i.e., between two regions, aiming at enhancing national geospatial information management and data integration for evidence-based policy-development and accelerating the achievements of national development goals and the SDGs. Two key decisions: 1) to meet, in-person, at least twice a year. Once at the annual sessions of the Committee of Experts each August at UNHQ, and the other, to be hosted by a regional committee, on a rotational basis, during its annual plenary meeting; and 2) beginning with the Fourteenth session, to coordinate the preparation of their joint report to the Committee of Experts under agenda item 4 – Contribution of regional committees to the global geospatial information agenda, the lead will be rotated, beginning with UN-GGIM-AP.

UN-GGIM: Arab States (Chair) provided an update on its upcoming Eleventh plenary meeting to be held in Doha, Qatar from 4 to 8 February 2024. The regional committee will align its work programme with the global work programme and will be re-organizing and consolidating its working groups into three groups, focusing on geodetic framework, geospatial governance, and the UN-IGIF. The regional committee will continue raising awareness on the importance of the UN-IGIF, and at its Eleventh plenary meeting it will hold a workshop on geospatial data in disaster management together with the UN-GGIM-AP, and host the UN-GGCE “Listening Tour” for the Arab States during its Eleventh plenary meeting.

UN-GGIM: Americas (Chair) informed that its Tenth Session was held in Santiago, Chile, from 18 to 20 October 2023, with the participation of 22 Member States and various regional entities. Mr. Leonardo Scharth Loureiro Silva of Brazil was elected as Vice President. Major activities included the launch of UN-GGIM: Americas website (<https://www.un-ggim-americas.org/>) with access to shared resources on the regional committee's geospatial activities. The progress of SDI Americas was supported as a tool for disseminating geospatial resources in the region. The Chair noted the contribution of the Academic Network of the Americas (ANA) in the HLG-IGIF capacity development work group, in the translation of UN-IGIF documents. Working group activities were reported including ongoing encouragement to Caribbean Member States to join SIRGAS to strengthen the regional geodetic reference system and its capabilities. It was noted that a new working group on Land Administration was created with the objective to advance sustainable land management practices and contribute to regional socio-economic development. Other initiatives on open-source geospatial and gender gap were presented.

UN-GGIM: Europe (Chair) presented its strategy and work plan, structured around three pillars – sharing knowledge, raising awareness and strategic leadership. The strategy was delivered through a work plan seeking to enhance collaboration with five lines of work: - UN-IGIF, Geodetic Reference Frame; SDGs; Data Strategy and Policy; and Data Integration.

9. UN-GGIM functional groups and the substantive agenda of the Committee of Experts

The Secretariat provided a short overview of the Functional Groups and concurred on the need for functional groups to focus on implementation, to develop and provide the needed guidance sought by Member States, the “how” to allow them to operationalize the adopted frameworks, norms, principles and guides. The Secretariat further highlighted the upcoming events and agendas by the functional groups and other substantive agendas.

10. Geospatial information for climate and resilience

The Secretariat recalled the decision 13/107 and presented the composition and co-convenors of the Task Team for Geospatial Information for Climate Resilience. The terms of reference and expanded abstract of its proposed deliverables, a concept paper, were presented. The Task Team sought the Bureau’s endorsement of its Terms of Reference and structure of the concept paper. The Task Team also sought consideration for a mechanism to increase engagement with SIDS including inputs into the Fourth International Conference on SIDS. The Secretariat discussed with the Bureau the feasibility of launching a concept paper at a major event of the Committee of Experts. The offer for support and inputs to the programme for the 7HLF by the Task Team was welcomed and the Bureau endorsed the ToR of the Task Team and concurred with the structure of the concept paper.

The Secretariat also brought to the attention of the Bureau and Member States the opportunity to have a number of work streams under this new agenda item for the Committee of Experts to discuss 'climate' and 'resilience' at future sessions so as to strengthen the coordination and coherence of the Committee's climate-related work. The Secretariat noted that resilience is interlinked - Climate resilience, disaster resilience and ecological resilience are closely interlinked and, in many cases, will require similar data to assess risk and vulnerability and informed decision-making. The Secretariat further shared observations related to climate and resilience that can be considered by the Committee of Experts.

11. Future Geospatial Information Ecosystem

The Secretariat recalled the decision 13/104, including the establishment of a writing team, and the related offers of support from interventions during the thirteenth session from Australia, Austria, Canada, Colombia, Chile/Americas, Slovenia/Europe, Saudi Arabia, and thematic networks (Societies and Private Sector), and for the preparation of a position paper on determining the scope and an outline on the fundamental elements and principles of the future geospatial information ecosystem. The Secretariat presented the proposed next steps to:

- compose the writing team
- prepare a terms of reference
- hold virtual meeting to launch the Writing Team
- prepare the timeline for the position paper including determining the fundamental elements and principles of the future geospatial information ecosystem, to be reported at fourteenth session.

The Bureau agreed to the proposed next steps.

12. Contribution of thematic networks to the global geospatial information agenda

The four Thematic Networks of UN-GGIM presented their activities and progress. The Co-Chair (Belgium) suggested that all thematic networks focus on and align with the work programme of the UN-GGIM and thanked the thematic networks for bringing expertise and enthusiasm to the UN-GGIM.

13. Overview of the preparation for the fourteenth session as well as expert, plenary and regional meetings, international seminars and forums, and expert consultations

The Secretariat provided an update on the upcoming session of the Committee, including the assignment of Conference Room 4 for the Fourteenth session. The Secretariat further noted the challenges associated with the rooms for side events and meetings and recommended groups to consider holding virtual events especially to raise awareness for a substantive item on the agenda. The Secretariat further clarified that any side events and meetings will be held during 'regular hours' from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The Netherlands inquired whether the August dates for annual sessions could be moved, given the summer vacation period. The Secretariat clarified that currently there are no provision for changing. The sessions of the Committee start on the first Wednesday of August, and for the Fifteenth session, will be from 6 - 8 August 2025. The dates are set in August because UN-GGIM does not have dedicated conference services and therefore facilities are accorded on an "as available" basis. The co-Chair (Belgium), whilst noted the challenge with timing of the Committee's annual sessions, commented that current priority is the establishment of the Secretariat and the recruitment of staff.

The USA asked if side events and meetings could be held outside the UNHQ complex. The Secretariat confirmed that it was possible, e.g., in a meeting room of a permanent mission or a meeting facility in a nearby hotel (which need to be paid by the organizer).

14. Other matters

The Secretariat presented of the following items for the Expanded Bureau's information:

- i. ECOSOC Coordination Segment, UNHQ New York, 31 January – 1 February 2024 - Bureau invited and a co-Chair (Mexico) will participate, in-person, in two panels.
- ii. High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), UNHQ New York, 8 to 17 July 2024 - ECOSOC Secretariat request for input by Committee of Experts. Deadline is 1 March 2024.
- iii. World Data Forum, Medellin, Colombia, 11 – 14 November 2024 - the host is requesting proposals from the Committee of Experts. Deadline is 12 February 2024.
- iv. Summit of the Future “*Multilateral Solutions for a Better Tomorrow*” - once-in-a-generation opportunity to mend eroded trust and demonstrate that international cooperation can effectively tackle current challenges as well as those that have emerged in recent years or may yet be over the horizon.
- v. The SDG Data Alliance informed of their engagement with the upcoming 4th SIDS Conference and readiness to support the Committee's engagement.
- vi. Contribution to integrating gender, inclusion and diversity into the Committee's agenda items, and its functional groups and thematic networks – should not be put in silos and suggested instead bringing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) into main agenda with topics such as “Geospatial and Gender,” “Indigenous place names”, etc. UN-GGIM: Europe informed of its efforts and ready to work to bring DEI perspectives to the work programme of the Committee.
- vii. Strengthening the collaboration between UN-GGIM and UNGEGN - to consider how to integrate the work of UNGEGN into the UN-GGIM given many of the countries present have responsibilities for geographical names.

15. Summary, next steps and close

The Co-Chair (Belgium) highlighted the main points of discussions and decisions of the Expanded Bureau as:

- The report of Thirteenth Session was noted (adopted) by ECOSOC.
- Noted the establishment of the Secretariat of the Committee with seven regular budget posts in the 2024 programme budget of the UN.
- Announced that the 7HLF will be from 8-10 October in Mexico City, with 4 plenary sessions per day, one of which will be the keynote session.
- Received updates and discussed focus work items for the UN global geospatial centres.
- Welcomed the proposal by UN-GGKIC to work collaboratively with its IAC, HLG-IGIF, SDG Data Alliance, and to support the 7HLF.
- Requested the Secretariat to work closely with the HLG-IGIF Working Group on Communication to ensure the information, resources, documentation, and knowledge on the UN-IGIF is discoverable, centralized and easy to navigate on the website.
- Noted that the first meeting of the UN-GGKIC: IAC expected in either the 3rd or 4th week of April 2024.
- Noted the updates from Saudi Arabia on its initiative to establish a centre of excellence in Riyadh to support the prioritized agenda of the Committee.
- Noted the contribution of the regional committees and thematic groups.

- Noted the importance to quantify the contributions by Member States to the Committee's work programme including in awareness raising and promotions.
- Noted the need for translations of reference documents.
- Request that any future surveys should consider linguistic diversity and could be in multiple languages.
- Approved the Terms of Reference for the Task Team on Geospatial Information for Climate Resilience and concurred on the structure of the proposed concept paper.
- Noted the opportunity for the Committee to strengthen the coordination and coherence of its climate-related work.
- Agreed to a writing team and next steps to take forward the work related to the Future Geospatial Information Ecosystem.
- Recommended that thematic networks focus on and align their work with the priorities set by the Committee of Experts.
- Welcomed the preparations for the Fourteenth Session and noted the limited opportunities for convening side events and meetings.
- Opined that the Summit for the Future in September is crucial and welcomed the proposed engagement from the SDG Data Alliance at the upcoming 4th SIDS conference.
- Encouraged UN-GGIM: Europe to work and bring DEI perspectives to the work programme of the Committee to be considered at the Fourteenth session.

The Co-Chairs thanked everyone for their participation and attendance.

The Director of UNSD made a closing statement, thanking the host, participants and wishing everyone well in the continuation of the work programme of the Committee of Experts.