

United Nations Nations Unies

SECRETARIAT OF THE UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON
GLOBAL GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
UN STATISTICS DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
TWO UNITED NATIONS PLAZA, DC2-1670, NEW YORK, NY 10017
TELEPHONE NO: 1 (917) 367-4130; FAX NO: 1 (212) 963-0623
Internet location: ggim.un.org

STAT 421(4-111)

29 July 2020

Dear colleagues,

Tenth Session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) 26-27 August and 4 September 2020

I hope this email finds you, your families and your teams well as we adjust and adapt to a unique, although now becoming more familiar, ‘new normal’ and virtual situation at this time of global pandemic.

I am reaching out to you, our global geospatial information community, as a follow-up to my letter of 10 June 2020, which announced that, for this year, the tenth session of UN-GGIM will be held in a scaled down virtual format, consisting of three two-hour meetings, on **26-27 August and 4 September 2020**.

At the outset, please allow me to pass on my deep appreciation for your continued flexibility and understanding as we continue to adapt our working methods in progressing the substantive work of the Committee of Experts for this tenth session. As you can well understand, preparing for such a virtual meeting, with participants from all corners and time zones of the world, is a process that we are learning as we go. The session is shaping up to be a meeting of similar size to that of the virtual High Level Forum (HLF) events on 26 May, 2 and 9 June 2020, convened in lieu of the Sixth High Level Forum on UN-GGIM. The three virtual HLF events, each of about three hours in duration, attracted 887 unique participants from 100 Member States with good geographic representations, by far the most representative and attended High Level Forum we have convened. So we have shown, that we, as a professional community are strong, and I have no doubt, that the tenth session of UN-GGIM will be one that will go down in the history books for us to reflect on in the future.

It is in this regard that I would like to provide you with an update on the ‘status of play’ for the tenth session, and to reassure you that we are making good progress with the arrangements.

We will be honest with you and share with you that we still have to clarify some procedural, logistical and technological arrangements for the virtual session. However, the United Nations has just successfully convened its High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) virtually, including a three-day ministerial segment, from 7 – 17 July 2020. So, we are working on leveraging those arrangements for our meeting. A number of ‘internal’ UN elements, including conference support and services, interpretation, and the virtual meeting technology to be used, are being ironed out at the moment.

A specific logistical example that a number of you have already observed, is that our technical reports still have the dates ‘5-7 August’ on them, even though the dates are now changed. This is a procedural element because the documents were originally slotted into the UN conference management process in early May, before any decisions were able to be made to convene the tenth session virtually. We are unable to reverse these dates on the documentation at this time (as the Summary Reports were

also translated into the official UN languages), but it is intended that the meeting and **report of the tenth session will reflect the actual dates as corrections.**

What is clear, the good news, is that all of the substantive work is in very good shape. The final technical reports are now being progressively loaded on the Committee’s website, along with background documents as appropriate, and are available here: <http://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/10th-Session/documents/>. We are adapting our Organization of Work accordingly so that we are able to be as efficient as possible with the time available on **26-27 August and 4 September 2020**. While we will report on all the Agenda Items for this tenth session, it does, however, mean that for 2020 we will only concentrate on moving forward with key items and issues for the Committee of Experts. This also acknowledges that a number of work items are continuing along at the working level through your combined support, and will be provided for ‘information’ only. Key items for consideration will include those such as the progress on strengthening geospatial information management – which includes the Future Trends Report, the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, global geodetic reference frame, and the Framework for Effective Land Administration. The Organization of Work for the session will reflect these priority areas.

I would like to reassure you that you will just be required to connect on the three days mentioned above for the tenth session, and that we will ensure all preparations are in place beforehand. However, we will need you to prepare ahead of time, especially in reviewing the reports and responding as appropriate with your written statements and interventions. We will be communicating with you the modality for submitting your written statements and interventions in early August. To assist in the process of connecting, we are planning to convene a ‘**UN-GGIM tenth session Global Chat**’ on **12 August 2020 at 11:00 hrs. (UTC) or 07:00 a.m. (EDT/New York)**. This will be an informal test run and Q&A session for participants 2 weeks out from the first meeting of the tenth session on 26 August. This will enable all prospective participants to call in to test the arrangements and also ask any questions, etc. so that there is a level of comfort and understanding on the process and procedures for the session.

Finally, and as a means to continue with communications ahead of the first meeting of the tenth session, I will send out a weekly email as required to ensure that you are receiving the right information and timely updates on a regular basis.

Thank you for your continuing support and commitment.

Yours sincerely,



Stefan Schweinfest
Director

UN-GGIM Secretariat
United Nations Statistics Division/DESA