

Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management

Tenth session

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Item 3 of the agenda

Strengthening of geospatial information management (for discussion and decision)

Statement provided by:

Jamaica

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Jamaica welcomes and takes note of the report prepared by the Secretariat on Strengthening Geospatial Information Management and extends congratulations on the significant strides made to strengthen geospatial information management and related interlinkages for Member States.

Commendations are particularly extended for the efforts made to collaborate with ESRI and Regional Commissions in hosting a series of UN-GGIM COVID-19 virtual seminars and the facilitation of access to information dashboards for COVID-19 visualization, monitoring, management and response efforts in developing countries. Such initiatives significantly aid knowledge and technology transfer, resulting in practical and tangible outcomes.

Within the report tabled, reference was made to a 'COVID-19: Ready to Respond' background paper outlining the desire for countries to share their national experiences and to learn from others, in addition to a template that was developed for countries to provide their national experiences of their COVID-19 response. We however note that this white paper has not yet been made available for Member States to access and benefit from the consolidated experiences mentioned. As Member States continue to grapple with the surmounting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we welcome every opportunity to share, learn from and build on each other's experiences. Additionally, Jamaica would have welcomed the opportunity to share our COVID-19 experience and geospatial response, given the extensive work pursued by the National Emergency Response GIS Team (NERGIST), the Ministry of Health & Wellness (MOHW) and Jamaica Defence Force (JDF).

Additionally, Jamaica takes note of the efforts of the Secretariat to improve and strengthen national geospatial information capacity-building in developing countries, and its request to Member States for extra-budgetary resources to be made available via several funding options and mechanisms. Although Jamaica recognizes the financial needs of the Secretariat, it is vital to highlight that the budgets of developing states such as Jamaica have been significantly reduced by over 50% due to the resultant impacts of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and the crippling impact on our economy. Every industry, especially travel and tourism with significant industry linkages has been impacted with billions in losses and hundreds of thousands left unemployed. The economies of many developing countries are highly dependent on the travel and tourism industry.

Jamaica remains committed to supporting efforts that strengthen geospatial information management and related interlinkages for Member States, however within the realities of present and possible future resource constraints, within the context of a novel and ever raging pandemic with surmounting short and long-term impacts.

Submitted on:

8/24/2020