Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management

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Contribution of regional committees and thematic groups to

the global geospatial information agenda

United Nations Geospatial Network of the
Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management

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Introduction

1. At its ninth session, held in New York from 7 to 9 August 2019, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 9/102 (d), in which it welcomed the formal establishment of the steering group of the United Nations system network. The Committee further noted the renaming of the Network to the United Nations Geospatial Network to ensure clear, succinct and compelling branding and facilitate communication within the United Nations system.

2. During the intersessional period the Network met on a monthly basis to implement its agreed work programme for 2019-2021, presented during the Ninth Session of the Committee of Experts. As an immediate implementation of its work programme, the Network adopted the internal web-platform of the United Nations Secretariat to facilitate its proceedings, the dissemination of relevant documentation and build the community of practice.

3. The present report offers an overview of the activities of the Network in particular its actions: to complete its priority activities of preparing the United Nations Geospatial Network "Blueprint", its strategic orientations document; to reach out to all United Nations entities and further grow its membership ; and, to build synergies, collaboration and partnerships with other Networks of UN-GGIM and other Networks of the United Nations system.

The Blueprint

4. In its agreed work programme for 2019-2021, the Network included the preparation of a "Blueprint", as its priority activities. The Blueprint is the foundation document of the Network as it lays out its strategies on communication, governance, knowledge and other activities in geospatial information management for the United Nations system. The Network set up a task group and organized several consultation meetings for the completion of on the Blueprint. The Blueprint details key activities identify synergies for programmes, strategic orientations and cooperation between its members and with the Committee of Experts. The main part of the Blueprint provides an overview of the Network, its strategic orientations, transformation pathways and associated key activities.

5. In the context of the Blueprint, the Network also prepared a comprehensive report of current existing geospatial activities, governance arrangements and list of representatives to the Network across the United Nations system. The report, which is an integral part of the Blueprint, is referred as "Blueprint: Geospatial Landscape in the United Nations system".

6. Both the main part of the Blueprint and its Geospatial Landscape in the United Nations system component are also included as background documents to the report of the Committee of Experts.

7. During the preparation of the Geospatial Landscape in the United Nations system, the Network reached out to the entities of the United Nations system with the aim to provide a comprehensive review on current policies, mandates, geospatial personnel, data, infrastructure and resources on activities in the geospatial realms. The Network is cognizant that despite its best efforts some entities could still be missing from the present landscape. As the Blueprint is meant to be a living document further updates and complements can be incorporated as other perspectives, activities and, for the Landscape, other entities of the United Nations system join the proceedings and membership of the Network.

8. Due to the ongoing pandemic, the Network decided to hold its annual Plenary online instead of during the side events of the Committee of Experts. At its second plenary meeting held on 23 July 2020, the Network endorsed the main part of the Blueprint and its Geospatial Landscape in the United Nations system component. The meeting was attended by 22 members of the Network.

9. With the endorsement of the Blueprint and the adoption of an internal platform for its proceedings, the Network completed its priority activities as set out in its work programme for 2019-2021.

The Network

10. A significant outcome of the efforts to reach out to all entities in the preparation of the Geospatial Landscape of the United Nations system was the interest by new United Nations entities to join the Network, and further to the proceedings of the Committee of Expert. As a result, the membership of the Network grew steadily to reach 35 represented entities.

11. Further the Geospatial Landscape in the United Nations system provides a list of its members with the designated representatives and alternate representatives nominated by the heads of departments of entities within the United Nations system. The Blueprint also identifies synergies and obstacles for coordination and coherence of geospatial capabilities and activities within the United Nations system with proposed action items to resolve these challenges.

12. Finally, the Network considers the Blueprint as an important tool for acting in transparent manner toward the Committee and hopes its publication would further facilitate communication and foster synergies with the Committee. Also, the Blueprint is considered by the Network as an integral part of a wider communication strategy, yet to be fully elaborated to raise awareness on geospatial information both within and outside the United Nations system, leveraging and promoting the UN-GGIM websites and resources, as appropriate.

Communication and partnerships

13. As one its first activity during the intersessional period, the Network prepared an Executive brief as an initial common communication tool to present its members, activities and role in the overall architecture of UN-GGIM. The Network used this common tool to met with the leadership of the three Networks established under the UN-GGIM architecture (Academic Network, Private Sector Network and geospatial Societies Network), as well as the other groups including the Coordination Committee on Statistical Activities (CCSA), World Geospatial Industry Council (WGIC) and the Digital Technology Network (DTN) of the United Nations.

14. While further synergies, specific activities or joint projects are yet to be undertaken with the relevant Networks, the Network invited the networks met to consider jointly events, training, capacity building activities could be conducted in close partnership. In particular, the Network invited other networks to contribute, through the partnerships with the wider United Nations system, to its upcoming demonstration projects.

15. As part of the Blueprint, the Network set out overarching trends, shared interests, common topics, collaboration and related activities in geospatial information management including relevant outcomes of the UNGIWG in the upcoming activities. Further, in the Blueprint, the Network included details on the coordination activities and mechanisms with relevant Working Groups, Expert Groups and Networks of UN-GGIM to coordinate actions, practices and standardization activities on methods, tools and dissemination on geospatial information management.