

Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management

Eleventh session

Agenda Item 4

Contribution of the regional committees and thematic groups to the global geospatial information agenda

Introductory Statement - UN-GGIM Regional Committees

Friday 27 August 2021

Good morning/afternoon everyone! Depending on where you are.

Distinguished delegates of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM),

It is a great honor to speak on behalf of all the regional committees: *the Regional Committee for Africa, the Regional Committee for the Americas, the Regional Committee for Arab States, the Regional Committee for Asia and the Pacific, and the the Regional Committee for Europe*. Summarizing all five activities' reports was a bit of challenge given the time constraints that come with the reduced format of the meeting, and I just hope that I will do justice to the tremendous efforts put by each entity in their work this past year.

As you well know, the five regional committees are the operational arms of the UN-GGIM Committee of Experts at the regional level and as such they provide a regional focus for coordinating geospatial information management and a sustainable mechanism for bringing important regional perspectives to the global level and facilitating in return the dissemination of the outcomes and benefits of the global activities to the Member States. They owe their strength to the strong support they receive from their Secretariats such as *ECA, ESCAP, ECLAC, ESCWA, EuroGeographics*, etc.

The Regional Committees operate work programs that are focused on facilitating initiatives to promote advancements in, among other things: (a) policy, institutional arrangements and legal frameworks; (b) developing information and knowledge resources, applications and services that improve the availability and use of spatially-enabled information for development at the national, regional and sub-regional levels; (c) building capacity and collective knowledge; and (d) international cooperation and partnership, through collaborating and coordinating its activities with the United Nations system's entities and with international and regional networks and programs.

The activities of the regional committees laid out in the reports cover a variety of topics ranging from the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF) to the Integration of Statistics and Geospatial Information (GSGF), to Geospatial Information for Disaster Management and the use of Earth Observation for Sustainable development (Digital Earth Africa, Open Data Cubes, etc.), and the vital importance of Geodesy for development (GGRF, SCoG, GCEG), and much more. The reports also include an overview of the last regional plenary meetings and the work carried out by our thematic working groups. And just as in last year, the challenges brought by the COVID-19 Pandemic have continued to be a dominant issue that the regional committees have tackled in various ways through the use of geospatial information to combat the spread of the disease and to mitigate its impact on our societies and economies.

A notable paradox of the of the COVID-19 Pandemic is that in spite of the difficulties it has brought, meetings and other activities have continued to be held and it has highlighted more than ever before the need and importance of building partnerships and collaborations in geospatial information management.

Finally, all regional committees have in one way or the other supported their member States through organizing/facilitating seminars/webinars for sharing best practices, holding capacity building workshops, and encouraging them to participate in global surveys (readiness for the GSGF, readiness for the COVID-19, GRF Competency, etc.), developing knowledge resources and publishing reference documents on topics/issues of great relevance to their regions.

The Committee of Experts is invited to take note of the present communication and the reports provided by the five Regional Committees, and to also note the upcoming plenary meetings of UN-GGIM: Americas and UN-GGIM: Africa.

*Oumar H. Ka,
Chair, UN-GGIM: Africa*