
Economic and Social Council

29 July 2021

Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management Eleventh session

New York, 23, 24 and 27 August 2021

Item 9 of the provisional agenda*

Application of geospatial information related to land administration and management

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Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present paper contains the report of the Expert Group on Land Administration and Management for consideration by the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management.

At its tenth session, held virtually on 26 and 27 August and 4 September 2020, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 10/107, in which it noted the continued efforts of the Expert Group to advocate and raise awareness of the merits and benefits of effective and efficient land administration by formulating and finalizing the Framework for Effective Land Administration as a reference for Member States when developing, reforming, strengthening and modernizing effective and efficient land administration processes and systems. The Committee appreciated that the Framework for Effective Land Administration was fully aligned with the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework as an overarching policy guide supporting the achievements of the Sustainable Development Goals for both developing and developed countries, and noted that transparent and secure land and property rights for all was a crucial component for an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable society. The Committee suggested that an assessment mechanism be developed that would account for all nine pathways of the Framework for Effective Land Administration to support its implementation and encouraged the Expert Group to continue to advocate and raise awareness of effective land administration.

In this present report, the Expert Group provides information on its progress and activities, including on the review and update of its work plan for the period 2020–2022 and on efforts to advocate and raise awareness of effective land administration and ensure the usefulness of the adopted Framework for Effective Land Administration within the context of national circumstances. The present report contains information on the initial consideration of the Expert Group to utilize the Implementation Guide of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework as a reference resource when developing guidance to implement the Framework for Effective Land Administration at the country level. In that regard, the Expert Group indicates that it is also considering modalities for sharing and exchanging knowledge, information, and experiences, including relevant use cases, practices, and examples at the country level, and to translate concepts into practical guidance, including appropriate assessment mechanisms that account for all nine pathways of the Framework for Effective Land Administration to support its implementation. The Expert Group also includes information on its efforts to encourage the translation of that Framework into languages other than English in order to further communicate, advocate and raise awareness of effective land administration; details of

* E/C.20/2021/1

efforts to support the implementation of the Framework; and a discussion of the initial consideration by the Expert Group of a working modality to periodically review, update and maintain the Framework as a living document.

I. Introduction

1. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a global plan of action for people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnerships. When realized, the lives of all will be profoundly improved, and the world transformed for the better. Considering that most humanity do not enjoy secure land and property rights, to create sustainable and inclusive societies, there is a need to accelerate efforts to document, record and recognize people to land relationships in all forms, ensuring that no one is left behind.

2. Land administration relates people to land and informs on the ‘how’, the ‘what’, the ‘who’, the ‘when’ and the ‘where’ of land tenure, land use, land value, and land development. Land administration systems are the basis for recording the complex range of rights, restrictions and responsibilities related to people, places, and policies.

3. The Expert Group has continued efforts to advocate and raise awareness of the merits and benefits of effective and efficient land administration and management, having formulated and finalized an overarching policy guidance aligned with the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF). This overarching policy guidance, the Framework for Effective Land Administration (FELA) with nine pathways aligned to the nine strategic pathways of the IGIF, seeks to provide the reference and guidance for Member States with regard to administering the relationships between people and land, and when establishing, strengthening, co-ordinating and monitoring their land administration nationally or sub-nationally.

4. At its tenth session, held virtually on 26 and 27 August and 4 September 2020, the Committee of Experts, in making decision 10/107, adopting the FELA, appreciated that the framework was fully aligned with the IGIF as an overarching policy guide supporting the achievements of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for both developing and developed countries, and noted that transparent and secure land and property rights for all was a crucial component for an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable society.

5. Effective land administration must be fit-for-purpose, appropriate and adequate, interoperable, sustainable, flexible, inclusive, and able to accelerate efforts to document, record, recognize, and monitor people to land relationships in all forms. Effective land administration provides humanity with better access to and security of land and property rights and leaving no one behind - the commitment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The FELA embraces a plurality of tenure types, globally agreed concepts and approaches, promotes the use of applicable internationally agreed standards, and recognized the need to respect the inherent rights of indigenous peoples to their lands, territories, and resources, as well as traditions and customs.

6. This present report informs the Committee of Experts on the progress and activities of the Expert Groups, including on the review and update of its work plan for the period 2020–2022, on efforts to advocate and raise awareness of effective land administration, and ensure the usefulness of the adopted FELA. The Committee of Experts is invited to take note of the report and express its views on the Expert Group’s activities and considerations. Points for discussion are provided in paragraph 27.

II. Membership and activities

7. During this reporting period no new Member States joined the Expert Group, which presently comprises expert representatives from 26 Member States, four from the UN System, and seven from relevant organizations from the Committee of Experts’ stakeholder community.

8. During this intersessional period, Guyana stepped down as co-Chair of the Expert Group. The Expert Group expressed its sincere appreciation and thanks to Guyana for its contributions

and leadership during its year as co-Chair. It is the intention of the Expert Group to select a member who is willing, able, and ready to step into the leadership role as a co-Chair, together with the Netherlands, after the eleventh session of the Committee of Experts. It should be noted that the Netherlands is currently serving its second three-year period as co-Chair.

9. The Expert Group conducted its business virtually during this intersessional period, and convened three online meetings, its eighth on 10 November 2020, its ninth on 7 April 2021 and its tenth on 6 July 2021. These meetings afforded opportunities for the Expert Group to consider its work plan and activities following the adoption of the FELA by the Committee of Experts at its tenth session. The Expert Group had the opportunity to discuss, regarding its work plan, how to –

- (a) Raise awareness and promote the usefulness of the FELA;
- (b) Develop guidance to implement the FELA utilizing the IGIF Implementation Guide;
- (c) Develop an assessment mechanism to support the implementation of the FELA;
- (d) Share and exchange knowledge, information, use cases, practices, experiences, and examples; and
- (e) Engage and collaborate with regional committees, in particular, UN-GGIM: Africa

10. The Expert Group encourages the translation of the FELA into languages other than English by its members. These volunteered translation efforts support the raising of awareness, promote better understanding, and encourage the implementation of FELA at the national and sub-national levels. The Expert Group expressed appreciation to Saudi Arabia for the Arabic translation, to China for the Chinese translation and to Chile and Spain for the Spanish translation of the FELA. The Expert Group welcomes further volunteered efforts from Member States to translate the FELA into additional languages.

11. The Expert Group was invited to participate in the virtual ninth plenary meeting of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Asia and the Pacific (UN-GGIM-AP) on 3 and 5 November 2020. The FELA, together with the work and activities of the Expert Group, were presented and discussed with UN-GGIM-AP Working Group 2: Cadastre and Land Management. At its plenary meeting, UN-GGIM-AP welcomed the adoption of the FELA by the Committee of Experts at its tenth session and further welcomed FELA as a reference for Member States in Asia and the Pacific when developing, strengthening, and modernizing its cadastre and land management arrangements. UN-GGIM-AP emphasized the need to strengthen the capacity of professionals, including young and future professionals, in effective land administration.

12. The eighth plenary meeting of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Managed for Arab States (UN-GGIM: Arab States), held virtually on 23 January 2021, discussed the FELA and the activities of the Expert Group. The discussion was led by Saudi Arabia, a member of the Expert Group. The plenary meeting noted that effective land administration provides better access to and security of land and property rights and supports the achievement of the SDGs. With the translation of the FELA into Arabic, UN-GGIM: Arab States seeks to raise awareness and share the framework within the region and promote its implementation.

13. The Expert Group also participated in the twelfth session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Working Party on Land Administration (UNECE-WPLA) and presented the FELA with its nine pathways to realize effective land administration. The Expert Group noted the proposed [Scenario Study on Future Land Administration in the UNECE region](#) by UNECE-WPLA and is considering how to collaborate and leverage the scenario study to support the implementation of FELA at the country-level.

14. At the Working Week of the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) hosted by the Netherlands Cadastre, Land Registry and National Mapping Agency, Geo Information Netherlands (GIN) and ITC-University of Twente, and convened virtually from 20 – 25 June 2021, the Expert Group facilitated a technical session on the FELA to raise awareness and promote the framework and effective land administration and management. Support for the FELA was noted and discussions centered on appropriate communications required to raise awareness and improve understanding of effective land administration and the FELA.

15. The Expert Group appreciated the invitation and participated in the meetings of the UN-GGIM Working Group on Policy and Legal Frameworks on Geospatial Information Management. The Expert Group also participated in the virtual expert meetings on policy and legal frameworks¹ that discussed a ‘policy and legal resource kit’ aimed at supporting the implementation of the IGIF at the country-level and to improve the availability, accessibility and application of geospatial information including land information, as well as to promote data sharing and exchange. The Expert Group looks forward to the finalization of this ‘policy and legal resource kit’ and will engage and work with the Working Group on land-sector legal issues related to authoritative data, authority, and custodianship.

16. The Expert Group kept abreast with the development and status of ISO 19152 – Land Administration Domain Model second edition, which will be in six parts. The Expert Group was briefed by ISO-TC211 at its most recent online meeting and noted that Part 1 – Fundamentals have been submitted and expected to be reviewed by ISO-TC211 in the upcoming period. Part 2 and 3 can be expected within the year. The FELA, under its Pathway VI: Standards, encourages the use of internationally developed standards.

III. Work plan 2020 - 2022

17. At its tenth session, in making decision 10/107, the Committee of Experts requested the Expert Group to continue to raise awareness and advocate for effective land administration, ensuring the usefulness of the adopted FELA that recognize national circumstances. The Expert Group is expected to utilize the IGIF Implementation Guide as a reference resource when developing guidance to implement the FELA at the country level; share and exchange knowledge, information, and experiences, including relevant use cases, practices, and examples; address cultural, professional, and technological barriers; and engage and collaborate with the regional committees and thematic groups of UN-GGIM as appropriate.

18. The Committee of Experts further noted that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had highlighted the critical need for reliable land information to support coordinated and informed national responses. The Expert Group also undertakes work that is contributing to the SDGs and other areas as appropriate including, access to land, property rights, ownership, land degradation, rapid urbanization, and climate change, in coordination with other expert and working groups noting that the overarching principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is to leave no one behind.

¹ http://ggim.un.org/meetings/2021/Policy_legal_Framework/

19. In this context, the [work plan of the Expert Group for 2020 - 2022](#), as agreed by the Expert Group after the tenth session of the Committee of Experts, has the following focus –
- (a) Addressing the guidance, feedback and comments provided by the Committee of Experts at its tenth session;
 - (b) Advocating and raising awareness of the merits and benefits of effective land administration, and share knowledge and experience leveraging the FELA as the overarching policy guidance that can be referenced by Member States;
 - (c) Leveraging the IGIF Implementation Guide to translate the overarching guidance and concepts of the FELA into practical implementation guidance and actions for Member States when implementing the FELA;
 - (d) Establishing a modality to periodically review, update and tailor the FELA, as living document, cognizant of the changing and evolving societal, economic, environmental, political, and technological landscapes and national circumstances;
 - (e) Providing a forum for dialogue and coordination between Member States, United Nations system, international organizations, and experts with a view to advocate, promote and deliver effective land administration;
 - (f) Addressing issues, gaps and appropriate approaches including that of access to basic datasets, to accelerate efforts in documenting, recording, and recognizing people-to-land relationship in all its forms; and
 - (g) Leveraging synergies, avoid duplication through collaboration with other functional and thematic groups of UN-GGIM.

IV. Implementing the FELA – Initial consideration

20. At its tenth online meeting (6 July 2021), the Expert Group continued its consideration on the implementation of the FELA and on translating overarching guidance and concepts into practical implementation guidance and actions for Member States to operationalize the FELA at the country level. Five key elements for implementing the FELA at the country-level were identified, briefly,

- (a) Raise awareness and promote the relevance and usefulness of the FELA;
- (b) Avail practical guidance for implementing the FELA utilizing the IGIF Implementation Guide as a resource;
- (c) Provide an assessment mechanism to support the implementation of FELA;
- (d) Share and exchange knowledge, information, use cases, practices, experiences, and examples; and
- (e) Engage and collaborate within regional or sub-regional settings, and with international organizations and relevant stakeholder.

These elements will require in-depth consideration during the next intersessional period.

21. Also, at its tenth online meeting, the Expert Group was informed by a Member State that it had referenced the FELA when considering its general legislation governing cadastre and public registry of property. The responsible agencies involved had sought to align the new legislation with the principles, goals, and recommendations of the FELA. With regards to an assessment mechanism, the Expert Group could consider a checklist or a set of elements that could be considered to support the implementation of the FELA at the country-level, as was carried out by the Member State and welcomed its contribution.

22. The Expert Group requested the UN-GGIM Academic Network to consider how it may contribute to the implementation of the FELA, especially in promoting learning, understanding

and capability development. Similarly, the UN-GGIM Private Sector Network was requested to consider its contribution to the implementation noting the importance of appropriate and accessible technologies and processes, particularly for documenting and recording people-to-land relationships in all forms. In this regard, the Expert Group, at its tenth online meeting, welcomed a suggestion for EuroSDR² to consider a European-level applied research project on the benefits of implementing FELA that would include online learning resource to support raising awareness and promote implementation.

23. The Expert Group noted some development assistance initiatives have started to consider how to implement the FELA for their land-sector based international development assistance projects or services and utilizing the IGIF Implementation Guide in the process. It was recognized that implementing the IGIF together with the FELA at the country-level is preferred when seeking to provide humanity with secure land and property rights.

V. Next steps and considerations

24. The translation of the FELA into languages other than Arabic, Chinese, English and Spanish to support efforts to raise awareness, improve learning and understanding, promote and encourage the implementation of the FELA is important. In addition, the Expert Group seeks opportunity to engage and work with the regional committees of UN-GGIM to advocate the importance, merits and benefits of effective and efficient land administration and management.

25. The Expert Group, vis-à-vis its work plan and the implementation of the FELA, would need to consider –

- (a) Raising awareness and improving understanding of effective land administration and the FELA;
- (b) Promote the sharing and exchanging of information and experiences including appropriate use cases, practices and examples;
- (c) Periodically review, update, and tailor the FELA to suit national (or sub-national) circumstances and evolving political, economic, societal, and technological landscapes;
- (d) Collaborative efforts for strengthening the capacity of professionals including young and future professionals in effective land administration; and
- (e) Engaging and collaborating with the regional committees and thematic groups of UN-GGIM.

26. To advance its work, the Expert Group will continue with its online meetings in the upcoming period. The Expert Group has noted the value of in-person exchanges and interactions amongst its members and relevant stakeholders, and wish to consider, when global conditions permit, organizing its next formal (in-person) meeting together with an international seminar on effective land administration.

VI. Points for discussion

27. **The Committee of Experts is invited to:**

- (a) Take note of the present report and the work of the Expert Group on Land Administration and Management during the intersessional period, including its updated work plan for the period 2020 – 2022;**

² A not-for-profit organization linking National Mapping and Cadastral Agencies with Research Institutes and Universities in Europe for the purpose of applied research in spatial data provision, management and delivery

(b) Provide guidance to improve advocacy and awareness of the Framework for Effective Land Administration together with the merits and benefits of effective land administration;

(c) Express its views and provide guidance on the initial consideration for implementing the Framework for Effective Land Administration at the country-level; and

(d) Take note of the Expert Group's intention to convene a formal meeting, together with an international seminar on effective land administration, when global conditions permit.