



**United Nations**

# **Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management**

**Report on the eleventh session  
(23, 24 and 27 August 2021)**

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## Chapter I

### **Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention**

#### **A. Draft decision for adoption by the Council**

1. The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

#### **Report of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management on its eleventh session and provisional agenda and dates of the twelfth session of the Committee**

The Economic and Social Council:

- (a) Takes note of the report of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management on its eleventh session ([E/2022/46](#));
- (b) Decides that the twelfth session of the Committee of Experts shall be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 3 to 5 August 2022;
- (c) Approves the provisional agenda and documentation for the twelfth session of the Committee of Experts as set out below:

#### **Provisional agenda of the twelfth session of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management**

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Strengthening global geospatial information management arrangements.
4. Determining the future geospatial information ecosystem.
5. Contribution of regional committees to the global geospatial information agenda.
6. Contribution of thematic networks to the global geospatial information agenda.
7. Integrated Geospatial Information Framework.
8. Global geodetic reference frame.
9. Geospatial information for sustainable development.
10. Integration of geospatial, statistical and other related information.
11. Application of geospatial information related to land administration and management.
12. Geospatial information and services for disasters.
13. Marine geospatial information.
14. Policy and legal frameworks, including issues related to authoritative data.

15. Implementation and adoption of standards for the global geospatial information community.
16. Collaboration with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.
17. Programme management report.
18. Provisional agenda and dates of the thirteenth session.
19. Report of the Committee of Experts on its twelfth session.

## **B. Decisions brought to the attention of the Council**

2. The following decisions adopted by the Committee of Experts are brought to the attention of the Council:

### **Decision 11/101 Strengthening of geospatial information management**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Secretariat and the expanded Bureau (see [E/C.20/2021/4](#)) and noted with appreciation the considerable efforts in continuing to take strategic and practical action to champion and strengthen geospatial information management and related interlinkages for Member States, in line with the mandate of the Committee pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution [2016/27](#) of 27 July 2016;

(b) Noted the efforts to improve and strengthen national geospatial information capacity-building and cooperation in countries, especially developing countries, including through the provision of extrabudgetary resources through several funding options and mechanisms, and the need to ensure that those resources be made available in an even more transparent manner to scale up efforts to avoid widening the geospatial digital divide and to avoid duplication of efforts;

(c) Recognized the considerable achievements and increasing importance of the Committee of Experts, whose multiple workstreams had had demonstrably positive impacts on both the global geospatial landscape and national development programmes over the past 10 years, but which needs to be sustainably resourced to effectively guide and support Member States in their efforts towards building and maintaining integrated geospatial information capabilities going forward;

(d) Noted that the Committee of Experts was considering ways towards an even stronger global geospatial ecosystem, including a comprehensive programme to encourage the modernizing of national geospatial information agencies and to address the growing geospatial needs of developing countries;

(e) Welcomed the convening of the second United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress, with the theme “Geo-Enabling the Global Village: no one should be left behind”, planned for the week of 10–14 October 2022, at the Hyderabad International Convention Centre in Hyderabad, India, and hosted by the Government of India through its Ministry of Science and Technology;

(f) Appreciated the efforts by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to establish a global geospatial knowledge and innovation centre in Deqing, China, and a global geodetic centre of excellence at the United Nations

campus in Bonn, Germany; each of which would, in an open and transparent manner, provide opportunities to build and expand global geospatial capacity, competence and capability, and to strengthen geospatial information management arrangements in countries, especially developing countries;

(g) Expressed its appreciation for the efforts of the Governments of the Netherlands and Sweden for their tangible contributions through the secondment of virtual staff to support the work programme of the Committee of Experts, and encouraged Member States to mobilize similar extrabudgetary resources and to consider practical means not only to sustain the current working modalities of the Committee's work but to strategically strengthen its operations and stable resourcing for the future;

(h) Welcomed the initiative taken by the Bureau and Secretariat towards the preparation of the timeline, modalities and main elements of the proposed report of the Committee of Experts to be submitted to the 2022 session of the Economic and Social Council, and supported the establishment of an ad hoc task team, comprising the Bureau and friends of the Co-Chairs of the Committee of Experts, together with additional volunteered resources and expertise offered by Member States, to lead preparations and consult on the draft report, initially guided by the draft briefing note provided, in an inclusive and transparent review process, and to entrust the Bureau and friends of the Co-Chairs to finalize the report for the consideration of the Committee prior to its submission to the Council in 2022;

(i) Emphasized the importance of a close dialogue and open engagement between geospatial information management experts in Member States, their ministries of foreign affairs and permanent missions to the United Nations in New York to sensitize them on the tangible value of the Committee of Experts for adequately addressing issues in national and global geospatial information management, such as, inter alia, the delivery of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other missions of the United Nations and the importance of multilateral cooperation in global geospatial information management, and to notify them on the preparations for and nature of the report to the Economic and Social Council in 2022.

#### **Decision 11/102**

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

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

(a) Welcomed the report compiled by the Secretariat (see [E/C.20/2021/5](#)), congratulated the five United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management regional committees and four thematic groups on their work and achievements during the intersessional period, including their response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, recognized that their outputs, including technical background documents, provided vital knowledge for the development and strengthening of geospatial information capabilities and decision-making for Member States, and that strong and relevant regional committees and thematic groups were significant contributors to the realization of the overall vision and work programme of the Committee of Experts;

(b) Urged for concerted efforts in the strengthening, coordination and coherence of geospatial information management, including the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, among the regional committees, and noted the call by the regional committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management: Africa for Member States and interested partners to



assist the region in determining and supporting the modernizing of national geospatial information agencies to leverage geospatial information technology and to support post-COVID-19 recovery efforts;

(c) Welcomed the continued support of the thematic groups, namely, the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Academic Network, the geospatial societies, the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Private Sector Network and the United Nations Geospatial Network, including in research, education, the use of innovative technologies and capacity development, in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals with geospatial products or services, in promoting the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, and for considering collaborative and joint initiatives among the groups to advance the mission and work programme of the Committee;

(d) Commended the regional committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management: Americas for advancing key activities and projects to coordinate and build national and regional geospatial capacity for Member States, including: the establishment of a strategic partnership with the Americas Group on Earth Observation (AmeriGEO) solidified by the Aguascalientes Declaration on “Better together: geospatial information for decision making in the Americas” of September 2020; the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information project (Central America project); the Caribbean Geospatial Development Initiative (CARIGEO) and the hosting of the CARIGEO Geoportal Webinar 2021 series; and the Statistical and Geospatial Framework for the Americas version 2.0 with the addition of new indicators, to promote the improved sharing and use of geospatial information management practices and solutions;

(e) Noted the accomplishments of the United Nations Geospatial Network over the intersessional period, recognized its renewed steering group, the strengthened partnerships and communication among stakeholders and the three background reports prepared, including those entitled “Generic geospatial job profiles for the United Nations system”, “Geospatial for humanity”, and “Geospatial in action”, which reflected the breadth of geospatial activities performed within the United Nations system;

(f) Welcomed the background report entitled “Geospatial industry advancing sustainable development Goals” provided by the Private Sector Network, in which it highlighted for Member States the role of geospatial infrastructure in the fourth industrial revolution and how geospatial technology and innovation could increase productivity, transform working methods and enable Governments to provide citizens with new and improved goods and services, and welcomed the growing interest and support from multiple industry actors;

(g) Acknowledged the new Executive Committee and Advisory Board of the Academic Network, including its updated terms of reference and website, noted the publication of *COVID-19 Pandemic, Geospatial Information, and Community Resilience*, a collection of contributions of members of the Network in response to the pandemic’s challenges, and noted the publication of *Mapping for a Sustainable World*, a collaborative effort between the International Cartographic Association and the Geospatial Information Section of the United Nations;

(h) Noted that the plenary meetings of all five regional committees would be convened in hybrid or virtual modes from November 2021 to February 2022, encouraged Member States, the thematic groups and stakeholders to

participate and contribute actively to those regional processes, and expressed its appreciation that the regional committees had seized opportunities to convene their plenary meetings in conjunction with other geospatial and related technology events.

**Decision 11/103**  
**Integrated Geospatial Information Framework**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

(a) Welcomed the report of the High-level Group of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, prepared with assistance from the Secretariat (see [E/C.20/2021/6](#)), and recognized the efforts by the high-level group, under the leadership of Ethiopia and Sweden, to quickly establish itself and develop an ambitious plan to provide the strategic leadership and guidance, and leading at this fundamental phase of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, which continued to be globally important and adopted;

(b) Endorsed the strategic plan of the High-level Group, including its six defined goals and focus actions, as an essential step towards the continued success and relevance of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, and supported the three priority goals identified for immediate attention – improve communication, strengthen capacity development and mobilize sustainable funding – as a means for developing the high-level group’s initial plan of work to guide its focus and activities for the next one to two years;

(c) Recognized the relevance and urgency of adequately resourcing the refinement and finalization of the Implementation Guide of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, update the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework Overarching Strategic Framework and complete related resource materials to assist Member States in the development of their respective country-level action plans as a means of strengthening national geospatial information management at the institutional level and supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(d) Emphasized the importance of maintaining the impact and continuity of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework at the national level, and that was applicable for all Member States, and noted suggestions for the high-level group to consider in its plan of work:

(i) The refinement and finalization of the Implementation Guide of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework remains a high priority for Member States and an important basis for the development of a global community for sharing knowledge and harmonizing the integration of geospatial information at the country level, without which there was a risk that the core focus of the Framework might become diluted and inconsistent in its adoption and implementation;

(ii) The pressing need to obtain sustained funding for the implementation and iterative development of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework so that it endured as a living instrument, was reviewed in a constant process, kept up to date and based on the practical implementation experiences of Member States;

(iii) Noting that the geospatial community often faces challenges in effectively communicating and promoting knowledge and awareness of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, especially with decision makers in non-geospatial global institutions, the convening of Integrated Geospatial Information Framework forums at the global and

regional levels to share good practices and successful strategies for Framework implementation at the country level would be beneficial in strengthening capacity development;

(iv) Noting the variability in the levels of national circumstances and conditions (governance, technology, capacity, etc.) between developed and developing countries when establishing a country-level action plan, a set of performance indicators or diagnostic measures might assist countries as they determine which priority goals, activities and actions to apply in their respective Integrated Geospatial Information Framework country-level action plans;

(v) Embedding the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, as a tangible framework, into existing United Nations conventions, agreements and frameworks, such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, to guarantee high-level political awareness of the Framework and its long-term sustainability;

(vi) Clear mechanisms to provide adequate resources to support the implementation of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework in developing countries, to develop national country-level action plans that could be effectively operationalized and, with a view to having a significant impact for geospatially enabled e-services, embarking on a path towards digital transformation and to bridge the geospatial digital divide;

(vii) That the high-level group continued to engage with the regional commissions and the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management regional committees to promote and implement the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework and support the strengthening of regional geospatial information management;

(e) Expressed its appreciation for the valuable efforts of the World Bank and multiple Member States for their initiative to convene the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework virtual knowledge learning series through the World Bank Open Learning Campus in early 2021, and for sharing their expertise and guidance with interested partner organizations in Member States developing their country-level action plans, thereby increasing Framework capacity-development for many countries;

(f) Congratulated those United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management expert, working and thematic groups which had aligned their activities to the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework over the past year and which had initiated guidance and reference documents to support the strategic pathways of the Framework, and encouraged other groups to continue to strengthen the interlinkages with the high-level group and the Framework;

(g) Emphasized that the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework now provided an overarching paradigm to further strengthen nationally integrated geospatial information management, not only for Member States that were in the early stages of adopting national spatial data infrastructures but also for those that had already successfully implemented spatial data infrastructure capabilities, had that continuous collaboration would be necessary with other emerging and complementary initiatives, such as the Geospatial Knowledge Infrastructure, the European Union Location Framework Blueprint and a geospatial ecosystem beyond spatial data infrastructures, which provided direct interlinkages with the Framework and which would ultimately extend the Framework's relevance in the future geospatial information ecosystem.

**Decision 11/104**  
**Global geodetic reference frame**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Subcommittee on Geodesy (see [E/C.20/2021/7](#)) and the progress made during the intersessional period, including the Subcommittee's considerable efforts to address the many complex issues related to the global geodetic reference frame, including the communication and outreach to non-expert audiences, and to grow the critical understanding and importance of the global geodetic reference frame as a vital infrastructure for the global geospatial community;

(b) Noted with appreciation the substantial focus of the Subcommittee, under the leadership of its Bureau, on broad global consultation and subsequent finalization with Member States and relevant geodetic stakeholders, of the position paper on sustaining the global geodetic reference frame and the concept paper on establishing a global geodetic centre of excellence, and adopted the two papers as key guidance documents to ensure the sustainability and enhancement of the global geodetic reference frame;

(c) Welcomed the discussion on the proposed work package items described in the position paper to address the critical issues facing the global geodetic reference frame, with the following initial areas of focus: establishing the governance of the global geodetic centre of excellence; undertaking a global geodesy needs assessment; conducting a reference frame competency and education needs assessment; and developing complementary communication, advocacy and capacity development mechanisms to engage current and future stakeholders in geodesy;

(d) Expressed its appreciation for the convening of the high-level Global Geodesy Forum titled "The power of where: the value of geodesy to society" on Earth Day 2021, followed by targeted regional geodesy forums in the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, Arab States and Europe, as critical elements of the global consultation process that further raised awareness and understanding of the global geodetic reference frame within Member States;

(e) Further welcomed the progress made by the Government of Germany and the United Nations to host and establish a global geodetic centre of excellence at the United Nations campus in Bonn, to: support and sustain the global geodetic reference frame; enhance global cooperation and coordination; support education, training and capacity-building; and improve awareness of and knowledge resources related to the global geodetic reference frame for the wider geodetic community;

(f) Encouraged the future global geodetic centre of excellence to collaborate and coordinate closely with the Subcommittee on Geodesy, regional global geodetic reference frame working groups, the International Association of Geodesy, the International Federation of Surveyors and international stakeholder organizations such as the Group on Earth Observations and the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites, to foster greater planning and international coordination in pursuit of strengthening partnerships and opportunities enabled by geodesy;

(g) Noted the Subcommittee's desire to review its working modalities, including its terms of reference and structure to align with the future working arrangements outlined in the position paper on sustaining the global geodetic reference frame and the concept paper on establishing a global geodetic centre

of excellence to ensure an even more efficient and relevant Subcommittee and, in this regard, encouraged active participation from developing countries in the Subcommittee and its working groups;

(h) Noted the Subcommittee's intention to convene its third plenary meeting in 2022 when global conditions permit.

#### **Decision 11/105**

##### **Geospatial information for sustainable development**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

(a) Welcomed the report prepared jointly by the Secretariat and the working group on geospatial information of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (see [E/C.20/2021/8](#)) and commended the valuable work towards strengthening the alignment of the work of the global geospatial information community with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(b) Expressed its appreciation for the inclusive development process for the working draft of the geospatial road map for the Sustainable Development Goals as an excellent guide in communicating the value of geospatial information and other technologies in generating geospatially integrated statistical data for the Sustainable Development Goal indicators and allowing Member States to learn from the many examples and take note of the key actions relevant to their respective national circumstances;

(c) Welcomed and supported the vision and ambition of the geospatial road map to see geospatial and location-based information being recognized and accepted as official data for the Sustainable Development Goals and their global indicators, and noted the importance of working in closer cooperation with custodian agencies and other stakeholders in terms of strategies for building the bridges and understanding between statistical and geospatial stakeholders working with the global indicator framework;

(d) Recognized that the geospatial road map clearly communicates how the broader frameworks of the Committee of Experts, such as the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework, global fundamental geospatial data themes and the Framework for Effective Land Administration, had an important integrative role in advancing the 2030 Agenda;

(e) Noted the progress of the federated information system for the Sustainable Development Goals initiative and welcomed the formation of the SDG Data Alliance, both as integrated system-of-systems approaches, that would focus on how geospatial information was, and could be, used to support local to global Sustainable Development Goal indicator initiatives, and encouraged further communication and updates on those activities to support the integration of geospatial information and enabling technologies in sustainable development and to help face current and near-future global challenges, including the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, climate change mitigation and disaster resilience and adaptation.

**Decision 11/106**  
**Integration of geospatial, statistical and other related information**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information (see [E/C.20/2021/9](#)) and noted the continued efforts of the Expert Group to support the integration of geospatial, statistical and other related information to realize national priorities and global development agendas;

(b) Urged Member States to continue to implement and operationalize the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework as a tool for attaining geospatially enabled statistical data for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2020 round of population censuses, and recognized that addressing the many data integration challenges presented by the global COVID-19 pandemic and other complex issues, such as climate change and disaster resilience, requires the implementation of the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework at the national and regional levels;

(c) Expressed its appreciation for the significant progress in the development of the Implementation Guide of the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework, which provided both the geospatial and statistical communities with valuable guidance for identifying methodologies, techniques and approaches for implementing the Framework and, in this regard, encouraged the completion of the Implementation Guide in order to provide pragmatic and understandable guidance on the implementation and operationalization of the Framework by Member States;

(d) Welcomed the many use cases and good practices describing how the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework has been implemented and operationalized within national and regional contexts, as elaborated in the document “The Global Statistical Geospatial Framework: national and regional experiences of implementing the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework” and requested the inclusion of relevant case studies as part of the process of finalizing the Implementation Guide of the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework;

(e) Recognized the promising initial results of the global survey to diagnose readiness at the country level for implementing the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework and urged national statistical offices and national geospatial information agencies within Member States to submit their responses if they had not yet done so, and suggested that the future workplan of the Expert Group address the gaps identified by the global survey and develop the interlinkages between the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework and the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework;

(f) Welcomed and encouraged efforts to strengthen coordination with the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management regional committees, the regional commissions and other regional stakeholders, and expressed its appreciation for the implementation of the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework at the regional level.

**Decision 11/107**  
**Application of geospatial information related to land administration and management**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

(a) Welcomed the report of the expert group on land administration and management (see [E/C.20/2021/10](#)) and its focus on updating the expert group's workplan for the period 2020–2022, and expressed its appreciation for the efforts of the expert group in continuing to take practical outreach actions to advocate and raise awareness of the importance of timely and effective fit-for-purpose land administration that must be affordable and accessible by all;

(b) Expressed its appreciation for the expert group's utilization of the Implementation Guide of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework as a reference resource when considering guidance to implement the Framework for Effective Land Administration at the country level and noted contributory efforts of the Expert Group to support the implementation of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework;

(c) Noted the initial consideration of the five key elements for implementing the Framework for Effective Land Administration at the country level, which translate concepts into practical guidance, and that the focus of those elements should include: modalities for sharing and exchanging knowledge, information and experiences, including relevant use cases, practices and examples; an assessment mechanism that considers the nine pathways of the Framework for Effective Land Administration and national circumstances of Member States; and appropriate collaborative efforts with regional committees, functional and thematic groups of the Committee and relevant international stakeholders;

(d) Urged the Expert Group to further consider the increased and complex rights, restrictions and responsibilities associated with land; the increasingly digital and mobile access to land information; the integration of building information modelling and the cadastre; and the cybersecurity and data security mechanisms needed to protect vital land information assets;

(e) Welcomed the volunteered efforts from Member States to translate the Framework for Effective Land Administration into languages other than English as an important step in continuing advocacy, raising awareness and promoting the merits and benefits of effective land administration and to improve access to and understanding of the Framework, and encouraged further volunteered efforts from other Member States to translate the Framework into additional languages, such as the proposal by Belgium to provide a translation into French;

(f) Noted that the Expert Group planned to convene a formal meeting, together with an international seminar on effective land administration, when global conditions permit.

**Decision 11/108**  
**Geospatial information and services for disasters**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

(a) Welcomed the report of the working group on geospatial information and services for disasters (see [E/C.20/2021/11](#)) and noted the continued efforts and commitment of the working group to promote the importance of geospatial information and services in disaster risk reduction and management and the

work towards implementing the Strategic Framework on Geospatial Information and Services for Disasters, in particular its relevance during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant need for a multi-hazard response approach by Member States and disaster risk reduction and management-related organizations in addressing the pandemic and other hazards;

(b) Expressed its appreciation for the preparation by the working group of its workplan for the period 2020–2023 and endorsed its implementation, acknowledging the importance of its four goals, which would guide the initial activities and operations of the working group, and invited Member States and relevant experts to contribute as members of the working group to actively progress its activities as outlined in its workplan;

(c) Congratulated the working group for successfully undertaking its many activities in raising awareness of the Strategic Framework, including the enhanced engagement and collaboration with multiple key stakeholder groups and international organizations, in particular the recent Open Geospatial Consortium disaster pilot project 2021, and the working group's contribution to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction Global Assessment Report 2022, all of which ensure consistent communication and coherence and avoidance of duplication of effort, and create synergies among the many groups and organizations undertaking disaster risk reduction and management activities;

(d) Noted the opportunity to integrate geospatial information from science and technology agencies with responsibility for hazard management, to strengthen the provision and uptake of geospatial information for disaster risk reduction and management, and welcomed the recommendation to consider the broader engagement by the working group with relevant science and technology agencies in Member States;

(e) Supported the development of a global disaster risk reduction inventory on organizations, services and platforms, and invited Member States, disaster risk reduction and management organizations and relevant academia, private sector and United Nations system organizations to participate in the global administration of the inventory surveys developed, and also invited the working group to include existing datasets and platforms in the inventory and examine potential linkages with developments of the Group on Earth Observations Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group (Earth Observation risk toolkit) and other disaster risk reduction and management initiatives, in an effort to create synergies and cooperation;

(f) Acknowledged the importance of the results and recommendations included in the draft report entitled "Assessment 2020 results: strategic framework on geospatial information and services for disasters" as a tool to assist the working group to better understand the status of the national geospatial information and services landscape across all phases of disasters, noted that the differences between countries and regions needed to be addressed and recommended that further capacity-building and outreach efforts be pursued to enhance the implementation of the Strategic Framework, and additionally noted the low response from Africa and the non-response from Arab States, and therefore recommended reopening the Assessment survey to both regions with a view to providing another opportunity for completion and the subsequent development of a second edition of the Assessment 2020 results document, to better facilitate global monitoring of the implementation of the Strategic Framework;



(g) Welcomed the working group's support for the development of a statistical framework on disaster-related statistics, expressed its appreciation for the establishment of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Disaster-related Statistics, and encouraged the Inter-Agency and Expert Group to focus on existing reporting mechanisms and frameworks, such as the reporting systems of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Decision 11/109**  
**Marine geospatial information**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

(a) Welcomed the report of the working group on marine geospatial information (see E/C.20/2021/12) and noted the working group's workplan for the period 2021–2022 and progress made, including the practical collaboration with the International Hydrographic Organization, the International Hydrographic Organization-Singapore Innovation and Technology Laboratory and the Open Geospatial Consortium, and, in noting the leadership transition, welcomed Singapore as Co-Chair, and expressed its sincere appreciation to Burkina Faso for its leadership and contribution to the working group;

(b) Expressed its appreciation for the continuing efforts to align the work of the working group with the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework in modernizing the geospatial ecosystem, and welcomed the development of an integrated policy guidance and operational framework (draft operational framework) for the marine domain that embraced all water-related elements, including oceans and seas, coastal zones, deltas and tributaries, inland water bodies and waterways, as an important contribution in this modernization, while reiterating that the working group must not replicate the Framework;

(c) Recognized that the draft operational framework, tentatively named "IGIF-Hydro", was to promote and advise on practical considerations regarding the integration of the marine domain, a domain that in general does not include every element of "hydro" within the geospatial ecosystem, and suggested further deliberation on how the draft operational framework for the marine domain should be named;

(d) Noted that the integration of the terrestrial, maritime and cadastral domains remained a priority for Member States, and encouraged further consideration to ensure that institutions collaborate to consider and develop interoperable arrangements, standards and infrastructures for the integration of all types of geospatial information leveraging the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework and to advocate guidance, standards and practices that would facilitate seamless integration of datasets spanning the terrestrial, maritime and cadastral domains;

(e) Urged Member States and stakeholders to recognize the marine domain as being cross-thematic and cross-jurisdictional, covering hydrography, oceanography, marine geology, marine biology, human-related activities and maritime governance, and that the draft operational framework served as a bridge between the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework and marine geospatial information management practices, in particular in support of developing effective and inclusive integrated marine geospatial information management and programmes;

(f) Encouraged consideration of and support for the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the General

Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans Seabed 2030 project to contribute, with the draft operational framework, to the goal to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources, and in this regard, noted the importance of engaging the ocean science and policy and legal communities towards developing integrated solutions;

(g) Requested the working group to focus on developing and completing the draft operational framework in a timely manner in consultation with Member States and relevant stakeholders; and noted the planned webinar series in October 2021 as precursor activities for the third expert meeting of the working group, expected to be convened in April 2022 together with an international seminar, and thanked Singapore for hosting those important events.

### **Decision 11/110**

#### **Legal and policy frameworks, including issues related to authoritative data**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

(a) Welcomed the report of the working group on policy and legal frameworks for geospatial information management (see [E/C.20/2021/13](#)) and commended the progress made, under the leadership of Australia and Sweden, in updating its workplan for the period 2020–2022, whereby the working group transitioned from hypothetical to real-world policy and legal situations and began legal considerations on authoritative data, geospatial data for the public good and ethical use and the implementation of the policy and legal strategic pathway of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework;

(b) Expressed its awareness that policy and legal frameworks for geospatial information management within and across Member States were a complex mixture of interlinked issues in which established legal systems and jurisdictions were diverse and at different levels of maturity, presenting a challenging and important area of work for the Committee and for the implementation of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, and noted the importance of effectively communicating and raising awareness of these issues to policymakers and decision makers, relevant stakeholders and the general public;

(c) Requested the working group to continue its consideration of the policy and legal settings impacting on privacy, national security, commercial-in-confidence concerns, authority, diversity of geospatial information sources, liability and multiplicity of use, and recognizing that policy and decision makers seek trust, timeliness and fitness-for-purpose in geospatial information, and in this regard, the importance of maintaining trust in geospatial information for evidence-based policies and decisions;

(d) Encouraged the working group to continue its consideration of policy and legal issues related to authoritative data and the public good, noting that defining authoritative data could be complex and challenging, with differing national circumstances, and that the production of geospatial information and services were no longer exclusive to nationally mandated agencies owing to the changing digital and technological landscape and diversity and innovative use of geospatial information, and in this regard, to collaborate with relevant international organizations;

(e) Welcomed the progress in developing and preparing a policy and legal resource kit to support Member States in improving data sharing and exchange, noted that these resources were foundational for implementing the

Integrated Geospatial Information Framework with appropriate national-level policy and legal frameworks, and encouraged continued collaboration with functional groups and regional committees of the Committee of Experts to gain a greater understanding of policy and legal factors and implications and to advance the implementation of the Framework at the country level.

#### **Decision 11/111**

##### **Implementation and adoption of standards for the global geospatial information community**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

(a) Welcomed the report of the three standards development organizations, namely, the International Hydrographic Organization, technical committee 211 of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the Open Geospatial Consortium, on the implementation and adoption of standards for the global geospatial information community (see [E/C.20/2021/14](#)), noted the broad range of geospatial standards considered, and expressed its appreciation to the three standards development organizations for their valuable work and continuing support;

(b) Expressed its appreciation for the collaborative efforts and work of the standards development organizations in developing and preparing standards for the measurement and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals, advancing data access and data sharing, including towards the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic, disaster risk reduction and management, and welcomed continuing development of the open application programming interface (API) standards, the ISO 19152 Land Administration Domain Model and the S-100 suite of marine data product specifications;

(c) Welcomed and endorsed the third edition of the “Guide to the role of standards in geospatial information management”, the purpose of which was to promote the recommendations regarding the use of standards for geospatial information management, and urged Member States and relevant stakeholders to continue with the broad review and refinement of the Standards Guide as a living online resource aligned with the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework and to actively use the Standards Guide for standards-based solutions;

(d) Encouraged Member States and relevant stakeholders to contribute practical examples on the implementation of geospatial standards to further strengthen the Standards Guide, as a means to ensure standards accountability and compliance of practice and to demonstrate the benefits of implementing geospatial standards, to further participate in the development of geospatial standards in collaboration with the standards development organizations, and also encouraged the standards development organizations to consider means to expand the capacities of Member States towards the adoption and implementation of geospatial standards.

#### **Decision 11/112**

##### **Collaboration with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

(a) Welcomed the report prepared by the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (see [E/C.20/2021/15](#)), congratulated the Group of Experts on the adoption of its strategic plan and programme of work 2021–

2029 at its session held virtually in May 2021, and noted that the strategic plan would assist the Group of Experts to fulfil its goals, encourage and assist in the creation of geographical names authorities, provide information to external bodies including the Committee of Experts and promote collaboration between United Nations bodies towards wider standardization of geographical names;

(b) Supported efforts and actions for strengthening interaction and collaboration between the Bureaus of the Committee of Experts and the Group of Experts, including opportunities for partnership such as sharing technical expertise and geographical names data, pursuing joint capacity-building initiatives, raising awareness of the importance of toponymy, sharing guidelines, methods and practices for the standardization of geographical names and the preservation of native place names derived from indigenous languages, as part of the cultural heritage of a country;

(c) Encouraged Member States to improve communication, coordination and cooperation between geospatial information management authorities and geographical names authorities at the national and regional levels, including across thematic areas, to strengthen geospatial information management, noting that geographical names were an essential referencing component for geospatial data infrastructures and geospatial knowledge networks and a vital part of a country's linguistic and cultural heritage;

(d) Acknowledged the importance of standardized geographical naming for integrative information management, underpinned by innovations in methodology and technology for the development of national geographical names databases and web services for a variety of purposes, including in health care and emergency response, the management of the COVID-19 pandemic and the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(e) Noted the recommendations of the Group of Experts for revitalizing and activating its geographical and linguistic divisions and national names authorities and establishing a trust fund to support the implementation of its strategic plan and programme of work 2021–2029 with emphasis on capacity-building for Member States, focused on training initiatives to strengthen skills in the principles and techniques of geographical naming, and its suggestion to explore collaborative projects to safeguard cultural heritage;

(f) Noted the slow progress in the development of the new interface to enhance the current version of the GeoNyms system and the Africa Gazetteer project to produce a ubiquitous application for the capturing and validating of geographical names nationally and in the continent, invited interested partners to join in the efforts for the redevelopment of the Africa Gazetteer project, and also noted the European Open Regional Gazetteer being delivered through the new Open Maps for Europe project to provide easy access to pan-European datasets by EuroGeographics.

### **Decision 11/113**

#### **Programme management report**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management noted the oral report delivered by a representative of the Secretariat on the programme management of the Committee.

## Chapter II

### Organization of the session

#### A. Opening and duration of the session

3. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council decision 2021/233, and taking into account the prevailing conditions relating to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic affecting the working arrangements and the available technological and procedural solutions in the interim period, the Committee of Experts did not hold formal meetings of its eleventh session. The Committee held three online informal meetings with remote simultaneous interpretation on 23, 24 and 27 August 2021.

4. The Committee conducted its business during the eleventh session through correspondence and informal consultations and considered proposals by means of silence procedure pursuant to Council decision 2021/233.

#### B. Election of officers

5. The Committee of Experts elected the following officers by means of silence procedure on 13 August 2021.

*Co-Chairs:*

Ingrid Vanden Berghe (Belgium)  
Paloma Merodio Gómez (Mexico)  
Rosamond Bing (Tonga)

*Rapporteur:*

Kamal Outghouliast (Morocco)

#### C. Agenda and organization of work

6. The Committee of Experts adopted its provisional agenda ([E/C.20/2021/1](#)), by means of silence procedure. The agenda read as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Strengthening of geospatial information management.
4. Contribution of regional committees and thematic groups to the global geospatial information agenda.
5. Integrated Geospatial Information Framework.
6. Global geodetic reference frame.
7. Geospatial information for sustainable development.
8. Integration of geospatial, statistical and other related information.
9. Application of geospatial information related to land administration and management.
10. Geospatial information and services for disasters.
11. Marine geospatial information.
12. Legal and policy frameworks, including issues related to authoritative data.

13. Implementation and adoption of standards for the global geospatial information community.
  14. Collaboration with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.
  15. Programme management report.
  16. Provisional agenda and dates for the twelfth session of the Committee of Experts.
  17. Report of the Committee of Experts on its eleventh session.
7. The Committee also approved the revised organization of work for the session (E/C.20/2021/2/Rev.1) by means of silence procedure.
8. In addition, the Committee adopted its rules of procedure (E/C.20/2021/3), on the understanding that they would also apply to all future sessions of the Committee, by means of silence procedure.
9. The Committee also adopted a decision, by means of silence procedure, in which it invited the following non-governmental organizations and other entities, which do not have consultative status with the Council, to participate in the work of the session as observers: Aligarh Muslim University; American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing; Austrian Academy of Sciences; Carleton University; Centre for Spatial Law and Policy; ConsultingWhere; Curtin University; Environmental Systems Research Institute; EuroGeographics; European Association of Remote Sensing Companies; European Umbrella Organisation for Geographic Information; FIMO – Vietnam National University; Geospatial Frameworks; Geospatial World; Griffith University; Group on Earth Observations secretariat; Health GeoLab Collaborative; Hexagon; Institute of Photogrammetry and Geoinformation, Leibniz University Hannover, Germany; International Association of Geodesy; International Cartographic Association; International Society for Digital Earth; International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics; John Kedar Geospatial Initiatives, Ltd.; Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven, Belgium; Land Equity International; Location International, Ltd.; MapAction; Maxar Technologies; National Autonomous University of Mexico; National University of La Plata; NOVA Information Management School; Open Geospatial Consortium; Pan-American Institute of Geography and History; PlaceFund; Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu; RSS-Hydro; Southwest Jiaotong University; Taylor & Francis Group; Technical University of Vienna; Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi; Three Trees and a Map PR, Ltd.; University of Botswana; University of Melbourne; University of Pretoria; University of Twente; University of Winnipeg; World Geospatial Industry Council; and Wuhan University.

#### **D. Documentation**

10. The documents before the Committee of Experts at its eleventh session are available on the Committee's website (<http://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/11th-session/>).

## Chapter III

### **Report of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management on its eleventh session**

11. The Committee of Experts adopted the draft report on its eleventh session ([E/C.20/2021/L.2](#)), as well as the draft decisions to be contained therein, under silence procedure on 1 September 2021 and entrusted the Rapporteur with its finalization with the support of the Secretariat for submission to the Economic and Social Council at its 2022 session.

## Chapter IV

### **Provisional agenda and dates of the twelfth session of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management**

12. The Committee of Experts approved the draft provisional agenda and dates of its twelfth session ([E/C.20/2021/L.1](#)), under silence procedure on 1 September 2021, and entrusted the Bureau with streamlining and finalizing it.

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