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Strengthening of geospatial information management

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Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat has the honour to bring to the attention of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management the report on strengthening geospatial information management, which will be available in the language of submission only from the relevant web page of the Committee of Experts (<http://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/11th-Session/>). The Committee is invited to take note of the report and to express its views on the Committee's implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 2016/27 entitled "Strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management" and, in this context, to examine the strengthening of such arrangements of the Committee, as well as the way in which the global geospatial information management community contributes to efforts by Member States to strengthen their geospatial information management arrangements.

Summary of the report

At its tenth session, held virtually on 26 and 27 August and 4 September 2020, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 10/101, in which it recognized the considerable efforts of the Secretariat and the expanded Bureau of the Committee in continuing to take strategic and practical action to strengthen geospatial information management and related interlinkages for Member States, in line with the broadened mandate of the Committee pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2016/27. The Committee also noted the efforts made to improve and strengthen national geospatial information capacity-building activities in developing countries, to ensure that extrabudgetary resources were made available through several funding options and mechanisms and to scale up efforts in that regard in order to avoid widening the geospatial digital divide. The Committee acknowledged that the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework was the culmination of the broad programme of work carried out over the past 10 years, not only as evidence of the achievements of the Committee to date but as a means of enabling Member States to

* E/C.20/2021/1.



integrate and strengthen their national geospatial information management arrangements according to their national circumstances. The Committee also acknowledged that, when coupled with a strong portfolio of outputs from the broader programme of the Committee, the Framework provided a strong foundation for reporting back to the Council in 2021. In addition, in adopting decision 10/103, the Committee noted the global significance of the Framework, which served as a key umbrella for the many activities under the purview of the Committee.

In the report, prepared with the assistance of the expanded Bureau of the Committee of Experts, the Secretariat provides information on efforts to continue strengthening the coordination and coherence of global geospatial information management in the areas of capacity-building, norm-setting, data collection, data dissemination and data sharing, among others, and ensuring that the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework is used as an overarching guide for the broad programme of work and the activities of the Committee, including those of its regional committees and functional groups, in order to ensure that the strategic and practical actions of the Committee contribute consistently to efforts of Member States aimed at strengthening their geospatial information management arrangements.

The report serves to highlight specific initiatives aimed at improving and strengthening national geospatial information management for Member States. There has been substantial progress by the United Nations and the Government of China on establishing the United Nations global geospatial knowledge and innovation centre in Deqing, China, including a programme of work to build, develop and expand global geospatial capacity, competence and capability, especially in developing countries. The report also provides details of efforts by the United Nations and the Government of Germany to establish a global geodetic centre of excellence at the United Nations campus in Bonn, Germany, to enhance global geodetic cooperation and coordination among Member States and relevant geodetic stakeholders, strengthen geodetic infrastructure, support Member States in improving their national contributions towards the sustainability and quality of the global geodetic reference frame, and advance the implementation of General Assembly resolution [69/266](#) on a global geodetic reference frame for sustainable development.

The report also serves to highlight contributions from extrabudgetary resources that support the activities of the Committee of Experts. These include activities under the second phase of the China trust fund to improve and strengthen national geospatial information management arrangements and capacities, in particular in developing countries, activities under the eleventh tranche of the United Nations Development Account project, which is focused on improving and strengthening nationally integrated geospatial information management capacities, and activities in the six participating Member States of the project. The onset of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic made it necessary to pivot to virtual modalities and substantive support and for subject matter expertise to be provided virtually in order to sustain efforts and progress towards strengthening the nationally integrated geospatial information management activities of the participating Member States. In that regard, the pandemic reinforced the need for agile, adaptive and responsible geospatial information that is nationally integrated. Reliable and high-quality integrated geospatial data must be available and accessible in order for Member States to respond in an adequate and timely manner to any emerging crisis, whether related to public health or the environment.

Specific dedicated resource contributions were also provided to the Statistics Division as the secretariat for the Committee of Experts. The Cadastre, Land Registry and Mapping Agency of the Netherlands (Kadaster) and the Mapping, Cadastral and Land Registration Authority of Sweden (Lantmäteriet) each virtually seconded a staff member to support agreed items of the work programme of the Committee. The virtual

secondments represent a significant and substantive collaboration between Kadaster, Lantmäteriet and the Secretariat, and tangible contributions by the Governments of the Netherlands and of Sweden to the work programme of the Committee. The report also serves to inform the Committee of collaborative activities (including resources) carried out with the private sector and philanthropic organizations to improve and strengthen national geospatial information management in participating Member States, in particular developing countries.

In the report, the Committee of Experts is informed of the process and outcome for bidding to host the second United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress, scheduled to be convened in 2022. Equally sound bids were submitted by the Governments of China and India, both of which took into consideration the importance, significance and responsibility associated with the distinction of hosting the second Congress. In order to arrive at an objective decision, the expanded Bureau applied an inclusive evaluation framework to arrive at an objective decision, ultimately awarding the hosting of the second Congress to India.

The Economic and Social Council, in adopting resolution [2016/27](#), requested the Committee of Experts to report back to the Council within five years on the implementation of the resolution, as well as on efforts to work with the Statistical Commission and the entire United Nations system and to integrate geospatial and statistical information systems and, in this context, examine the strengthening of the institutional arrangements of the Committee. In the report, the Committee demonstrates that it has proved to be an effective, productive and relevant intergovernmental mechanism that successfully promotes international cooperation on global geospatial information management. The Committee has implemented the resolution and operated effectively in line with the mandate from the Council and with the available resources.

In the report, the expanded Bureau and the Secretariat discuss the main elements of the proposed draft report of the Committee of Experts to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council, as requested in Council resolution [2016/27](#). The draft report will serve to review the Committee's implementation of the resolution and major accomplishments, discuss the value proposition and benefits to the Member States, including over the next 5 to 10 years, and examine a number of feasible options for strengthening the institutional arrangements of the Committee.
