

**Proposed modalities on the arrangements for the eleventh session of the  
United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management  
23, 24 and 27 August 2021 (virtual)**

---

1. We are about to embark on another virtual informal session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), against the background of an ongoing serious and unprecedented health crisis which makes it necessary to react responsibly, putting the safety and health of delegates and the staff of the Secretariat and their families first. At the same time, we must also show that we are pragmatic and sensible to the pressing priorities while ensuring business continuity and the fulfillment of the responsibilities attributed to this Committee of Experts.
2. The physical distancing guidelines and constraints related to the ongoing situation of the COVID-19 global pandemic continues to impact the work of the 2021 session of ECOSOC, including its subsidiary bodies scheduled to meet during 2021. In this regard, the President of ECOSOC in his letter dated 3 December 2020, encouraged the Chairs of the ECOSOC subsidiary bodies to exercise flexibility in the preparation of their sessions in 2021.
3. Taking into consideration the various aspects including the ongoing extraordinary and unprecedented situation of the global pandemic, the continued risks and restrictions associated with international travel by representatives from capitals, quarantine requirements of the host country, as well as the aforementioned guidance from the President of ECOSOC and UN Occupational Safety and Health, the holding of in-person meetings of the eleventh session of UN-GGIM was not recommended.
4. Bearing in mind the prevailing conditions, the official guidance received from the President of ECOSOC, and building on the recent experiences from the convening of the tenth session of the Committee of Experts, other subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and the ECOSOC in 2020-2021, the Bureau recommends, on an exceptional basis and without setting any precedent, a combination of convening of informal meetings on a virtual platform with remote simultaneous interpretation, together with proceeding with the work of the eleventh session of the Committee of Experts through side events and statements, and decision-making through correspondence.
5. These limitations require from all of us an important degree of flexibility. The Bureau of the Committee of Experts hopes that these limitations are taken into consideration by all Member States when working on the organization of work of the Committee and also during the preparation and development of its substantive work.
6. The aim of these proposals is to explain the way in which the work of the Committee of Experts is going to be conducted, and to serve as the basis for the advanced version of the draft organization of work (E/C.20/2021/2/Rev.1, annexed). This paper is subject to revision in light of the evolving situation concerning the COVID-19 pandemic and the related safety and health guidelines implemented at the UN headquarters.

7. The proposals outlined in this document would only be applied as a temporary measure during the extraordinary circumstances imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and would not create a precedent for the work of the Committee of Experts.

8. Taking all this into consideration, the Bureau would like to present the following modalities and proposals that have informed the advanced version of the draft organization of work (E/C.20/2021/2/Rev.1) annexed to this paper.

### A. Structure of the Organization of Work

9. There will be three informal meetings of the eleventh session of the Committee of Experts, convened on the Interprefy virtual platform supported by the UN Secretariat, and will be provided with remote simultaneous interpretation in the six official languages of the UN. The Secretariat will reach out to delegations for training (onboarding) sessions on using the virtual platform with interpretation. Each virtual meeting of the eleventh session will be two hours from 13:00hrs to 15:00hrs (UTC) or 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. (EDT/New York) on 23, 24 and 27 August 2021.

### B. General Discussion

10. The format of general discussions will continue to remain as with the tenth session in 2020, with some exception to new steps that include; the submission of written statements, informing the UN-GGIM Secretariat in advance of the meeting of the delegation's intention to speak per agenda item, and additional time constraints impacting the length of speaking at the virtual meetings. For each agenda item the chair will invite pre-identified representatives to introduce their papers, followed by interventions from delegations who informed the UN-GGIM Secretariat of their intention to speak under that agenda item. A representative of the UN-GGIM Secretariat will then deliver the summary of the discussion for each agenda item.

11. Due to the virtual nature of the eleventh session and the limited time of the meetings, Member States and entities participating in the work of the session are invited to **submit written statements and interventions starting 3 August 2021.**

- a. Written statements referring to specific agenda items can be submitted by the Heads of Delegation or designated officials on their behalf (as provided in formal notification to the Secretariat).
- b. Under each agenda item, a proforma for statements will be available. Guidance for submitting written statements, using the provided proforma, is within the relevant section here: <http://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/11th-Session/documents/>.
- c. Delegates are invited to submit the proforma, preferably as a pdf file, to the Secretariat ([teo@un.org](mailto:teo@un.org) and [frani@un.org](mailto:frani@un.org)).
- d. All proforma received will be date-stamped and uploaded to the UN-GGIM 2021 session website, in the language received, as soon as feasible (except over weekends).

- e. Please use a separate proforma for each agenda item. The submission of written statements will help facilitate discussions and general debate.
- f. Due to the potential volume of submissions in a condensed period, we encourage written statements to be brief, provided in English if possible, focused on the main discussion items for the Committee of Experts, and should be provided to the Secretariat by **17 August 2021**.
- g. Additional written statements may be posted until the conclusion of an agenda item; however, they may not be fully captured within the initial summaries of each agenda item if received after this date.

12. Keeping in mind that the standard duration for provision of remote simultaneous interpretation for virtual meetings is two hours, delegations **intending to speak at the virtual meetings** will be encouraged to indicate to the Secretariat ([cianciulli@un.org](mailto:cianciulli@un.org); [frani@un.org](mailto:frani@un.org); [teo@un.org](mailto:teo@un.org)) their intention to take the floor, in advance of the meeting.

- a. Delegations are asked to take into account capacity limitation of the virtual platform and to ensure that those who access the platform are accredited participants.
- b. The maximum time for delivering oral statements/interventions will be 2 minutes.
- c. The delegations are encouraged to submit their oral statements in written form, which will be posted on the website of UN-GGIM.

### C. Action on proposals – use of Silence Procedure

13. ECOSOC decision 2021/213 of 24 February 2021, entitled “Procedure for taking decisions of the sessional bodies and subsidiary organs of the Economic and Social Council during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic at the 2021 session of the Council” authorized its sessional bodies and subsidiary organs to apply the decision-making (silence) procedure set out in ECOSOC decision 2020/205 of 3 April 2020. Therefore, the composition of the Bureau, rules of procedure (E/C.20/2021/3), adoption of the provisional agenda (E/C.20/2021/1), the organization of work (E/C.20/2021/2/Rev.1), and the draft report of the eleventh session of the Committee of Experts, including the text of the draft decisions, will be adopted under silence procedure bearing in mind the specificity of UN-GGIM and its inability of taking action at in-person meetings.

14. The Co-Chairs and the Bureau will make every effort for the conduct of the virtual meetings and consultations to occur in an open, inclusive, efficient and structured manner while ensuring contribution from all Member States and Observers prior to decision-making by silence procedure.

### D. Side events

15. For this eleventh session side events directly related to specific agenda items will be held virtually between 9 – 12 August and 16 – 19 August 2021. This is consistent with the practice of UN-GGIM, and is being encouraged, as side events allow for substantive discussions outside the limited meeting times of the virtual session. Notably the main sponsors of side events will be

responsible for arranging their event and providing their own platform to hold the event. An overview of the virtual side events for the eleventh session is now available here: [http://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/11th-Session/side\\_events/calendar.cshtml](http://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/11th-Session/side_events/calendar.cshtml), and this will be progressively updated.

## E. Global Chat

16. To assist you in preparing for and connecting virtually to the session, we will be convening a ‘**UN-GGIM eleventh session Global Chat**’ on **5 August 2021 at 11:00 a.m. (UTC)** or 07:00 a.m. (EDT/New York). In a similar manner to the tenth session in 2020, this ‘Global Chat’ will enable prospective participants to ask questions and seek clarity so that there is a level of comfort and understanding on the process and procedures for the eleventh session, in advance of the first meeting on 23 August. Connection details of the Global Chat will be posted on the UN-GGIM eleventh session webpage and circulated via e-mail.