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Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

Strengthening global geospatial information management arrangements

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Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present paper contains the report of the Secretariat, prepared with the assistance of the Bureau and friends of the co-Chairs of the Committee of Experts, on strengthening geospatial information management for consideration by the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management.

At its eleventh session, held virtually on 23, 24 and 27 August 2021, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 11/101, in which it recognized the considerable achievements and increasing importance of the Committee of Experts, whose multiple workstreams have 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.

The Committee of Experts 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 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, together with additional volunteered resources and expertise offered by Member States, to lead preparations and consult on the draft report 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.

The Committee of Experts also emphasized the importance of 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 for adequately addressing issues in

* E/C.20/2022/1

national and global geospatial information management, and to notify them of the preparations for and nature of the report to the Council in 2022.

In this present report, prepared with the assistance of the Bureau and friends of the co-Chairs of the Committee of Experts, the Secretariat provides information on efforts to continue strengthening the coordination and coherence of global geospatial information management; reflects on the progress made by the Committee in the intersessional period, particularly with regard to an in-person meeting of the Bureau and Friends of the co-Chairs, held in New York from 26 to 28 April 2022; and discusses the means by which the Committee, under the leadership of the Bureau and friends of the co-Chairs, has collectively responded to Council resolution [2016/27](#) through a report on enhancing global geospatial information management, for submission to the Council prior to the conclusion of the Council's 2022 Session.

The report outlines how, with limited resources, the Committee of Experts has delivered significant value since its establishment and remains committed to enhancing global geospatial information management in order to respond more efficiently and effectively to the urgent needs of the 2030 Agenda and the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, as well as with regard to climate change and recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. However, this ongoing commitment brings with it new requirements on the part of the Committee, namely: structure, as an expert subsidiary body of the Council with inclusive and participatory modalities for making joint decisions and setting directions by consensus with all Member States; sustainability, with regular budgetary resources so as to ensure continual coordination and coherence, including with regard to norm-setting and capacity development; and status, with meeting entitlements accorded to convene annual sessions. As a strengthened subsidiary body of the Council, the Committee would then be well placed to support the critical development work of the Council and Member States, as well as to ensure that no one is geospatially left behind.

With regard to the report prepared with the assistance of the Bureau and friends of the co-Chairs of the Committee of Experts, the Secretariat provides the Committee of Experts with an overview of the progress made regarding the convening of the second United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress, on the theme 'Geo-Enabling the Global Village: No one should be left behind', which will be hosted by the Government of India through its Ministry of Science and Technology at the Hyderabad International Convention Centre in Hyderabad, India, from 10 to 14 October 2022. The convening of the Congress is linked to the mandate entrusted to the Committee by the Council to convene global forums in order to promote comprehensive dialogue on global geospatial information management with all relevant Governments, international organizations and stakeholders. The report also contains information on the progress made towards the establishment and inauguration of the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre in Deqing, China, and a global geodetic centre of excellence at the United Nations campus in Bonn, Germany.

I. Introduction

1. The global importance of geospatial information was recognized by the United Nations in July 2011 when, at its 47th plenary meeting, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), recognizing the urgent need to take concrete action to strengthen international cooperation in the area of global geospatial information management, adopted resolution [2011/24](#) establishing the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) in accordance with its terms of reference contained in the annex to the resolution. In making resolution [2011/24](#), ECOSOC requested the Committee of Experts to present to the Council, in 2016, a comprehensive review of all aspects of its work and operations, in order to allow Member States to assess its effectiveness.

2. On 27 July 2016 and following a comprehensive review of the review of the work and operations of the Committee of Experts ([E/2016/47](#)), ECOSOC adopted resolution [2016/27](#) entitled 'Strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management'. This resolution acknowledged the considerable achievements of the Committee over its first five years, including its contribution to the strengthening of geospatial information management capacities and utilization, especially in developing countries. Recognizing that the Committee of Experts was well placed to continue to contribute to the work of the United Nations, ECOSOC further decided to broaden and strengthen the mandate of the Committee as the relevant body on geospatial information consisting of government experts. In making resolution [2016/27](#), noting the increasing role and relevance of the Committee of Experts, ECOSOC requested that the Committee report back to the Council, no later than in five years' time, on the implementation of the resolution and to examine the strengthening of the institutional arrangements of the Committee.

3. At its eleventh session, held virtually on 23, 24 and 27 August 2021, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 11/101, in which it recognized the considerable achievements and increasing importance of the Committee of Experts, whose multiple workstreams have 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.

4. In making decision 11/101 at its eleventh session, the Committee of Experts 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 to be submitted to the 2022 Session of ECOSOC, 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.

5. Further, the Committee 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 agendas 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 ECOSOC in 2022.

6. Following a number of smaller ad hoc meetings from July to October 2021, the Bureau and Friends of the co-Chairs of the Committee of Experts (Friends Group) had its first of several virtual meetings on 28 October 2021 to initiate preparations on the draft report for consideration and review by the Committee of Experts prior to its submission to the Council. The Friends Group, as part of the First Plenary Meeting of the High-level Group of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (HLG-IGIF), then met in person from 26 to 28 April 2022 at UN Headquarters in New York to finalize the draft report in preparation for its global consultation with Member States, which was subsequently initiated on 17 May 2022. At its meeting in New York, the Friends Group also prepared a pre-zero draft resolution entitled ‘Enhancing global geospatial information management arrangements’ for further consideration and refinement by Member States.

7. On 22 July 2022, ECOSOC welcomed and noted the Committee’s comprehensive report on its implementation of ECOSOC resolution [2016/27](#) on strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management, entitled ‘Enhancing global geospatial information management’ ([E/2022/68](#)). Further, the Council adopted resolution¹ [2022/24](#) entitled ‘Enhancing global geospatial information management arrangements.’ The adoption of this critical resolution represents a significant endorsement of the Committee’s work and value over the past decade. It acknowledges the achievements and progress made by the Committee and reiterates the importance of strengthening and enhancing the effectiveness of the Committee, particularly for the achievement of its operations focused on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF), to strengthen and ensure its continued effectiveness and benefits to all Member States. However, the resolution fell short in a number of key areas; namely in the provision of expanded conference management and services for the Committee, and resources to strengthen the Secretariat, as detailed in Section IV of this report.

8. In the immediate future, the Committee of Experts will undertake practical action to implement resolution [2022/24](#) and to mobilize resources as the global role and relevance of the Committee of Experts continues to grow and expand. As captured within this present report, these expanding roles will include supporting the implementation of the Committee’s global geospatial frameworks; establishing the Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre (GGKIC) in Deqing, China and the Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence (GGCE) in Bonn Germany; the convening of the second United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (UNWGIC) in Hyderabad, India, and in continuing to lead and set the agenda in global geospatial information management.

9. The Committee of Experts is invited to take note of the present report and to express its views on the way forward for enhancing geospatial information management. Points for discussion and decision are provided in paragraph 57.

II. Work of the Bureau and Friends of the co-Chairs of the Committee of Experts (Friends Group)

10. In its decision 11/101, the Committee of Experts 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 ECOSOC. The Committee 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

¹ [E/RES/2022/24](#) Enhancing global geospatial information management arrangements. At the time of publication, the final resolution adopted by ECOSOC (inclusive of Member State co-sponsors) had not yet been issued. The draft resolution was tabled under symbol E/2022/L.26 <https://undocs.org/E/2022/L.26>

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 (Friends Group) to finalize the report for the consideration of the Committee prior to its submission to the Council in 2022.

11. On 28 September 2021, the Bureau of the Committee of Experts met virtually and informally to discuss and ‘brainstorm’ next steps in preparation for initiating the work of the Friends Group. It was agreed that a key leadership task before the Bureau is to prepare, consult, finalize and submit the report to ECOSOC in a way that would be of the most impact. In this regard, several key points were reiterated: a significant obligation will be on Member States to engage their Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Permanent Missions to the UN in New York; the report must be coherent and should emphasize the Committee’s value proposition, what can be offered but would need investing; need to determine and agree what key messages will resonate with the diplomats and decision-makers; and all of these elements will require continual communication, engagement, and strong leadership over the coming months.

12. On 13 October 2021, the Eighth Plenary Meeting of the Regional Committee on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Europe (UN-GGIM: Europe), convened virtually, initiated discussion and breakout sessions on ‘UN-GGIM Looking to the Future’ to assist the Friends Group with inputs from UN-GGIM: Europe that may provide a valuable starting context in compiling the report to ECOSOC. Guided by the [Draft Briefing Note](#), the UN-GGIM: Europe breakout sessions responded to the following 4 questions: 1) What is the overall societal value proposition of geospatial information?; 2) How do you see geospatial information best contributing to our global challenges into the future?; 3) What are the key messages that will resonate with diplomats and decision-makers?; and 4) What do you see as the future of the Committee of Experts and what we can offer?

13. On 21 October 2021, a number of the Friends Group from European Member States (Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Slovenia, United Kingdom) met in person informally with the Secretariat on the margins of Geospatial World Forum in Amsterdam, the Netherlands to continue the discussion from the preceding week at the Eighth Plenary Meeting of UN-GGIM: Europe. The outcome of the interactive discussion was an attempt to define three distinct phases of activity for the Friends Group to consider over the coming months. These were: Phase 1: National awareness and communication materials, and engagement package; Phase 2: Formal report submitted to ECOSOC in response to resolution [2016/27](#); and Phase 3: Drafting and submission of a resolution to ECOSOC for adoption.

14. The Friends Group² convened its first of several virtual meetings on 28 October 2021 and began with a recap of the discussions referenced in paragraphs 11-14 above so as to ensure all participants were fully briefed on the current status. The Friends Group then agreed on the 3-Phase approach as proposed by the European Member States, and that providing key messages that would resonate with the diplomats and decision-makers would be important for countries as they seek engagement with their political colleagues and Permanent Missions. The Group further agreed that the report to ECOSOC would need to speak in the language of the policy outcomes of the UN and ECOSOC; that without UN-GGIM the policy outcomes of the UN will be weakened; a real sense of consequence if the future of UN-GGIM is not secure. Key messages for the report included ‘looking into the future – time to invest in UN-GGIM’ and ‘presenting both the value proposition and return on investment’. Recognizing the urgent need to ensure the right messages are able to be transmitted, the Friends Group agreed that a small writer’s team, led by the Netherlands, would prepare a strategic overview document that

² Australia, Belgium, Cameroon, Chile, Ethiopia, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Slovenia, Sweden, Tonga, United Kingdom, and the United States (and later, Singapore).

explains the broad global importance and value proposition of the Committee of Experts, and with more detailed national awareness and communication messages added for individual countries.

15. The Friends Group convened its second virtual meeting on 2 December 2021 with a focus on the Phase 1 needs: a letter from the co-Chairs of the Committee of Experts to all Member States providing an overview and explaining the process and timeline (what will happen when) for upholding the Committee's mandate to report back to ECOSOC as requested; a strategic overview document, as a policy brief, which provides a number of generic but clear key messages; and information to capture key national messages, awareness and highlights.

16. A detailed letter from the co-Chairs of the Committee of Experts, along with a Strategic Policy Brief with supporting messages and a short overview of the Committee of Experts, were sent to all Member States on 10 January 2022 as a source of inspiration and a tool for initiating and maintaining contact with Ministries of Foreign Affairs and key ministries at the capitals, Permanent Missions, and other important stakeholders within the countries. Both documents are provided as background documents to this present report for reference.

17. The Friends Group convened its third virtual meeting on 1 March 2022 with a focus on the Phase 2 needs: drafting, consulting, and agreeing on the report and messages to ECOSOC, including suggesting the broad institutional arrangements and resources needed. The drafting of this report was immensely assisted by the work carried out by Sweden as part of its support to the Secretariat. This work by Sweden, provides a compilation of key outputs and achievements of the Committee of Experts since 2016, relating these outputs and achievements to key global agendas and policy initiatives, and substantiating the relevance and value of these outputs and progress vis-à-vis the 2030 Agenda and national development priorities that benefits all Member States, in particular, developing states.

18. This third meeting of the Friends Group was more of a 'question and answer' session as the Group prepared for its in-person meeting in New York in April 2022. Key among these being: What are the options for the future modalities of the Committee of Experts, and what is the preferred status? Should the Committee remain as an expert body, or consider elevation to the status of a Commission? What is the margin for the ask in terms of resources? What trade-offs is the Committee willing to accept, particularly with regard to its well-established global architecture (of regional committees and thematic groups)? In asking for resources, what will change and what will the additional resources provide? These, and other questions were to be elaborated in the report to ECOSOC.

19. The Friends Group, as part of the First Plenary Meeting of the High-level Group of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (HLG-IGIF), then met in person from 26 to 28 April 2022 at UN Headquarters in New York to finalize the draft report in preparation for its global consultation with Member States. The 'integrated' nature of the 3-day meeting had the advantage of bringing an extensive process of engagement and consultation into the final preparations of the report, especially given that the advancement of the IGIF, as a flagship Framework, can help justify and inform the report to ECOSOC of the Committee's 'implementation' value and impact. The meeting was attended by 39 expert representatives from 23 countries³ together with 6 representatives of 5 international organizations.

20. A highlight of the April meeting was a discussion with the Vice-President of ECOSOC, Ambassador Stoeva of Bulgaria. This was initiated by the co-Chairs of the Committee of Experts, inviting members of the ECOSOC Bureau, that may be available, to attend and

³ Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Ethiopia, Fiji, Germany, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

participate in a strategic interactive dialogue for 1-2 hours during the meeting so that participants may share insights, and better understand, the requirements of ECOSOC vis-à-vis the future modalities and programme of work of the Committee of Experts. This interaction proved invaluable as an opportunity for ECOSOC to make better use of the expertise and knowledge available from the Committee to support the implementation of the SDGs at all levels.

21. During the April in-person meeting in New York, the Friends Group, with considerable support from the HLG-IGIF, successfully finalized the Committee's draft report in preparation for its global consultation with Member States. Further, and noting the limited time remaining in ECOSOC's 2022 Session, the Friends Group also prepared a pre-zero draft resolution for further consideration and refinement by Member States. This concluded the Phase 2 and 3 activities for the Friends Group. On 3 May 2022, the pre-zero draft was forwarded to Fiji, who had indicated that the Permanent Mission of Fiji to the United Nations in New York was considering facilitating the formulation of a draft resolution with Member States.

22. On 17 May 2022, the draft report, entitled 'Enhancing global geospatial information management', was submitted via letter by the co-Chairs of the Committee of Experts, to a global consultation and review process with Member States, and aimed at finalizing the report to be submitted to ECOSOC for its consideration and adoption before the conclusion of its 2022 Session. The global consultation concluded on 31 May 2022 with responses from Australia, Colombia, Cuba, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Japan, Mexico, Myanmar, the Philippines, and the United Kingdom. With these responses and refinements, the Bureau of the Committee of Experts finalized the report in preparation for its submission to ECOSOC.

23. This brought to a successful conclusion the critical and time-dependent work of the Friends Group; to lead preparations and consult on the draft report in an inclusive and transparent review process, and to finalize the report for the consideration of the Committee prior to its submission to ECOSOC. Each of the 19 Member States that comprised the Friends Group and led by the co-Chairs of the Committee of Experts, together with members of the HLG-IGIF, are to be warmly congratulated for their unwavering efforts, dedicated engagement, and broad consultation in ensuring that, once again, the considerable achievements and progress made by the Committee in the area of global geospatial information management, in line with the mandates given by the Council over the past 11 years, continue to grow in value and relevance.

III. Report to ECOSOC: Enhancing global geospatial information management

24. On 15 June 2022, pursuant to Council resolution [2016/27](#), the co-Chairs of the Committee of Experts transmitted to the Council, via letter to the Vice-President of ECOSOC, the Committee's final report on strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management ([E/2022/68](#)) entitled 'Enhancing global geospatial information management'. The comprehensive report describes the process of 'transition' marking the Committee's work, starting with an initial five-year period (2012 – 2016) **establishment**; the report then considers its second five-year period (2017-2021) **institutionalization**. Looking forward, the report considers the Committee's future in the coming five-year period – on **implementation** of the Committee's frameworks, anchored by the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF). This demonstrates the Committee's evolving maturity over the first decade of its existence, and demonstrates the clear value proposition the Committee offers to the United Nations and to Member States as a means to strengthen multidisciplinary and multisectoral participation and reinforce the commitment to achieving an inclusive and integrated approach to global geospatial information management.

25. One of the key points highlighted in the report is that the Committee's current institutional arrangements are not sustainable; they are limiting further progress and lessening the Committee's overall impact. The case for change is made, challenges that the Committee faces in addressing gaps are identified, as are the needs that the Committee has not yet been able to address. At the national level, particular attention is paid to the need to develop and foster greater capacity for institutional collaboration, interoperability and integration across the various national government data and information systems, platforms, and policy processes. Various institutional arrangements are considered for strengthening the Committee.

26. Finally, a set of recommendations is made for consideration by ECOSOC on the future modalities and programme of work of the Committee so that it may continue its growing programme of work, coordination, coherence, and value proposition at the global and regional level through the Council and the Committee's regional committees, at the national level through Governments, and across the United Nations system through the subsidiary machinery of the Council. These recommendations relate to three key elements: (a) **structure**, as an expert subsidiary body of the Council with inclusive and participatory modalities for making joint decisions and setting directions by consensus with all Member States; (b) **sustainability**, with regular budgetary resources so as to ensure continual coordination and coherence, including in norm-setting and capacity development; and (c) **status**, with accorded meeting entitlements to convene annual sessions.

27. On 22 July 2022, ECOSOC welcomed and noted the Committee's report on strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management ([E/2022/68](#)) entitled 'Enhancing global geospatial information management'.

IV. ECOSOC Resolution: Enhancing global geospatial information management arrangements

28. On 1 and 12 July 2022, the Permanent Mission of Fiji to the United Nations in New York, through Deputy Permanent Representative Agnes Harm, led and facilitated informal consultations with Member States on the zero draft ECOSOC resolution entitled 'Enhancing global geospatial information management arrangements.' The final negotiated draft resolution was placed under silence procedure on 15 July until 18 July 2022 and submitted to ECOSOC on 19 July 2022.

29. On 22 July 2022, at its final Management Segment for its 2022 Session, ECOSOC adopted resolution⁴ [2022/24](#) entitled 'Enhancing global geospatial information management arrangements'. Led by Fiji, the resolution was co-sponsored by Australia, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Equatorial Guinea, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Samoa, Slovakia, and Switzerland. The resolution acknowledges the achievements and progress made by the Committee of Experts in the area of global geospatial information management and its contribution to the strengthening of geospatial information management capacities and utilization in developing countries. Further, the resolution updates and modernizes the Terms of Reference of the Committee in line with its established global architecture.

30. The resolution represents a major achievement for the Committee of Experts. It is an unequivocal endorsement that the Committee's work is important to the Council and Member States. The resolution reiterates the importance of strengthening and enhancing the effectiveness of the Committee of Experts, particularly for the achievement of its operations focused on the SDGs and the IGIF.

⁴ *ibid*

31. However, it is also important to point out that, due primarily to budget concerns, the resolution fell short in key areas of the ambition reflected in the zero draft which had been prepared by Committee members; namely in the provision of regular conference management and services for the Committee; resources to strengthen the Secretariat; and sustainable funding to support developing countries to participate in the annual sessions. On the positive side, in the resolution the Council:

- (a) Recognizes that, as the global role and relevance of the Committee of Experts continues to grow and expand, implementing and sustaining the mandate of the Committee without adequate, predictable, and sustainable funding and support limits the potential of the full value of the Committee's normative and implementation work;
- (b) Decides to enhance the institutional arrangements of the Committee of Experts as a subsidiary body of the Council in charge of all matters related to geospatial information, geography, land administration and related topics, in accordance with the Terms of Reference annexed to the present resolution;
- (c) Also decides to strengthen the work of the Committee of Experts, and requests the Secretary-General, in the context of his next budget proposal, to identify options to do so, within existing resources, including the establishment of a secretariat for the Committee, dedicated to the Committee's normative and implementation work on global geospatial information management; and
- (d) Confirms the inclusion of the annual session of the Committee of Experts within the regular calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations under the Council, inclusive of the provision of dedicated conference management services, interpretation, and full support for the annual session of the Committee within existing resources.

32. On the negative side, the resolution has to be considered in conjunction with the [oral statement](#) read out by the ECOSOC Secretariat prior to the adoption of the resolution, and which provides some practical context as to how these decisions have been interpreted from a budgetary perspective. For instance, conference services for the Committee will continue to remain as has been the case since the Committee was established in 2011 – on an 'as available' basis during the 'low activity' periods, and with no translation of the Committee's technical reports. No budgetary resources will be made available for funding developing countries to the annual sessions of the Committee of Experts, and any additional secretariat resource requirements would need to be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for 2024, and only then with the expectation of 50% recruitment in 2024. This means that any additional secretariat resources will not be available to the Committee until mid-2024 at the earliest. However, the Committee does now have a very strong [mandate](#) and ability to make a budget submission for seven additional, and defined, regular budget staff posts (within existing resources) for the 2024 budget.

33. In the interim, the Committee may wish to consider how it manages and balances its activities over the next two years (2022-2024). This will require some innovative ideas and potentially developing a short-term strategic plan for 2022-2024 that identifies the key activities and priorities of the Committee along with required outcomes.

V. Second United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress

34. At its eleventh session, held in August 2021, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 11/101, in which it welcomed the convening of the second United Nations World Geospatial

Information Congress (UNWGIC), with the overarching theme ‘Geo-Enabling the Global Village: No one should be left behind’, from 10–14 October 2022, at the Hyderabad International Convention Centre in Hyderabad, India. The UNWGIC is being hosted by the Government of India through its Ministry of Science and Technology and organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) through the UN-GGIM Secretariat.

35. The convening of the second UNWGIC arises out of the mandate from ECOSOC to the Committee of Experts – a subsidiary body of ECOSOC – to convene global forums to promote comprehensive dialogue on global geospatial information management with all relevant governments, international organizations, and stakeholders. Accordingly, the Second UNWGIC is expected to allow 2,000 participants to gather in a participatory and inclusive environment to enhance the communication, understanding, knowledge and application of geospatial information to address local, regional, and global challenges, and to leave no one behind.

36. During the intersessional period, the International Advisory Committee (IAC) has conducted a globally inclusive process for establishing the Congress’ programme. The call for presentations was initiated⁵ on 19 May 2022, with the IAC currently finalizing the plenary programme covering three days (11–13 October 2022), with global and regional meetings, workshops and learning events, expert meetings, and side events, including the eleventh plenary meeting of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Asia and the Pacific (UN-GGIM-AP), as well as the annual meeting of the UN-GGIM Expanded Bureau occurring within the week of 10–14 October 2022.

VI. Strengthening the interlinkages among the global geospatial information community

United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre, Deqing, China

37. At its ninth session, held in New York from 7 to 9 August 2019, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 9/101, in which it welcomed the efforts of the United Nations and the Government of China in developing a proposal to jointly advance the establishment, led by the United Nations, of a global geospatial knowledge and innovation centre in Deqing, China, providing opportunities to build global geospatial capacity and capability and to improve and strengthen expertise on how to prepare for national geospatial information management arrangements in countries, especially developing countries.

38. At its eleventh session, held virtually on 23, 24 and 27 August 2021, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 11/101, in which it appreciated the efforts by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to establish a global geospatial knowledge and innovation centre in Deqing, China, 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.

39. As the culmination of these mandates, the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), as the UN-GGIM Secretariat, in collaboration with the Government of China, through the Ministry of Natural Resources convened the inauguration ceremony of the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre (UN-GGKIC) on 20 May 2022 to

⁵ A letter from the Secretariat and the Chair of the Second UNWGIC International Advisory Committee https://ggim.un.org/2unwgic/documents/Announcement_for_Presentation_Proposals_Letter_19May2022.pdf

formally establish the Centre. In his congratulatory message, the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres⁶ thanked the Government of China, observing the journey of the Centre: “As I stated in my opening video message to the first United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress, convened in this very location in Deqing in November 2018, the data needs for the SDGs are great, and time is no longer on our side. Geospatial data, methods, frameworks, tools, and platforms are urgently needed. Reliable, timely, accessible and disaggregated geospatial information can help to measure progress, inform decision-making, assist in the implementation of the SDGs, and transform our world for the better”.

40. The Secretariat is now in the process of operationalizing the Centre, resolving staffing, budgetary and other administrative and substantive matters. In this regard, the Secretariat would like to highlight the utility of the United Nations Geospatial Network’s ‘Generic Geospatial Job Profiles’⁷ in assisting with defining the job description, roles and responsibilities of staff at the Centre. This underscores the important role of the Committee of Experts’ global architecture in mutually benefitting other areas of the Committee’s substantive programme.

41. The Centre will be operationalized with full time staffing that will include a Director with a team of professional staff who are internationally recruited by the United Nations. This professional team will be supported by administrative staff recruited by the Centre, as well as persons seconded by the host government. It is possible that the Centre may accept person(s) with requisite background and expertise seconded by Member States to support its operations, and to forge partnership(s) with allied and complementary institutions to advance its aims and objectives, subject to satisfactory arrangements and agreements.

42. In the lead up to the operationalization of the Centre in Deqing, China, and in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations and the Government of China on the operationalization of the Centre, an International Advisory Committee was constituted, comprising international geospatial experts with balanced geographical representation and diversity from the Committee of Experts. This Advisory Committee will provide the required guidance and advice on the development, implementation and review of the substantive programme and work plan of the Centre and will work with the Director of the Centre so that the Centre coordinates, engages and supports the aims and objectives of the Committee of Experts, including in the development of norms, frameworks, principles and guides, and capacity development initiatives, as appropriate.

United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence, Bonn, Germany

43. At its tenth session, held virtually on 26 and 27 August and 4 September 2020, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 10/104, in which it welcomed and supported the offer by Germany to establish and host a United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence (GGCE) at the United Nations campus in Bonn, Germany, as the first Centre of an envisioned federated approach to enhance global cooperation and coordination among Member States and relevant geodetic stakeholders, strengthen geodetic infrastructure and 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.

44. At its eleventh session, held virtually on 23, 24 and 27 August 2021, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 11/104, in which it welcomed the progress made by the Government

⁶ <https://china.un.org/en/182602-inauguration-ceremony-united-nations-global-geospatial-knowledge-and-innovation-centre>

⁷ https://www.un.org/geospatialnetwork/sites/www.un.org.geospatialnetwork/files/2021_ungeospatialnetwork_genericjobprofilesgeospatial.pdf

of Germany and the United Nations to host and establish the Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence at the United Nations campus in Bonn. The Committee also encouraged the future Centre 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.

45. During the intersessional period UNSD, as the UN-GGIM Secretariat, in collaboration with the Government of Germany, through the Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy (BKG), have recently concluded the legal framework and agreement, so that the Centre may be established in 2022. Other modalities, including on contributions to the UN Trust Fund which fund the operation and work program of the Centre are detailed in a separate report to this eleventh session of the Committee of Experts ([E./C.20/2022/10/Add.1](#)).

46. It is anticipated that the exchange of formal instruments for the establishment of the Centre, together with the requisite formal notifications, can be concluded in the coming months so that the Centre can be operationalized in 2022 with full time staffing that will include a head of the Centre with a team of professional staff internationally recruited by the United Nations.

VII. Strengthening national geospatial information management

47. The Development Account 11th Tranche Project 1819D ‘Strengthening National Geospatial Information Management Capacities towards Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’ was initiated in 2018 with an objective to improve and strengthen nationally integrated geospatial information management capacities in six countries. The countries being Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Fiji, Mongolia, Nepal, and Tonga. The principal thrust of this Project was for countries to leverage the IGIF as a basis and a mechanism to strengthen their respective geospatial information management arrangements, capacities and capabilities. The IGIF, adopted by the Committee of Experts at its eighth session in August 2018, was welcomed as a means to strengthen national geospatial information management arrangements within and across Member States. At its tenth session, the Committee particularly noted the global significance of the IGIF, which can be applied to any country to guide transformational change⁸.

48. The onset of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic curtailed travels and postponed a series of planned regional, sub-regional and country-level capacity development activities and events under the Project. This made it necessary to pivot to virtual modalities and substantive support, including for subject matter expertise to be provided virtually to sustain efforts and progress towards strengthening the nationally integrated geospatial information management activities of the six countries. 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 for Member States to respond in an adequate and timely manner to any emerging crisis, whether related to public health or the environment.

49. Support to the six target countries continued with resources re-purposed to develop additional resource materials and to remotely deliver the needed guidance and support that allowed each country to undertake and complete their assessment and analysis of their national

⁸ Decision 10/103, tenth session of the Committee of Experts, August 2020: https://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/10th-Session/documents/GGIM10_report_e.pdf

circumstances, needs and gaps, the basis for their design and development of their IGIF Country-level Action Plans according to their national circumstances, aspirations and needs.

50. The provision of subject matter expertise, guidance and regular meetings and discussions remotely allowed all six countries to progress with their approach and tasks, complemented by a suite of resource materials that allowed each country project team to 'self-assess' and analyze their situation, discover, and understand their needs and gaps, and design and develop their Country-level Action Plans. Resource materials developed and shared were worked through and refined as appropriate, given all six countries are of differing circumstances. The support, guidance and resource materials improved the capabilities of the country project teams, and yielded a wealth of collective experience and understanding, that sharpened and focused the implementation guidance and recommendations in the IGIF Implementation Guide. This process has proven that there is more to learn and the living nature of the Guide.

51. All six countries have completed their assessment and analysis of their national circumstances, and discovered their geospatial needs and gaps, issues and challenges vis-à-vis strengthening national capacities and capabilities to deliver national development priorities. Respective Country-level Action Plans were developed to address identified priorities through operationalizing the IGIF anchored by the nine strategic pathways.

52. Although due for completion at the end of 2021, the Project was extended for a period of seven months, to 31 July 2022, allowing technical advisory and support missions, including support for events to raise awareness, and promote and consult on draft Action Plans with national stakeholders. The Project was able to support in-person participation of representatives from the six countries to the First Plenary Meeting of the High-level Group of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (HLG-IGIF) from 26 to 28 April 2022 at UN Headquarters in New York. The participation of these Project countries allowed for better appreciation and wholesome discussion with exchanges of real-world experiences and solutions towards strengthening nationally integrated geospatial information management leveraging the IGIF.

53. The Project, during this extension period, supported three national stakeholder consultation workshops, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 25 and 26 May 2022, Suva, Fiji on 14 and 15 June 2022, and Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on 19 and 20 July 2022. Whilst the Project supports six target countries, the Project was designed to support engagement with a wider group of Member States through regional and sub-regional activities. Therefore, the Project supported sub-regional engagement at the event in Addis Ababa and a regional workshop on Strengthening National Geospatial Information Management on 16 and 17 June 2022 in Suva, Fiji. The regional workshop was organized by the Ministry of Lands and Mineral Resources Fiji, the Pacific Geospatial and Surveying Council (PGSC), the Pacific Community (SPC), and substantively supported by the UN-GGIM Secretariat. The workshop provided a forum for expert representatives from the Pacific Island countries and territories to engage and interact with one another, share and exchange information, experiences and practices, and consider feasible pathways towards strengthening national geospatial information management across the national terrestrial, maritime and cadastral domains.

54. Regional or sub-regional engagements promote and facilitate peer-to-peer exchanges, interaction and learning towards strengthening nationally integrated geospatial information management. For example, at the most recent regional activity, the regional workshop in Fiji, it was observed that several participating Pacific Island countries and territories who are members of PGSC expressed needs and motivation to strengthen their national geospatial information arrangements leveraging the IGIF, including as a mechanism to raise awareness on the importance, value and benefits of integrated geospatial information management at the country level. Collectively, their approach to strengthen national arrangements requires the recognition of national circumstances, endeavors, and efforts to be country-owned and country-

led, and that the strengthening of geospatial capacities and capabilities be embedded within their indigenous efforts holistically – bringing together the terrestrial, maritime and cadastral domains.

55. The approach for designing and developing a Country-level Action Plan to strengthen national geospatial information arrangements and enabling infrastructure must be indigenous capacity and capability centric. The approach developed under the Project is self-paced, learn and discover by methodologically assessing and analyzing national circumstances with a suite of resource materials developed and refined as part of the Project’s support to the six partnering countries. The approach and resource materials have since been adopted by the SDG Data Alliance as the Alliance works with a group of developing countries⁹ to strengthen their national geospatial information management arrangements leveraging the IGIF through Country-level Action Plans.

56. The SDG Data Alliance, a multi-stakeholder partnership with donor support, assists this group of developing countries to address national and global reporting requirements to report on the SDGs, with a specific focus on SDG 10. The ultimate outcome is to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs by identifying where investment will have its greatest impact.

VIII. Points for discussion

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

(a) Take note of the present report and express its views on the efforts of the Bureau, the Expanded Bureau and Secretariat to take strategic and practical actions to strengthen geospatial information management and related interlinkages for Member States;

(b) Express its appreciation to the Friends Group for the critical and time-dependent work carried out, in leading the preparations and consultation on the report of the Committee to ECOSOC in an inclusive and transparent manner;

(c) Take note and express its views on the adoption of resolution [2022/24](#) by ECOSOC, and its implications on the programme of work of the Committee;

(d) Take note of the progress in convening the Second United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress, 10-14 October 2022, at the Hyderabad International Convention Centre in Hyderabad, India, and encourage the global geospatial information community to participate;

(e) Take note and express its views on progress and efforts to establish the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre in Deqing, China, and the United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence in Bonn, Germany;

(f) Emphasize again the importance to improve and strengthen national geospatial information capacity and capability, especially in developing countries and call for appropriate national investments in this context; and highlight also the critical need to mobilize extrabudgetary resources at the global level to support national efforts;

⁹ Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chile, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Guatemala, Honduras, Morocco, Mozambique, Panama, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tonga, Tunisia

(g) Provide guidance and recommend modalities for the revision of the UN-GGIM Strategic Framework and developing a short-term strategic plan for 2022-2024 that identifies the key activities and priorities of the Committee along with required outcomes.