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## Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management

### Twelfth session

New York, 3–5 August 2022

Item 13 of the provisional agenda\*

### Marine geospatial information

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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 prepared by the working group on marine geospatial information, which will be available in the language of submission only from the relevant web page of the Committee of Experts (<https://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/12th-session/>). The Committee is invited to take note of the report and to express its views on the progress of the working group in its efforts to provide guidance and encourage the availability and accessibility of marine geospatial information for the benefit of society, the environment and the economy.

### Summary of the report

At its eleventh session, held virtually on 23, 24 and 27 August 2021, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 11/109, in which it welcomed the working group's workplan for the period 2021–2022 and the progress made. The Committee 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 information ecosystem, and welcomed the development of an integrated policy guidance and operational framework for the marine domain (the draft operational framework) that embraced all water-related elements, including oceans and seas, coastal zones and deltas, inland water bodies and waterways, as an important contribution to this modernization, while reiterating that the working group must not replicate the Framework. The Committee recognized 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 Framework and marine geospatial information management practices.

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\* E/C.20/2022/1.



The Committee of Experts encouraged consideration of and support for the working group 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. The Committee also 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 Framework. The Committee 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.

In the report, the working group provides information on its progress, including a review of its workplan and activities. It discusses the focus areas of its updated workplan for the period 2022–2023 as part of efforts to continue raising awareness, providing guidance and encouraging the availability and accessibility of marine geospatial information for the benefit of society, the environment and the economy. Through the updated workplan, the working group seeks to advance its objectives and functions, such as: (a) the need for collaboration, partnerships, engagement and capacity development, including considerations as they relate to the International Hydrographic Organization and its regional commissions, the Singapore-International Hydrographic Organization Innovation and Technology Laboratory, the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans Seabed 2030 project and the United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development; (b) policy and legal frameworks and authoritative data, authority and custodianship; (c) the land and sea interface and coastal zones; and (d) integration of the maritime, terrestrial and cadastral domains.

The report contains an overview of the progress made by the working group and the next steps in its development of and consultation on the draft operational framework, in which the Framework is recognized as providing the overarching paradigm for integrated marine geospatial information management. In this regard, the nine strategic pathways of the Framework provide the mechanism through which marine geospatial information can be integrated with any other meaningful data in order to solve societal and environmental problems and act as a catalyst for economic growth and opportunity. The draft operational framework, now agreed by the working group as the operational framework for integrated marine geospatial information management, is aimed at providing practical guidance that countries can use to enhance the availability and accessibility of marine geospatial information and realize the greatest benefit from their integrated geospatial information management arrangements for the betterment of society, the environment and the economy.

The report also provides the Committee of Experts with an account of the third expert meeting of the working group, convened in-person in Singapore from 9 to 13 May 2022 and held in conjunction with a United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management international seminar on the theme “Effective and integrated marine geospatial information management”. The working group noted that increasing the availability and accessibility of marine geospatial information has benefits for many aspects of the maritime domain, including with regard to: (a) commercial shipping and safe navigation, maritime resource management, the blue economy and marine spatial planning; (b) emergency management and response; (c) scientific research, maritime limits and administration; and (d) law enforcement and defence. Access to reliable, timely and quality marine geospatial information can provide the data needed for

monitoring progress towards the achievement of national development priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals. Marine geospatial information must be readily available and accessible to support the data-driven, evidence-based management and administration of seas, oceans, coastal zones and inland waters. Knowing where people, marine life, events and activities are, and their spatial relationships to one another, is essential for informed policy development and decision-making. The timeliness of such data is of equal importance. Real-time marine geospatial information is needed to prepare for and respond to emergency situations such as disasters, but real-time or near real-time data can also be helpful in developing strategic priorities and measuring and monitoring outcomes, including regarding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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