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Integrated Geospatial Information Framework

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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 of the High-level Group of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, which will be available in the language of submission only from the relevant web page of the Committee (<http://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 further development of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework and its Implementation Guide, as well as on the strategic leadership and coordination of and oversight by the High-level Group to ensure the sustained success of the Framework.

Summary of the report

At its eleventh session, held virtually on 23, 24 and 27 August 2021, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 11/103, in which it recognized the efforts by the High-level Group to quickly establish itself and develop an ambitious plan to provide the strategic leadership and guidance at that fundamental phase of the Framework. The Committee endorsed the strategic plan of the High-level Group 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 two years.

Also in decision 11/103, the Committee of Experts recognized the relevance and urgency of adequately resourcing the refinement and finalization of the Implementation Guide of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, updating the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework Overarching Strategic Framework and completing related tools and resource materials to assist Member States in the development of their country-level action plans. These actions were identified as a high priority for strengthening national geospatial information management at the

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institutional level and for supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Committee stressed the pressing need to obtain sustained funding for the implementation and iterative development of the Framework so that it endured as a living instrument, was reviewed in a constant process, was kept up to date and was based on the practical implementation experiences of Member States.

The Committee of Experts noted the global significance of the Framework, which served as a key umbrella for the many activities under the purview of the Committee, its regional committees and thematic groups, and which could be applied to any country to guide transformative change. The Committee recognized that both developed and developing countries were currently implementing the Framework and developing country-level action plans in accordance with the available guidance and resource materials, and it emphasized the importance of maintaining the impact and continuity of the Framework at all levels.

The Committee of Experts noted the suggestion of embedding the Framework into existing United Nations conventions, agreements and frameworks, such as the Goals and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, to guarantee high-level political awareness and long-term sustainability. The Committee acknowledged the work of expert, working and thematic groups in their efforts to align their activities and reference documents with the strategic pathways of the Framework and noted that continued collaboration would be necessary with other emerging and complementary initiatives, such as the Geospatial Knowledge Infrastructure, the European Union Location Framework Blueprint and the determination of a geospatial ecosystem beyond spatial data infrastructures, which provided direct linkages with the Framework and would extend the Framework's relevance in the future geospatial information ecosystem.

The Committee of Experts noted additional suggestions that included putting in place clear mechanisms to provide adequate resources to support the implementation of the Framework and to develop country-level action plans that could be effectively operationalized. That would include a set of performance indicators or diagnostic measures that might assist countries as they determined which priority goals, activities and actions to apply in their respective Framework country-level action plans. The Committee expressed appreciation to the Member States and the World Bank, which had contributed to the Framework virtual knowledge learning series, convened through the World Bank Open Learning Campus, and acknowledged the resultant positive impact on capacity development and the implementation of country-level action plans for many countries.

The Committee of Experts encouraged the convening of global and regional forums, especially with decision makers in non-geospatial global institutions, to share good practices and successful strategies for Framework implementation at the country level. Lastly, the Committee encouraged the High-level Group to continue to engage with the regional commissions and the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management regional committees and thematic groups to promote and implement the Framework and support the strengthening of regional geospatial information management.

In the report, information is provided on the progress and activities of the High-level Group, including its working methods and the meetings that it has held. At its fourth virtual meeting, held in November 2021, the High-level Group reviewed and consulted the draft plan of work for 2022–2023. In the plan of work, details are provided on the tasks and activities necessary to implement the three priority goals identified for immediate attention – improve communication, strengthen capacity development and mobilize sustainable funding. A task leader was selected to begin to advance the tasks for the prioritized strategic goal to improve communication.

At its fifth virtual meeting, held in February 2022, the High-level Group welcomed a new Co-Chair to sustain the current level of executive leadership following the request by Sweden to step down owing to increased national commitments. The High-level Group thanked Sweden for its strategic leadership during its fundamental phase. The Group welcomed the United States of America, joining Ethiopia to co-chair the High-level Group and provide executive leadership going forward. In addition, the plan of work was finalized, and initial progress on the goal to improve communication was presented and reviewed. This included the presentation of a draft communications strategy and a draft communications plan.

In the report, information is also provided on the first plenary meeting of the High-level Group, held in person at United Nations Headquarters from 26 to 28 April 2022. The meeting was co-convened with the Bureau of the Committee of Experts and friends of the Co-Chairs of the Committee. The Co-Chairs of the High-level Group and the Co-Chairs of the Committee worked together through an integrated agenda that included an engagement segment with the Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the United Nations and Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council. The meeting proved to be very productive in raising awareness of the Framework as the umbrella for the comprehensive programme of work of the Committee, underpinning the value proposition of the Committee for all Member States and confirming the urgency and importance of strengthening institutional arrangements on global geospatial information management. The meeting, as well as the subsequent plan of work actions, underscored that sustainable resources must be made available to implement the Framework, strengthen national geospatial information management and develop geospatial capacity and capabilities at the country level to achieve the Goals.

The report also includes information on efforts and progress towards establishing task groups and leaders for each of the three priority goals of the Framework strategic plan, as well as actions to ensure the advancement of tasks and activities in the plan of work. The plenary meeting considered initial recommendations on messaging, tag lines and logos for the Framework. Procedures were put in place to monitor progress against the plan of work, including a monthly status report and Gantt chart.

A summary of the first plenary meeting outcomes on strategies to help to sustain Framework implementation within countries is also included in the report. The overarching concepts were related to aligning country-level actions with national priorities, communicating benefits through success stories and developing a high-level version of the Implementation Guide of the Framework.

The report also includes information on efforts and progress towards refining and finalizing the Implementation Guide, which is intended to be a living and evolving practical document. This includes the provision of assistance, including resources and learning materials, for the development of country-level action plans for strengthening national capacities to effectively manage geospatial resources and to modernize national geospatial information arrangements in Member States, in particular in developing countries. The report also serves to inform the Committee of Experts of the capacity development approach by the Secretariat to support the operationalization of the Framework at the country level, including through the eleventh tranche of the United Nations Development Account project (project 1819D), as well as the multi-stakeholder SDG Data Alliance partnership, in which the United Nations is a partner.

In the report, the Committee of Experts is also informed of additional capacity development efforts, including the convening of workshops and sessions at global and regional events to share good practices and successful strategies for implementing the

Framework at the country level, extending the Framework into interrelated data domains, principally land administration and marine geospatial information. The report includes suggestions and information on efforts by the High-level Group to coordinate and collaborate with functional and thematic groups of the Committee, as well as considerations to embed the Framework in existing United Nations conventions, agreements and frameworks.

The Committee of Experts can be expected to provide inputs and guidance and to discuss support to resource the refinement, finalization, translation and digital publication of the Framework's suite of documents, including the Overarching Strategic Framework, the Implementation Guide and tools and resource materials through which to assess, design and develop country-level action plans, especially given the importance and urgency of the matter. The Committee will be invited to provide further guidance on the way forward for Member States to implement the Framework as a forward-looking framework at the country level, across the work areas of the Committee and pertaining to data domains, the Framework's interlinkages with other regional-to-global frameworks and its continued adoption in response to increasingly challenging national, regional and global demands.
