



Twelfth Session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management

Side Event

Women in Geospatial

Monday 1 August 2022

10:00 am - 11:25 am

Venue: Conference Room 2 (CR-2 Conference Building)

United Nations Headquarters, New York

CONCEPT NOTE

A. Introduction

1. Women and girls represent half of the world's population and, therefore, also half of its potential. Gender equality, besides being a fundamental human right, is essential to achieve peaceful societies, with full human potential and sustainable development. Moreover, it has been shown that empowering women spurs productivity and economic growth. The UN Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres has stated that achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is the unfinished business of our time, and the greatest human rights challenge in our world.¹

2. **UN Women** is the [United Nations](#) entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality. It works globally to make the vision of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities:

- Women [lead, participate in and benefit equally](#) from governance systems
- Women have [income security, decent work and economic autonomy](#)
- All women and girls live a life free [from all forms of violence](#)
- Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in [building sustainable peace and resilience](#), and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and [humanitarian action](#)

3. **SDG 5 Gender Equality** The 2022 SDG Report states that, the world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030, and the social and economic fallout from the pandemic has made the situation even bleaker. Despite women's leadership in responding to COVID-19, they still trail men in securing the decision-making positions they deserve. Commitment and bold action are needed to accelerate progress, including through the promotion of laws, policies, budgets and institutions that advance gender equality. Greater investment in gender statistics is vital, since less than half of the data required to monitor Goal 5 are currently available.

¹ <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/gender-equality>

4. **Women in ICT** The power and transformational potential of Internet access and use is not equally distributed. Of the estimated 2.9 billion people currently unconnected, the majority are women and girls. The digital gender gap continues expanding in many developing countries, creating a specific need to support digital gender equality. Globally, in 2022, 62% of men are using the Internet, compared with 57% of women. Only 19% of women in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) used the Internet in 2020, compared to 86 percent in developed world (in 2019). When women and girls are empowered through information and communication technologies (ICTs), societies overall benefit. With access to the Internet and skills to use digital technologies, they gain opportunities to start new businesses, sell products in new markets, and find better-paid jobs; pursue education and obtain health and financial services; exchange information; and participate more fully in public life. Most countries with a large gender gap in mobile phone ownership also have a large gender gap among Internet users. Given that mobile phones are the most frequently used means of accessing the Internet, addressing the mobile phone gender gap could help to reduce the Internet usage gender gap. Digital technologies are an essential pathway to gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. Achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will not be possible until we close the digital gender gap.²

5. **Women in GIS Support Groups** There are many GI and ICT/STEM women support groups worldwide and their numbers and impact are and growing. This side event is being organized in collaboration with Women+ in Geospatial. They are a global professional network promoting diversity and gender-equality in the geospatial industry and academia. They aim to build an inclusive global community inspiring, uniting and empowering women+ in the geospatial sector to become strong leaders and changemakers. See list of women in GIS support groups in the Supporting Document to the concept note.

6. **UN-GGIM related initiatives on women in GIS** On the sides of the ninth session of the Committee of Experts, the Global Centre of Excellence on Gender Statistics (CEGS), in partnership with INEGI and UN Women's Research and Data Section, organized a side event on "[Gender and Geospatial Research and Analysis.](#)" The side event brought together experts from the UN-GGIM community, Member States, academia, civil society and private sector actors and they explored and discussed how GIS could be used to fill critical knowledge gaps around gender equality.

7. Two key messages from the side event were:

- (i) There is an inherent lack of gender research using spatial data and GIS tools and very little is known in this regard. However, this presents an important opportunity to further explore and unlock the potential of GIS to help fill knowledge gaps on gender equality and women's empowerment
- (ii) Strong urge to empower women working in GIS and STEM and to provide a platform, such as a network, to share experiences and strengthen women's voices within the global geospatial community. Network building, such as Women in GIS network and WeCAN, present an important opportunity to bring women practitioners together and have a dialogue around how to empower women in the field and around important gender issues.

8. **Talking Tech: Girls and Women in ICT - Geospatial Edition series** Talking Tech is a series celebrating girls and women in tech being recorded around the world between Girls in ICT Day 2020 to Girls in ICT Day 2022. Girls in ICT Day is an international day marked on the 4th Thursday of each April. In 2022, Girls in ICT Day was 28 April. The objectives of Girls in ICT Day are to help to create a global environment that empowers and encourages girls and young women to consider studies and careers in the growing field of Information and Communications Technology, including geospatial technologies. To

² ITU, Measuring digital development: Facts and figures 2021(2021)

date, the interview series has featured 170 interviews with 400 girls and women from 130 UN member countries.

9. The UN-GGIM Geospatial Network partnered with International Telecommunications Union (ITU), UN International Computing Centre (UNICC), and the Office of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and is in support of EQUALS: the Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age, to interview women working in GIS in the UN to share their geospatial exploits and career development.

10. The objectives were to: - Interest and inspire girls and younger women with information about a range of ICT careers - Bring before a broader audience some role models who are women in tech and share information about their career journeys and work - Offer diverse examples of how ICTs are being used to support achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and other UN goals - Showcase initiatives that are working with girls to support them in ICT studies or future ICT careers.

Interviews are available on [\(4\) Talking Tech: Girls/Young Women and Women - #GirlsInICT 2020 - 2022 - YouTube](#) the Geospatial Edition

B. Objectives

11. While a number efforts have been made to address the gender disparity we still know that "women are underrepresented in the geospatial industry compared to the workforce average, and over a third (38%) have sometimes, often, or always been left out of a work social gathering (compared with 16% of men as show in the SSSI Diversity and Inclusion Survey 2021). We need to continue our efforts to address the disparity and issues that present challenges for women and their ability to work and pursue careers in the Geospatial Industry. Women have been making significant contribution alongside their male counterparts and are developing innovative and ground-breaking geospatial applications and products and are heading geospatial enterprises.

12. The objectives of this side event are to:
- (i) bring together women in the UN-GGIM Community to build on outcomes from the first side event in 2019;
 - (ii) identify priority issues and related solutions;
 - (iii) Explore in what ways can the Committee of Experts – using existing resources – members, body of knowledge and experience support filling data gaps for SDG goal 5;
 - (iv) Determine what role(s) should the Committee of Experts play in the Women in GIS arena, what issues should be addressed that fits within its objectives/terms of reference;
 - (v) Identify its partners and support agencies – Member States, academia, private sector, NGO's and
 - (vi) Decide on next steps – should this become an agenda item for the Committee of Experts? if yes, under which substantive agenda item, and which delegation will present the proposal to the Committee during the twelfth session.

C. Expected outcomes

- (i) Summary of issues and recommendations.
- (ii) Decision – should Women in GIS be on the UN-GGIM work agenda
- (iii) Identification of possible next steps

D. Proposed Agenda

Moderator: Barbara Ryan, Executive Director, World Geospatial Industry Council (WGIC)

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| 1. Welcome and introductory remarks | UN-GGIM Co-Chair, Paloma Merodio Gómez Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía, Mexico |
| 2. Introduction/Setting the scene presentation | Barbara Ryan, WGIC |
| 3. Introduction to Women GI bodies and other Institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Women • Women+ in Geospatial • Talking Tech: Girls and Women in ICT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Women, Papa Seck • W+G, Denise McKenzie, PLACE • Talking Tech, Rui Wan, ITU |
| 4. Round Table Discussion | Chair -Maria Antonia Brovelli, Politecnico di Milano, Italy Panellists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denise McKenzie - PLACE • Paloma Merodio Gómez – Mexico • Papa Seck, UN Women • Rui Wan, ITU • Linda Peters, Esri |
| 5. Summary and Next Steps | Cecille Blake, UNSD |
| 6. Closing remarks | Moderator |

E. Registration

Please register <https://forms.office.com/r/iznhJXXXC0> , thank you.

F. Organizers

- The UNSD UN-GGIM Secretariat in collaboration with Women+ in Geospatial

“This is an open side event, and all Session Attendees are invited”