

**Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management  
Fourteenth session**

New York, 7 - 9 August 2024

Item 19 of the agenda

**Report of the Committee of Experts on its fourteenth session**

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**Informal paper containing draft decisions (Part I)**

**8 August 2024**

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**14/101**

**Enhancing global geospatial information management arrangements**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

- (a) Took note of the comprehensive report of the secretariat and the expanded bureau and commended the significant efforts in continuing to take strategic and practical actions to strengthen and enhance the coordination and coherence of global geospatial information management arrangements in accordance with the United Nations Economic and Social Council resolution 2022/24;
- (b) Appreciated the establishment of a new and enlarged secretariat for the Committee of Experts dedicated to the Committee's normative and implementation work on global geospatial information management and in this regard, asked the Secretariat to focus, in particular, on (i) supporting the bureau to develop a strategic framework for 2025-2030, (ii) strengthening effective global coordination and governance arrangements for the United Nations global geospatial centres, and (iii) support a global programme of national capacity development aligned with the Committee's operations focused on the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF);
- (c) Appreciated and welcomed the opportunity to convene as a global community in Mexico City for the seventh High-level Forum on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management and urged Member States to embrace the opportunity and participate in this global forum to intensify dialogues and discussions on how geospatial information supports resilient and sustainable development;
- (d) Welcomed the establishment of the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre (UN-GGKIC) in China and the United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence (UN-GGCE) in Germany as well as the advanced planning to establish the United Nations Global Geospatial Ecosystem Center of Excellence (UN-GGECE) in Saudi Arabia; endorsed the strategic plan of the UN-GGKIC and appreciated the efforts to extend the current agreement on the operationalization of the UN-GGCE until 31 December 2030 thereby ensuring a longer-term operation for the UN-GGCE;
- (e) Noted that open and transparent management and coordination between the three United Nations global geospatial centres are key to their successes and effective resource utilization, requested the bureau, with the support of the secretariat, to develop a suitable common governance and operational structure for all United Nations global geospatial centres including, for instance, international advisory committees with broad expertise and geographic representation.

- (f) Requested the bureau with the support of the Secretariat to initiate preparations for the third United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress, to be convened after the sixteenth session of the Committee of Experts in 2026, and to report back to the Committee at its fifteenth session;
- (g) Recognized the increasingly complex and challenging operating environment for national geospatial, mapping and cadastral agencies with rapid technological changes and advancements (including in artificial intelligence), noted also that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has only six years remaining, in this context, stressed the importance to wholistically consider environment, climate, resilience and sustainability and requested the bureau with the support of the secretariat to consider these issues as a matter of priority as part of the development of the 2025-2030 strategic framework of the Committee, taking also into account within all activities and operations, aspects of diversity, equity and inclusion; and
- (h) Reiterated the importance of strengthening and enhancing national geospatial information management arrangement, capacity, capability and leadership, urged for sustained national investments in national geospatial programs, and emphasized the critical need to mobilize extrabudgetary resources at the global level to support national efforts, and the global and regional activities of the Committee.

#### **14/102**

#### **Contribution of regional committees to the global geospatial information agenda**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

- (a) Welcomed and commended the report jointly prepared by the five regional committees and the individual reports of the five regional committees provided as background documents, expressed its appreciation to the Regional Committee on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Asia and the Pacific (UN-GGIM-AP) for coordinating the preparation of this first joint report, and congratulated the regional committees for their contributions to and for aligning their work with the global geospatial information agenda, and for their many activities, joint initiatives, considerable progress and achievements during the intersessional period, including convening their annual plenary meetings;
- (b) Further welcomed all announced dates and preparations for the next the plenary meetings of all the regional committees, the proposed inter-regional engagement, dialogues and collaborative activities amongst and between regional committees during the upcoming intersessional period, continuing the synergistic interactions and relationships, the dialogue and sharing of knowledge, approaches and experiences;
- (c) Recognized the challenging operating environment for integrated geospatial information management within respective regional and national contexts, with emerging challenges and opportunities afforded by new technologies, cutting-edge techniques, artificial intelligence; acknowledged the inadequate resourcing for capacity development and for participation in regional activities, and in this regard, requested the United Nations global geospatial centres to engage, coordinate and support regional committees to strengthen and enhance national geospatial information management in the region, and to grow the needed geospatial capabilities and leadership, particularly in developing countries;
- (d) Noting that sufficient support and resources are needed to enhance regional geospatial information management arrangements, requested regional commissions and relevant stakeholders, including the four thematic networks, to actively support Member States by providing

forums to convene, discuss and cooperate on the implementation of global geospatial frameworks of the Committee, in particular, the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, with a focus on regional priorities and strengthening regional capacities, and to strengthen and modernize geospatial information management at the country-level;

(e) Acknowledged the Regional Committee on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for the Americas (UN-GGIM: Americas) will be responsible for coordinating the next joint report of the regional committees, appreciated the Regional Committee on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Europe (UN-GGIM: Europe) for its contribution highlighting the importance of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in all aspects of the work and activities of regional committees and the Committee of Experts;

(f) Requested regional committees to actively contribute to the enhancing the effectiveness of the Committee of Experts and its operations focused on the sustainable development goals and the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, and to explore multilateral collaborative partnerships to strengthen and enhance regional geospatial information management arrangements;

(g) Encouraged Member States to actively engage with their regional committees and to contribute to their intra-regional development activities including modernizing their national operations, acknowledged that in certain situation, the importance and need for national geospatial mandate, strategy and action plan in accordance with national situation; and

(h) Emphasized the importance of coordination, coherence and alignment by all regional committees, functional groups, thematic networks and United Nations global geospatial centres so as to avoid duplication.

### **14/103**

#### **Contribution of thematic networks to the global geospatial information agenda**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

(a) Welcomed the report compiled by the secretariat and the individual background documents prepared by the four thematic networks of the Committee on their contributions and activities during the intersessional period, and appreciated their effective representation, research, education, capacity development activities and collaborative initiatives with the five regional committees, functional groups and United Nations global geospatial centres in advancing their work plans and in implementing the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF);

(b) Welcomed the increased membership across the four thematic networks and encouraged better participation in the implementation of its global geospatial information management work programme; and acknowledged the interactions between the networks and increased collaboration, partnership and support provided to the regional committees by the thematic networks, encouraged alignment with the global geospatial information agenda and the programme of work of the Committee, and stronger collaboration with regional committees, in particular, the Regional Committee on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa (UN-GGIM: Africa);

(c) Appreciated the cooperation and synergies between thematic networks and Member States and stressed its importance to advance the Committee's programme of work, requested the

thematic networks to maintain open communication, to coordinate and avoid duplication of efforts so as to ensure their contributions are effective and aligned with the Committee's priorities for the benefit of Member States and contributing to their sustainable development;

(d) Welcomed the support offered including by the United Nations Geospatial Network to strengthen their contribution through the implementation of the 'One United Nations Geospatial Situation Room', which is the delivery mechanism to bring coherence on data governance and federated data services across the United Nations system, to provide use cases to support capacity development activities for Member States, in particular, low- and middle-income countries; and

(e) Acknowledged the work being done in researching and exploring the use and benefits of artificial intelligence (AI), Earth observations and other innovative technologies, welcomed the advancements made in GeoAI education and its applications and the creation of a repository of educational material to support identifying challenges, opportunities and benefits from sharing good practices and lessons learnt which could contribute to the work of the United Nations global geospatial centres.

#### **14/104**

#### **The future geospatial information ecosystem**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

(a) Welcomed the report of the bureau and the writing team on efforts aimed to continue discussing and exploring the future geospatial information ecosystem to assist Member States and their national geospatial information agencies in their thinking on how the global geospatial information community should be prepared to adapt to the rapidly changing geospatial information management landscape and its operating environment;

(b) Encouraged the bureau and its writing team to consider the constantly evolving nature of the concept and scope of the future geospatial information ecosystem, to avoid a static definition and to focus on the understanding, purpose and use of geospatial information within the broader future digital ecosystem;

(c) Noted that new and emerging technologies and the growth and breadth of the data and digital ecosystems, of which geospatial information and services are a part of, provided further opportunities to use geospatial information to address the complexities of national priorities, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the post-2030 global development agenda and bridging the geospatial digital divide; and that the future geospatial information ecosystem should be anchored in the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, with an emphasis on diversity, equality, and inclusion as well as to embrace innovative approaches, systems and technologies including artificial intelligence and machine learning for societal benefits;

(d) Encouraged the bureau and its writing team to consider the purpose and actors as the main drivers of the future geospatial information ecosystem, to undertake broad global consultation to maximize inputs and views from the Committee and relevant stakeholders, to include diverse perspectives and positions of a future geospatial information ecosystem within the broader digital ecosystem, and to embrace the understanding of a future geospatial information ecosystem as a journey rather than a deliverable;

- (e) Agreed to proceed with option 1 to further explore and consider the future geospatial information ecosystem and its scope, characteristics, fundamental elements and principles and to position the future geospatial information ecosystem within the broader digital ecosystem; and
- (f) Acknowledged the proposed principles and fundamental elements contained in the report prepared by the bureau and its writing team as an initial step for conceptualizing the future geospatial information ecosystem, and agreed to carry out further activities towards presenting a concept on the future geospatial information ecosystem, with its scope, fundamental elements, principles and role within the broader digital ecosystem at the fifteenth session of the Committee of Experts.

## **14/105**

### **United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

- (a) Welcomed the report of the High-level group of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework and commended the high-level group for its continuing efforts to improve the visibility and advance the role, relevance and uptake of the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF) with its strategic leadership, focused activities, effective coordination and oversight, and engagements with regional committees and United Nations global geospatial centres;
- (b) Acknowledged the contributions of its co-Chairs and members of the high-level group with its work groups and task teams, and applauded these coordinated contributions for enhancing geospatial information management arrangements, infrastructures and capacities according to national circumstances; welcomed the progress and achievements of the high-level group, its three work groups and task teams during the intersessional period, the inclusion of two additional goals into the present work plan, and endorsed the updated Strategic Plan;
- (c) Appreciated the preparation of sustainable funding guide, other guides and tools, and encouraged the continual development and updates of these practical guides, resource materials and references and their translations in support of efforts to operationalize the UN-IGIF at the country-level;
- (d) Acknowledged the urgency to refine and finalize the remaining UN-IGIF Implementation Guide suite of documents, to digitally publish these documents and resource materials supporting the preparation of country-level Action Plans, and requested the secretariat to prioritize these tasks after the fourteenth session; and further acknowledged the need to mobilize necessary resources, volunteered and extrabudgetary, to support and sustain these efforts;
- (e) Further acknowledged the importance to ensure the currency and to translate the UN-IGIF suite of documents and resource materials to facilitate the implementation of the UN-IGIF by countries and in this regard, appreciated the translation efforts undertaken by a task team comprising of volunteer translators from Member States, regional committees and the academic network;
- (f) Welcomed offers from some Member States to support the adoption and operationalization of the UN-IGIF across Member States, noting that the UN-IGIF is a broad work item within the Committee's programme of work and that strategic and effective implementing partnerships and collaboration arrangements will be beneficial, the Committee of Experts affirmed the benefits of

partnership and collaboration, and welcomed and appreciated the tangible contributions from PVBLIC Foundation, its SDG Data Alliance, and their donors, for their active support and involvement with a number of Member States to implement the UN-IGIF and to share their implementation experiences; and urged the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre to intensify its support to Member States to ensure the sustained adoption of geospatial information management capabilities and the operationalization of the UN-IGIF according to national circumstances;

(g) Requested the high-level group to consider sharing the results of its global survey with regional committees and relevant implementation partners to optimize the utility of this global survey, and in this regard, urged regional committees and relevant implementation partners to coordinate their activities with the high-level group ensuring synergy, avoiding duplication;

(h) Welcomed the successful convening of its third and fourth plenary meetings, and the offer from Saudi Arabia to host the fifth plenary meeting of the high-level group from 2 - 3 February 2025 in Jeddah, and encouraged Member States, particularly those in the region, to take advantage of opportunity to engage the high-level group and to share or advance their knowledge on the implementation of the UN-IGIF; and

(i) Reaffirmed the UN-IGIF is a key umbrella for the many activities under the purview of the Committee of Experts, reiterated the importance for coordination, coherence and alignment in the work, efforts and activities of regional committees, functional groups, thematic networks, the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre and the high-level group, and reiterated the importance for implementing the UN-IGIF together for the benefit of all.

## **14/106**

### **Global geodetic reference frame**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

(a) Welcomed the reports of the Subcommittee on Geodesy and the United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence and their progress and activities, including their considerable and coordinated efforts to continue to implement General Assembly resolution 69/266;

(b) Appreciated the work of the centre and the subcommittee to strengthen evidence, awareness and understanding of the importance of the global geodesy supply chain as a vital foundation for critical national infrastructure and global economy and encouraged the Subcommittee and the centre to continue providing materials which can be used by Member States to influence decision makers;

(c) Appreciated the draft first joint development plan for global geodesy prepared by the centre and commended the extensive consultation with Member States and partners in the development and preparation of this plan, and in this regard, encouraged the subcommittee, with the support of the centre to intensify efforts to raise awareness and promote the joint development plan for global geodesy to all relevant stakeholders and governments with a view to finalizing and implementing the plan;

(d) Requested the subcommittee, with the support of the centre, to coordinate implementation of the joint development plan to maximize the collective impact of the activities from Member States and partners; with a particular focus on capacity development;

- (e) Requested the subcommittee, with the support of the centre, to explore modalities for strengthening the mandate to sustain and enhance the global geodesy supply chain including identifying options to strengthen international cooperation and commitment and mechanisms for appropriate resource mobilization;
- (f) Requested the subcommittee, with the support of the centre, to provide guidance on how to raise awareness and strengthen governance arrangements with the establishment of country level geodesy working groups with representatives from Member State defence, policy and science agencies, and partners, to ensure the risks associated with degradation of the global geodesy supply chain are managed appropriately; and
- (g) Welcomed plans to organize the fifth plenary meeting of the subcommittee together with the meeting of the international advisory committee of the centre during the upcoming intersessional period.

#### **14/107**

#### **Geospatial information for sustainable development**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

- (a) Welcomed the report jointly prepared by the secretariat and the Working Group on Geospatial Information of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, and efforts to ensure that the contributions of the global geospatial information management community are aligned with the needs of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- (b) Reaffirmed that geospatial information is critical for sustainable development and will be for the post 2030 global development agenda, welcomed the continuing development of a paper “Rescuing the SDGs with geospatial information: How geospatial information can transform the production, measurement, monitoring, and dissemination of SDG indicators”, urged the working group to stress on and address the importance of integrating all relevant forms of geospatial information, including Earth observations and in-situ data, essential to assist countries to meet the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda and to leave no one behind; and in this regard, to note that many countries still struggle, and need support, to collect, integrate and apply geospatial information needed for the indicator framework of the 2030 Agenda;
- (c) Recalled the Statistical Commission decision 55/103 which stressed the need for continued technical and financial support for countries, which should be for both national statistical offices and national geospatial information agencies, so as to develop their national capacities for the production and reporting on the Sustainable Development Goal indicators, and requested the working group to highlight, promote and provide practical guidance for the implementation of the SDGs Geospatial Roadmap, and welcomed the development of data hubs along with the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework in some countries supported by the SDG Data Alliance, efforts accelerating the development of needed capacities;
- (d) Welcomed the second edition of the indicator “Shortlist” and urged countries to provide examples of good practices that demonstrate how geospatial information can support the production and dissemination of geospatially integrated sustainable development data and indicators according to national circumstances, so that the overarching principle and ambition of the 2030 Agenda, that no-one is left behind, is achieved; and

(e) Emphasized the importance of cooperation and coordination to ensure that the contribution of geospatial information for sustainable development remained relevant, welcomed the convening of its seventh meeting jointly with the eighth meeting of the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information at the United Nations Office in Nairobi, from 17 - 19 September 2024, and encouraged members of the working group to participate and contribute to this joint meeting.

#### **14/108**

##### **Geospatial information for climate and resilience**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

[forthcoming]

#### **14/109**

##### **Integration of geospatial, statistical and other related information**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

- a) Welcomed the report and progress of the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information to support the integration of statistical and geospatial information through the implementation of the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework (GSGF) and encouraged national geospatial information agencies to collaborate with their national statistical offices to ensure that the GSGF is implemented according to national context and beneficial to the country;
- b) Emphasized the importance of coordination and collaboration, supported the ongoing efforts of the expert group to strengthen engagement with the Statistical Commission and the Group of Experts on Geographical Names, and efforts to engage and interact with relevant functional groups of the Committee of Experts and the Statistical Commission, noting that the many data integration challenges including for the production of national development indicators, the Sustainable Development Goals indicators, the measuring and monitoring for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Agenda, other current and future global, regional and national development agendas, priorities, and programs, require the full and coordinated implementation of the GSGF at the country-level;
- c) Further welcomed the progress made by the expert group in developing and operationalizing the GSGF Self-Assessment Tool which supports countries in assessing their geo-statistical capacity, the ongoing consideration leading to the preparation of a paper on the 'Benefits of the UN-IGIF for the statistical domain' and a paper on the 'Development of a globally unique identifier for cities'; and highlighted the need for further review, refine and strengthen the GSGF;
- d) Welcomed the development of a governance mechanism towards the strengthening institutional arrangements and coordination between national geospatial information and statistical agencies; requested more national geospatial information agencies to participate and contribute to the work and activities of the expert group with an aim to deepen the integration of geospatial, statistical and other related information, the understanding and application of common geography towards more granular statistics, globally unique identifier for cities, degree of urbanization classification, in particular, to ensure the production and dissemination of geospatially integrated statistical data, the disaggregation of data at all levels of geography; and



e) Encouraged members of the expert group to participate in the upcoming eighth meeting of the expert group at the United Nations Office in Nairobi, from 17 to 19 September 2024, welcomed contributions from Member States to the development of its work plan for 2024 – 2026, and in this regard, requested the expert group to review its working modalities, ensure alignment with the priorities of the Committee, and to provide practical guidance for Member States to advance matters related to the integration of geospatial, statistical and other information according to national circumstances.

#### **14/110**

##### **Integrated geospatial information for effective land administration and management**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

[forthcoming]

#### **14/111**

##### **Integrated marine geospatial information**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

[forthcoming]

#### **14/112**

##### **Policy and legal frameworks, including issues related to authoritative data**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

(a) Welcomed the report and background document of the Working Group on Policy and Legal Frameworks for Geospatial Information Management, and appreciated the activities and progress achieved during the intersessional period including continuing efforts and consultation to address the Committee’s issues related to authoritative data under the leadership of Canada and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;

(b) Noted the progress on the concept paper “Geospatial data for public good” and encouraged the working group to continue to analyze the complex policy and legal issues with particular attention on the impact of emerging technologies and trends on geospatial information management, including artificial intelligence and machine learning, and explore appropriate the legal and regulatory frameworks in consultation with Member States and partners;

(c) Noted the progress related to the preparation of the paper “Authoritative, fit-for-purpose data for crises”, and welcomed the upcoming broad global consultation process after the fourteenth session with the view to present the paper to the Committee of Experts at its fifteenth session in August 2025;

(d) Appreciated the successful convening of the second in-person expert meeting of the working group in Leuven, Belgium in February 2024, and thanked the National Geographic Institute of Belgium, the Regional Committee on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Europe (UN-GGIM: Europe) and EuroGeographics for hosting the meeting; and

(e) Welcomed the convening of next in-person meeting of the working group, hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in October 2025, and encouraged Member States, particularly those in the

region, to seize the opportunity to work together to ensure robust and sound legal and regulatory frameworks for effective geospatial information management including addressing issues related to authoritative and reliable geospatial data and emergent technologies.

#### **14/113**

##### **Implementation and adoption of standards for the global geospatial information community**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

- (a) Welcomed the report of the three standards development organizations, namely, the International Hydrographic Organization, technical committee 211 of the International Organization for Standardization and the Open Geospatial Consortium, on the implementation and adoption of standards for the global geospatial information community, noted the broad range of geospatial standards considered, and expressed its appreciation to the three standards development organizations for their valuable work and contributions;
- (b) Appreciated the continued alignment by standards development organizations with the work of the Committee of Experts and appreciated the collaborative and cross-thematic efforts of the standards development organizations in developing and preparing standards through formal liaison agreements and joint programs to produce standards and good practices that could not be fully achieved by working in isolation;
- (c) Welcomed the numerous examples of the ongoing standards development activities for data access and interoperability, demonstrating the benefits of implementing geospatial standards to ensure accountability, interoperability and compliance, and for enabling the implementation of solutions with FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable) principles and CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance' (Collective Benefit, Authority to Control, Responsibility, and Ethics), and further noted the efforts to work with the United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence towards a sustainable ISO Geodetic Register;
- (d) Encouraged Member States to set policy that starts with open standards as a default for geospatial and location information programs towards the implementation of standard-based solutions that ensure interoperability, data-sharing and flexibility to adapt to changing data sources and technologies, and to support actual real use cases for the integration of geospatial information and statistics, for the reporting of the Sustainable Development Goals, the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, and the use and application of artificial intelligence; and
- (e) Urged Member States, including developing countries, and relevant stakeholders, including the United Nations system and the United Nations global geospatial centres, to collaborate with and participate in the maintenance, advancement, and capacity development of geospatial standards, together with the standards development organizations.

#### **14/114**

##### **Collaboration with the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

[forthcoming]

**14/115**

**Programme management report**

The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management:

[forthcoming]