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United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework

United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present paper contains the report of the High-level Group of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (HLG-IGIF) for consideration by the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management.

At its thirteenth session, held from 2 to 4 August 2023, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 13/105, in which it congratulated the High-level Group for its continued efforts to advance the role and relevance of the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework through a significant range of activities, including broadening work group membership, developing communication materials, a sustainable funding guide and an online tool, translating the Framework suite of documents and participating broadly in webinars, workshops, conferences and events to promote and advance the Framework.

The Committee acknowledged the priority and urgency of the High-level Group to refine, finalize, translate and digitally publish the Framework suite of documents, including the overarching strategy, the Framework implementation guide and addenda, and the resource materials to support the United Nations recommended approach to design and develop country-level action plans, all of which required adequate additional resources.

The Committee of Experts appreciated the considerable efforts of Member States, with coordination leadership from the Academic Network of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Regional Committee for the Americas, to informally translate the Framework documents into several languages, and welcomed the offer of Saudi Arabia to support the digital publication of the Framework suite of documents. The Committee recognized the vital role of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management regional committees, functional groups and thematic networks in advancing the implementation of the Framework and bridging the geospatial digital divide, and that the global advancement of the Framework required continued cooperation, coordination and resourcing among those groups, as evidenced in many reports under the agenda items of the thirteenth session. It noted the updated terms of reference and membership structure of the High-level Group, and that the High-level Group would meet in person in the first quarter of 2024 to continue progress toward its strategic goals and objectives. The Committee commended the efforts of the SDG Data Alliance, the World Bank and other regional collaborative partners to mobilize the resources necessary to assist developing countries in strengthening the advancement of the Framework and accelerating achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In this present report, the High-level Group provides information on its membership, meetings, activities, work group leadership and progress against its workplan and its three priority goals: (a) improving communication; (b) strengthening capacity development; and (c) mobilizing sustainable funding. The High-level Group convened both in-person and virtual meetings to advance its three priority goals and associated

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tasks. The leadership team, consisting of the co-chairs, co-leaders of work groups, the SDG Data Alliance and the Secretariat, meets virtually each month to review progress on the workplan and to coordinate efforts across work groups and partners.

In this report, the High-level Group also highlights actions and outcomes from its third plenary meeting, held in January 2024 in Aguascalientes, Mexico. During the meeting, the High-level Group conducted a review and made recommendations on its strategic plan to streamline, prioritize, reduce duplication and consider contributions from the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre, the SDG Data Alliance and other United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management functional groups and thematic networks, as well as the structure of its work groups that are needed to advance its workplan. Additional outcomes encompass the preparations for future plenary meetings and the establishment of a broader leadership team, which will include the chairs of regional committees and the Head of the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre. This expanded team is scheduled to meet biannually. The strategic plan of the High-level Group has been updated on the basis of these recommendations, and the strategic plan is included with the report for consideration and endorsement by the Committee of Experts.

In this report, the High-level Group further highlights efforts to assess the effectiveness of the Group in implementing the workplan and advancing of the Framework globally, including conducting a global survey on the Framework. The global survey, with a 59 per cent response rate, demonstrates considerable progress in raising awareness and advancing the Framework globally, while also identifying opportunities that the High-level Group and its partners can address. The report includes a summary of the results and recommendations from the global survey.

In this report, the High-level Group also provides information on the High-level Group's communications and engagements, including organizing forums, events, webinars and meetings to promote the Framework, increasing knowledge and awareness and sharing good practices and successful strategies to encourage the implementation of the Framework at the country level. Information is also provided on the development of communications and other support materials that will help Member States to promote and advance the Framework within their countries. In addition, the High-level Group informs the Committee of ongoing initiatives to enhance collaboration across regions, functional groups, thematic networks and partners, thereby fostering synergies, collaboration and reducing duplication.

In this report, the High-level Group discusses efforts to provide Member States with guidance on identifying and assessing sustainable funding for implementing the Framework at the country level. This substantive body of work was developed through detailed review of geospatial funding studies and literature, and in consultation with Member States, donors, private sector and the World Bank. Together, this work provides Member States with the information and support materials to identify potential funding sources, requirements, value propositions, costs, benefits and positive impacts of investing in the Framework to enhance nationally integrated geospatial information management.

This report includes an update on progress towards refining, finalizing and translating the Framework suite of documents, including the remaining implementation guide documents and the resource materials that support the development of the Framework action plans at the country level. In addition, the report includes the resources needed to finalize the remaining implementation guide documents, appendices and resource materials for the development of country-level action plans and to sustain the Framework as a living document. The report further includes the considerable progress made on translating the documents into multiple languages in order to ensure they are more widely available, understandable and utilized by a broader audience.

This report includes updates from the SDG Data Alliance on its efforts, activities and progress in supporting the implementation of the Framework at the country level, especially in developing countries. The updates include efforts aimed at mobilizing resources and providing remote technical expertise and assistance to developing countries for advancing the Framework through the development of country-level action plans and for implementing data hubs to help accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The High-level Group continues efforts to advance the relevance and utility of the Framework through its strategic plan and corresponding workplan.

I. Introduction

1. The Committee of Experts, in making [decision 10/103](#) at its tenth session, held virtually on 26 and 27 August and 4 September 2020, endorsed the establishment of a dedicated High-level Group on the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (HLG-IGIF) to provide strategic leadership, coordination and oversight in order to ensure the sustained success of the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF), and to mobilize the resources necessary to maintain the momentum and refinement of the UN-IGIF.

2. In making [decision 11/103](#) at its eleventh session, held virtually on 23, 24 and 27 August 2021, the Committee of Experts endorsed the HLG-IGIF strategic plan, including its six strategic goals:

Goal 1: Improve Communication

Goal 2: Promote Data Governance, Availability, and Accessibility

Goal 3: Strengthen Capacity Development

Goal 4: Mobilize Sustainable Funding

Goal 5: Encourage Collaboration, Exchange and Sharing

Goal 6: Oversee Improvement and Review

3. At its twelfth session, held from 3 to 5 August 2022, the initial HLG-IGIF work plan was presented. The work plan prioritized three strategic goals: Goal 1: Improve Communication, Goal 3: Strengthen Capacity Development, and Goal 4: Mobilize Sustainable Funding. The HLG-IGIF asked for participation in its three newly established work groups to address these prioritized goals. At its thirteenth session, held from 2 to 4 August 2023, the HLG-IGIF shared progress in broadening work group membership and initial progress in advancing the work plan.

4. In this present report, information is provided on the activities of the HLG-IGIF and its work groups, the meetings held virtually and in person, and the progress of advancing the HLG-IGIF work plan. The report further informs the Committee of Experts of efforts to assess the HLG-IGIF effectiveness in advancing the Framework globally, to streamline and prioritize the strategic plan and work plan, and to consider the role of partners such as the newly operationalized United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre (UN-GGKIC) and implementing partner i.e., SDG Data Alliance, while refining the strategic plan and work plan.

5. The Committee of Experts is invited to take note of the report and to express its views on the activities, and progress of the HLG-IGIF and provide guidance on identifying the resources needed to finalize the Implementation Guide of the UN-IGIF and Country-level Action Plan resource materials including their translation. Points for discussion and decision are provided in paragraph 65.

II. Meetings of the HLG-IGIF

6. At its second plenary meeting, held on 31 July 2023 on the margins of the thirteenth session of the Committee of Experts, the HLG-IGIF engaged with the chairs of the regional committees, thematic networks, and other partners such as the World Bank, SDG Data Alliance, and United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). The HLG-IGIF heard from work group co-Leads on progress advancing the three priority goals in the work plan: Communication, Capacity Development and, Sustainable Funding. A decision was made to extend the current work plan through 2024 and to revisit the three remaining goals in early 2024 and decide how and when these goals will be incorporated into the work plan. The HLG-IGIF adopted an updated Terms of Reference and welcomed regional committee chairs as members of the HLG-IGIF. The regional committee

chairs agreed to hold regular meetings to ensure strong collaboration on the UN-IGIF and the HLG-IGIF, and determined that an in-person plenary meeting was necessary in the first quarter of 2024 to continue progress toward its strategic goals and objectives.

7. At its third plenary meeting, held on 22-23 January 2024 in Aguascalientes, Mexico, during the five-day Expert Consultation and Meetings on Enhancing Geospatial Information Management Arrangements and Accelerating the Implementation of the SDGs, the High-level Group reviewed and made recommendations on its Strategic plan. Recommendations included to streamline, prioritize, reduce duplication of its goals, and consider contributions from the UN-GGKIC, the SDG Data Alliance and other functional groups and thematic networks of the Committee of Experts. The HLG-IGIF considered the number of work groups needed to advance the work plan and decided to keep the three existing work groups and to add an additional work group only if the work could not be absorbed by existing groups.

8. The HLG-IGIF Strategic plan was updated as a result of the recommendations from the third plenary meeting. The Strategic plan now includes four strategic goals instead of six, as two goals were combined with other related goals, to reduce duplication. The updated Strategic plan is included as a background report for consideration and endorsement by the Committee of Experts with the following four goals:

Goal 1: Improve and Encourage Communication, Collaboration, Exchange, and Sharing

Goal 2: Promote Data Governance, Availability, and Accessibility

Goal 3: Develop Capacity and Improve the UN-IGIF

Goal 4: Mobilize Sustainable Funding

9. The HLG-IGIF will continue with three work groups through 2025 and will add a fourth work group in late 2025 to address the remaining strategic goal, Goal 2: Promote Data Governance, Availability, and Accessibility. The work group for Goal 2 will start when the Sustainable Funding Work Group completes its work in late 2025, so the HLG-IGIF will have no more than 3 work groups at one time. This will help the HLG-IGIF to maintain strong leadership and membership for its active work groups.

10. During the third plenary meeting, the HLG-IGIF established priorities for the upcoming year including to:

- (a) Finalize and translate the suite of UN-IGIF documents and addendums, including the UN Recommended Approach documents and tools.
- (b) Create targeted communication materials to raise awareness of the importance and relevance of UN-IGIF.
- (c) Work with the Secretariat to develop a centralized repository for all UN-IGIF support materials, documents, and links to have an easily accessible body of knowledge for the UN-IGIF.
- (d) Adopt a future perspective that is focused more on strategic guidance and oversight as opposed to operational tasks, especially in light of increase in resources of the Secretariat and UN-GGKIC, pending finalization of recruitment later in 2024.
- (e) Establish strong ties between the HLG-IGIF, UN-GGKIC and its International Advisory Committee (IAC) to ensure synergies between the activities of the HLG-IGIF and UN-GGKIC, and to avoid duplication.
- (f) Build and sustain work group leadership so there are two co-Leads per work group.

11. Additional outcomes from the third plenary meeting include decisions to hold a fourth plenary meeting on the sideline of the fourteenth session of the Committee of Experts, and a

fifth plenary meeting in early 2025, and to establish a broader leadership team which will include the regional committee chairs and the Head of the UN-GGKIC. In this context, Saudi Arabia offered to host the upcoming fifth plenary meeting in conjunction with the twelfth plenary meeting of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Regional Committee of the Arab States (UN-GGIM: Arab States), in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in February 2025.

12. During the third plenary meeting, the HLG-IGIF also discussed the different uses, approaches, and resources for the UN-IGIF. Belgium, Cameroon, Indonesia, Mexico, and Saudi Arabia shared their approaches, accomplishments, and challenges in advancing the UN-IGIF. The HLG-IGIF celebrated the diversity of approaches taken by Member States, emphasizing that there is not a single approach. These varied approaches resulted in Member States successfully developing National Geospatial Information Strategies or Country-level Action Plans grounded in the UN-IGIF, which involved engagement and validation at the highest level of government. The HLG-IGIF highlighted that the true value is in how Member States are using or implementing the UN-IGIF to strengthen geospatial capacities and integration based on their national circumstances, rather than specific approaches. The HLG-IGIF agreed that moving to implementation is very important and that efforts should focus on getting Member States over the finish line. The HLG-IGIF also heard progress updates from regional committee chairs, work group co-Leads, the UN-GGKIC, the United Nations Global Geodetic Center of Excellence (UN-GGCE), and SDG Data Alliance. Progress and key outcomes from these discussions are highlighted separately for each of these groups in this present report.

13. In addition to the plenary meetings, the HLG-IGIF convenes regular monthly virtual leadership team meetings with the co-Chairs, Secretariat, work group co-Leads, and SDG Data Alliance advisors. The monthly meetings are utilized to report progress to the co-Chairs and to facilitate stronger coordination and reduced duplication of activities across the work groups. These meetings have been very effective at sharing important information each month and are key to tracking progress against the work plan milestones.

14. During the third plenary meeting, the HLG-IGIF agreed to hold biannual expanded leadership meetings which would also include regional committee chairs and the Head of the UN-GGKIC. On 7 May 2024, the HLG-IGIF held its first expanded leadership team Meeting. The focus of the meeting included the revised Strategic plan, updates from the UN-GGKIC, outcomes from the UN-GGKIC IAC Meeting, updates from regional committee chairs, the collection of inputs for this present report, and planning for the fourth plenary meeting and a joint Forum to be held at the Fourteenth session of the Committee of Experts. The HLG-IGIF expanded leadership team also discussed the need to align regional committee plenary meetings and possibly HLG-IGIF plenary meetings. The next expanded leadership team Meeting is scheduled for 5 November 2024 and will focus on planning for the HLG-IGIF Fifth plenary meeting to be held on 2-3 February 2025 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

15. HLG-IGIF work groups generally meet once per month to facilitate progress against the tasks and activities outlined in the work plan. During these meetings, the work groups discuss progress, identify task owners, and work through questions or concerns. The co-Leads then report work group progress at the monthly leadership team meetings to keep the Leadership team updated on progress and any concerns that arise during the work group meetings.

III. Events and engagements

16. The HLG-IGIF and its work groups have participated broadly in webinars, workshops, conferences, and events to promote and advance the Framework. On the margins of the thirteenth session of the Committee of Experts, the HLG-IGIF held a widely attended Forum to showcase key accomplishment of the work groups, to highlight several Member States experiences in advancing the UN-IGIF, including Chile, India, Tonga, Mozambique, and South Africa, and to share how the SDG Data Alliance is advancing the implementation of

the UN-IGIF. Key work accomplishments highlighted during the Forum included progress on a Sustainable Funding Guide, the launch of an online Geospatial Value Study Inventory (GeoVSI), an overview of the UN-IGIF document translation process, and translation progress made.

17. The HLG-IGIF co-Chairs, work group co-Leads, and HLG-IGIF members have utilized other global and regional forums, workshops, and side events to provide an overview of the progress of the HLG-IGIF, communicate the importance of the UN-IGIF, and share good practices and lessons learned. Other engagements have included Expert consultations and meetings on enhancing geospatial information management arrangements and accelerating the implementation of the SDGs, SDG Data Alliance Workshops (in Cape Town, South Africa and Aguascalientes, Mexico), UK Geospatial Summit (with academia, technologists, and policy advisors), Pan American Institute of Geography and History 24th General Assembly, 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States, International Federation of Surveyors, and participation to regional committee meetings, sessions, and virtual and in-person workshops and webinars.

18. At the upcoming fourteenth session, the HLG-IGIF will jointly organize a Forum between the HLG-IGIF, the Expert Group on Land Administration and Management, the Working Group on Marine Geospatial Information, the UN-GGKIC, with participation from regional committees and thematic networks, demonstrating the broad synergies and interlinkages of the UN-IGIF serving as the overarching Framework throughout the programme of work of the Committee of Experts. Upcoming HLG-IGIF engagements include the seventh High-level Forum in Mexico City, Mexico, on 8-10 October 2024, and the World Data Forum in Medellín, Colombia on 12-15 November 2024.

IV. Regional committee events, workshops, and webinars

19. In addition to the HLG-IGIF events and engagements, all regional committees are conducting their own events, workshops, or webinars to share good practices, develop capacity, and raise awareness and promote the implementation of the UN-IGIF, including during their annual plenary meetings.

UN-GGIM: Africa

20. At its ninth plenary meeting held on 14-18 August 2023, in Cape Town, South Africa, the regional committee strongly encouraged Member States to actively develop their own country-led action plans, including with the SDG Data Alliance, and to ensure that their national geospatial strategies are in line with the regional agenda, thus promoting developmental efforts within member countries and the African region. The regional committee also organized a workshop with the SDG Data Alliance on developing country-level action plans and building geospatial data hubs for the SDGs where Member States actively exchanged valuable insights, discussing good practices, challenges, and successes in implementing UN-IGIF's Country-level Action Plans. Additionally, impactful videos showcasing the value of geospatial information management in achieving SDGs across Africa were presented at a side event of the SDG Summit in New York, USA, entitled '[Geospatial Information: Accelerating Implementation of the SDGs](#)'.

UN-GGIM: Americas

21. At its tenth plenary meeting, held on 17-20 October 2023 in Santiago, Chile, the regional committee of the Americas held two UN-IGIF sessions that featured presentations on the UN-IGIF as a regional driver for change, the work of the regional UN-IGIF working group, results of the regional UN-IGIF survey, regional collaborations on the UN-IGIF, and Member States examples on the use and implementation of the UN-IGIF. The results of the regional UN-IGIF survey for the Americas were used to guide the UN-IGIF programme of work for the region. Two virtual webinars entitled "Let's Talk about the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF)" were organized with the first event, focused on Strategic Pathway 1 - Governance and Institutions, held on 24 April 2024, with more than 100

participants from the Americas region and other regional committees, and the second webinar entitled “Conversations on the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF), Strategic Pathway 2 - Policy and Legal” held on 26 June 2024. Additional webinars featuring the UN-IGIF will be conducted during the second half of 2024.

UN-GGIM: Arab States

22. At its Eleventh plenary meeting held on 4-8 February 2023 in Doha, Qatar, the regional committee of Arab States conducted a workshop on the UN-IGIF. The workshop introduced the UN-IGIF, emphasizing its role in supporting national development priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals. Member States shared their experiences implementing the Framework and discussed strategies for enhancing geospatial information management for evidence-based policy and decision-making. The UN-GGIM: Arab States regional UN-IGIF work group met to discuss promoting the UN-IGIF for improved integrated geospatial information management, emphasizing the importance of international standards and frameworks to enhance coordination and collaboration among geospatial stakeholders. The Geospatial Governance Working Group also met and proposed a governance model to help Arab States operationalize the UN-IGIF at the national level. It aimed to address policy, legal, and technical mandates, and improve integrated geospatial information management.

UN-GGIM-AP

23. At its twelfth plenary meeting on 6-10 November 2023 in Bali, Indonesia, the regional committee conducted a UN-IGIF workshop highlighting both global perspectives and sharing regional initiatives, experiences, and practices of Member States. Global perspectives were shared by the HLG-IGIF co-Chair and representatives from the five regional committees. Member States’ experiences were shared by eighteen countries including Australia, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Uzbekistan, and Viet Nam. The regional committee also conducted an expert consultation and meeting together with the Secretariat and engaged participating geospatial leaders and experts from Member States, to listen, discuss, and understand key elements of their national efforts implementing the UN-IGIF, and their current geospatial information management arrangements, leadership, resources, and capacities.

24. The UN-IGIF regional work group also met during the twelfth plenary meeting to formulate their 2024-2025 Action Plan, focused on raising awareness and a general understanding of UN-IGIF, as well as Country-level Action Plan development and implementation in an easy-to-understand manner. The group facilitated the process of requesting all Member States to complete the Baseline Survey, Task 5 of the UN Recommended Approach to Design and Develop Country-level Action Plan. The regional UN-IGIF work group agreed to work closely with the HLG-IGIF to develop and share resources used to facilitate the advancement of UN-IGIF in Asia and the Pacific region, including presentations, digital content, videos, posters, and infographics used for raising awareness, knowledge, and capacity on the UN-IGIF.

UN-GGIM: Europe

25. The UN-IGIF Work Group of the regional committee was set up to support European members of the HLG-IGIF, to contribute to the global tasks, and to raise the profile and relevance of UN-IGIF to members of the European Region. The regional committee developed and delivered a short webinar series to raise the profile of the UN-IGIF across Europe and to provide tangible advice for Member States. These webinars have had global reach with over 75 Member States taking part. This included a webinar on 27 September 2023 entitled “An introduction to the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF),” to raise awareness of the UN-IGIF and how it helps countries take practical actions to achieve digital transformation and to share how countries across Europe are adopting and implementing the Framework. This was followed by a second UN-IGIF webinar held on 23 April 2024 entitled “Toolbox for implementing the UN-IGIF: A practical

discussion on putting the framework in action,” which helped to enhance knowledge and understanding about the existing approaches to implementing the UN-IGIF and provided an overview of the different UN-IGIF tools available to help strengthen national geospatial capabilities.

26. The regional committee of Europe held its eleventh plenary meeting on 19-20 June 2024 in Geneva, Switzerland. The plenary saw the adoption of the revised work plan for the regional committee, which included a strong commitment to continue to focus on the UN-IGIF as a regional priority. The working group is currently working closely with other UN-IGIF regional working groups to maximize the impact of its activities.

V. Communications Work Group

Work group composition and leadership

27. During the intersessional period, the Communications Work Group operated with only one co-Lead, from the United Kingdom. Following the third plenary meeting, where leadership and support for the work groups were identified as a high priority, the High-level Group identified and welcomed a new work group co-Lead from Indonesia, and the United Kingdom sought and received additional internal resources to support Communications Work Group activities. The newly resourced work group is seeking to strengthen membership and reinvigorate the work activities of the Communications Work Group. The work group now includes eight Member States, and representation from the Private Sector and Academia Networks.

Work Plan

28. Based on discussions and feedback from the third plenary meeting of the HLG-IGIF in Aguascalientes, an updated Strategic Plan was developed and is presented to the Committee for endorsement. In an effort to streamline and reduce duplication, Goal 1: Improve Communication and Goal 5: Encourage Collaboration, Exchange and Sharing were combined into one new Goal 1: Improve and Encourage Communication, Collaboration, Exchange and Sharing. The Communications Work Group has developed and agreed to a new combined work plan for the group, which merges the focus actions and tasks from both goals and eliminates duplication. The revised work plan now includes the development of a communications toolkit, expansion of communications channels, and broader collaborative efforts across the functional groups of the Committee of Experts and the wider UN community. The revised work plan will be presented at the fourth plenary meeting of the HLG-IGIF in August 2024, on the sideline of the fourteenth session of the Committee of Experts.

Collaboration

29. Following several engagements with the regional committee chairs, collaborative efforts have continued to grow, and the regional committee chairs are now a critical part of the HLG-IGIF. The regional committee chairs made a commitment to strengthen collaboration across the regions and to create or strengthen regional UN-IGIF work groups, which are now active in all the regions. The regional committee chairs have significantly increased coordination across the regions, with the High-level Group, by conducting joint regional meetings and events; sharing plans, ideas, and good practices to advance the UN-IGIF; and having strong regional representation on the three UN-IGIF work groups.

30. In order to support the regional UN-IGIF work groups and strengthen synergies between the groups, the Communications Work Group is now hosting bi-monthly collaboration meetings with the regional UN-IGIF work group leads to coordinate event schedules, share ideas and resources, and promote regional events across all regions to maximize reach and impact. There is a significant amount of work being done in the regions to advance the UN-IGIF, and the Communications Work Group has compiled a UN-IGIF events calendar that will enable the coordination and promotion of the excellent work

undertaken in the regions and sharing of good practices and materials wherever possible. The Communications Work Group will also utilize this collaborative meeting occurrence to strengthen communication, share High-level Group work materials and products, and gather feedback to better understand regional needs.

31. The Communications Work Group will work to strengthen engagement with the thematic networks and will invite participation in the HLG-IGIF's Fourth plenary meeting to share work plans and discuss potential areas for strengthened collaboration on advancing the UN-IGIF. This engagement will be utilized to promote synergies and to better understand how the HLG-IGIF and thematic networks can best work together to advance the promotion and implementation of the UN-IGIF.

32. With the increased focus on collaboration in the new Goal 1, the Communications Work Group will now seek additional collaborative opportunities with the UN Geospatial Network including the United Nations Environment Programme, World Health Organization, United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Food and Agricultural Organization, and other relevant groups such as the Group on Earth Observations where the High-level Group has potential to benefit from joint activities and synergies. The Committee of Experts is invited to share guidance and advice on potential opportunities to strengthen collaboration and partnerships.

Communication materials

33. The Communications Work Group has identified a need to engage stakeholders across various sectors, including key decision-makers and high-level officials, on the positive outcomes and impacts of implementing UN-IGIF at the country level. The work group is continuing to build membership with the needed communication and graphics skills to continue the development of collateral materials that promote the broad benefits of the UN-IGIF to important stakeholders and decision-makers. In addition, the work group will advance the work started by the Secretariat on a Communications Kit that will provide Member States with key communications messages and materials for stakeholder communication and engagement.

Communication channels

34. The Communications Work Group has utilized three main communication channels to share information and promote UN-IGIF events: the @UN_IGIF Twitter account, the HLG-IGIF Newsletter, and the section of the UN-GGIM website dedicated to the HLG-IGIF. These channels have been utilized to promote HLG-IGIF engagement activities, regional workshops and events, to share good practices and to share information on new work products or materials. The work group is also exploring LinkedIn as another potential communication channel as well as enhancements to the UN-GGIM website to better meet the needs of Member States.

35. The Communications Work Group is working closely with the Secretariat to identify how best to utilize the section of the UN-GGIM website dedicated to the HLG-IGIF to communicate and effectively share documents and materials being produced by the work groups to the broadest possible audience. The goal is to have translated documents, collateral material, guides, example materials from Member States, online resources, webinars, and training centralized and easily accessible to promote and distribute to Member States. The Communications Work Group is working with the other HLG-IGIF work groups to identify work group materials to be hosted on the site. The Secretariat, guided by the Expanded Bureau, is working towards updates to the UN-GGIM website to ensure that information, resources, documentation, and knowledge on the UN-IGIF is discoverable, centralized, and easy to navigate.

VI. Capacity Development Work Group

Work group composition and leadership

36. Since the thirteenth session of the Committee of Experts, the HLG-IGIF Capacity Development Work Group has also had only one co-Lead, Argentina, with notable support from the HLG-IGIF leadership team. Based on priorities established during the Third plenary meeting in Aguascalientes, the work group has been actively seeking a second co-Lead for the Group. Conversations have been held with potential leadership candidates, and it is expected that the co-Lead position will soon be filled. The Group has participants from many Member States and from the five regional entities, UN-GGIM: Americas Academic Network, and ECLAC. The group maintains regular monthly meetings and utilizes subgroups for deeper involvement in specific activities of the work plan.

Work plan

37. Based on discussions held during the third plenary meeting of the HLG-IGIF in Aguascalientes, Mexico, the work group was tasked with reviewing and updating its work plan. In an effort to streamline and reduce duplication, Goal 3: Strengthen Capacity Development and Goal 6: Oversee Improvement and Review were combined into one new Goal 3: Develop Capacity and Improve the UN-IGIF. The working group reviewed the associated tasks of the combined goals and provided suggested updates for the work plan.

Finalization of the UN-IGIF suite of documents

38. The Secretariat continued to update the respective Implementation Guide for each strategic pathway, and the Country-level Action Plan resources materials based on the feedback from the global consultation process conducted. The revised version of the UN-IGIF Overarching Strategy is available since February 2023, Solving the puzzle since March 2023, and additional materials of the strategic pathways are available including Strategic pathways 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, the Implementation Guide strategic pathways 2 Policy and Legal, 4 Data, and 5 Innovation still pending finalization. Adequately resourcing, supporting and ensuring the refinement, finalization, translation, digital publication, and dissemination of the UN-IGIF suite of documents is a high priority for the HLG-IGIF, further resources are needed to complete and finalize the suite of documents and ensure their publication follows adequate editorial and publication processes.

UN-IGIF document translations

39. The Capacity Development Work Group Document translation team continues to translate the UN-IGIF documents into languages other than English. The documents that have already been translated are indicated in the following table:

Document	Translated documents sent to Secretariat for review and posting				
	Arabic	French	German	Portuguese	Spanish
Overarching Strategy	x	x			x
Solving the Puzzle	x	x	x		x
Strategic Pathway 1	x	x			x
Strategic Pathway 3	x	x		x	x

Strategic Pathway 6	x	x			x
Strategic Pathway 7	x	x			x
Strategic Pathway 8	x	x			x
Strategic Pathway 9	x	x			x

The highlighted documents have been reviewed and posted to the UN-GGIM website. The remaining translated documents remain under review. Document translation is ongoing, and there may be additional documents completed or posted prior to the fourteenth session of the Committee.

UN-IGIF global survey

40. In order to assess the effectiveness of the HLG-IGIF in implementing the work plan and advancing the Framework globally, the Capacity Development Work Group conducted a UN-IGIF global survey. The global survey, with a 59 percent response rate, demonstrates considerable progress in raising awareness and advancing the Framework globally. A global survey was essential to gauge the current level of awareness and utilization of the Framework and its components among Member States. While both the welcoming of the UN-IGIF Implementation Guide by Member States and the geospatial community, and the establishment of the HLG-IGIF signifies a dedicated effort toward the advancement of the UN-IGIF, the extent of Member States' knowledge and application remained uncertain. The Capacity Development Work Group shared early survey results at the third plenary meeting held in Aguascalientes and has prepared final survey results to be shared at the HLG-IGIF fourth plenary meeting in New York, USA, in August 2024. The highlights from the survey include:

- (a) A total of 114 out of 193 Member States responded to the UN-IGIF global survey, a 59 percent response rate.
- (b) The breakdown of responses by region is as follows:
 - UN-GGIM: Africa: 26 of 53 Member States (48 percent)
 - UN-GGIM: Americas: 25 of 36 Member States (69 percent)
 - UN-GGIM: Arab States: 6 of 12 Member States (50 percent)
 - UN-GGIM: Asia Pacific: 26 of 57 Member States (45 percent)
 - UN-GGIM: Europe: 31 of 45 Member States (69 percent)
- (c) Awareness of the UN-IGIF:
 - An overwhelming 98 percent of Member States are aware of the UN-IGIF
- (d) Member States using or implementing the UN-IGIF:
 - 58 percent are using or implementing the UN-IGIF in some capacity
 - 24 percent are not currently using or implementing but plan to soon
 - 18 percent are not considering using or implementing the UN-IGIF

41. The UN-IGIF global survey helps to discover that some Member States have generated various materials to support the use and implementation of the UN-IGIF and are willing to share those materials as examples to benefit other Member States. The Capacity

Development Work Group, through its work plan, will collect and disseminate further these materials for the benefit of the wider community.

VII. Sustainable Funding Work Group

Work Group composition and leadership

42. The HLG-IGIF Sustainable Funding Work Group experienced a change in both leadership roles this year with Jamaica and South Africa stepping aside as co-Leads, replaced by Mozambique and Saudi Arabia. The group thanks Jamaica and South Africa for their past leadership. The work group includes representation from seven Member States, as well as the Academic and Private Sector Networks. The group has regular monthly meetings and the seamless leadership transition has allowed work to progress smoothly on key work items.

Work plan

43. At the third plenary meeting in Aguascalientes, Mexico, the HLG-IGIF reviewed the strategic goals and associated focus actions, and the Sustainable Funding Work Group co-Leads were asked to consider if the group had additional activities to achieve following the completion of the Sustainable Funding Guide. A decision was made to extend the work plan through 2025 to include activities such as the promotion of the guide at HLG-IGIF plenary and regional plenary meetings, consultations with UN-IGIF regional work groups, and through a global UN-IGIF Sustainable Funding Webinar. The work group will continue into late 2025, at which time the Sustainable Funding Work Group will cease to exist and a new work group will be created to address the last strategic goal: Promote Data Governance, Availability, and Accessibility. This will ensure that the HLG-IGIF will not have more than three work groups to manage concurrently.

Sustainable Funding Guide

44. As part of the implementation of the Sustainable Funding Work Group's work plan, the group collaborated with numerous geospatial agencies and funding experts to understand their approaches to establishing sustainable funding for UN-IGIF at the country level. Led by Saudi Arabia, with participation from Belgium, South Africa, Jamaica, and representatives from the Academic and Private Sector Networks, the group is crafting a Sustainable Funding Guide that aims to inform Member States about potential funding sources, requirements, investment and budget needs, benefits, and associated good practices for cost/benefit analysis.

45. Saudi Arabia initiated a thorough document review and spearheaded focused consultations with selected member states, treasury representatives, financial institutions, and donor organizations from various country classifications. These consultations were conducted from October to December 2023 with eight Member States and two financial institutions with the aim to refine funding needs and clarify requirements. Covering insights from diverse stakeholders, including countries, donor organizations, and financial institutions, the consultations sought to explore budget assessment techniques, evaluate geospatial system investments, and develop a guide for economic assessment to support business cases for decision-makers.

46. In November 2023, Saudi Arabia was given the responsibility to draft a comprehensive Sustainable Funding Guide, including a 1-page flyer to disseminate key information. In December 2023, the draft Table of Contents was circulated among the work group and presented for initial comments and feedback at the third plenary meeting held in January in Aguascalientes, Mexico. By May, the draft Funding Guide and flyer were completed and shared with the work group for comment. Feedback from work group members was received, and the work group will refine the guide and flyer based on feedback and submit the revised draft to the HLG-IGIF for review and approval prior to presenting the guide at the HLG-IGIF fourth plenary meeting in New York, marking a milestone in sustainable funding for geospatial information management.

Geospatial Value Study Inventory (GeoVSI)

47. The online Geospatial Value Study Inventory ([GeoVSI](#)) tool, in the Sustainable Funding Guide was developed in response to Member States requests to access easily examples of relevant cost justifications used by Member States, and of industry reports that help quantify the value of geospatial information. These materials can help justify investment in the UN-IGIF, aid in the development of Country-level Action Plans, and provide the necessary cost/benefit and budget analysis. Since its launch at the Thirteenth session in August 2023, the site has welcomed 63 registered (and validated) users from 23 countries. The site receives an average of 20 weekly visits, with 93 unique site visits in its launch during the thirteenth session. Several enhancements have been made to the site since its launch, including an updated user guide and improved map interface, and 20 additional studies have been brought forward by Member States to expand the inventory. There are, presently, a total of 85 studies on the site, and another 10 studies being added. The Sustainable Funding Work Group continues to welcome additional study submissions at info@geoVSI.org which will be included upon receipt.

VIII. SDG Data Alliance

48. In making [decision 12/105](#) at its twelfth session, the Committee of Experts welcomed the establishment and success of the SDG Data Alliance initiative as a concrete mechanism to mobilize resources to assist developing countries in accelerating achievement of the SDGs, made possible by advancing and implementing individual Country-level Action Plans and data hubs for countries throughout Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Latin America, and requested the SDG Data Alliance to report back to the Committee on its progress.

49. At its thirteenth session, the Committee of Experts was provided with an update on the progress and activities of the SDG Data Alliance during the intersessional period, including through the provision of a detailed background document. In making [decision 13/105](#) at its thirteenth session, the Committee of Experts commended the efforts of the SDG Data Alliance, the World Bank and other regional collaborative partners to mobilize the resources necessary to assist developing countries in strengthening the advancement of the UN-IGIF and accelerating achievement of the SDGs, and noted the planned convening of the SDG Data Alliance workshops as key elements of the ninth plenary meeting of UN-GGIM: Africa and the international meetings of the International Cartographic Conference 2023, held in Cape Town, South Africa, in August 2023.

56. During the 2023-2024 intersessional period, the SDG Data Alliance and its core partners have continued to guide and support developing countries in their efforts to utilize the UN-IGIF guidance and tools to develop and implement UN-IGIF Country-level Action Plans and to develop and operationalize SDG Data Hubs as a means to measure, monitor, and report national progress toward achievement of the SDGs. In the past year, this guidance and support has been considerably strengthened and enabled as a result of close collaboration and coordination with the Secretariat and the HLG-IGIF.

50. The 31st International Cartographic Conference (ICC), the ninth plenary meeting of UN-GGIM: Africa, and two SDG Data Alliance workshops were convened in an integrated way in Cape Town, South Africa, from 13-18 August 2023. Some 845 delegates from 81 countries attended the ICC, a higher number than anticipated due in part to the representation by 33 African countries, made possible by the concurrent meeting of UN-GGIM Africa and the workshops offered by the SDG Data Alliance. With more than 100 participants from 33 countries, the plenary meeting of UN-GGIM: Africa was held on 16-18 August 2023 with the two SDG Data Alliance workshops integrated into the ninth plenary meeting of UN-GGIM: Africa, convened on 17-18 August.

51. These workshops, ‘Accelerating the achievement of the SDGs’, comprised key capacity development and knowledge transfer elements of UN-GGIM: Africa and ICC 2023 international meetings, and were tailored towards enabling African Member States, including

SDG Data Alliance partner countries, to accelerate the creation and implementation of national UN-IGIF Country-level Action Plans and the deployment of sustainable SDG data hubs, supporting the achievement of the SDGs. Significantly, the first demonstrations of SDG data hubs by Burkina Faso and South Africa were showcased.

52. The SDG Data Alliance participated in a regional expert consultation and meeting to enhance national geospatial information management arrangements and accelerate the achievement of the SDGs, on 23-28 November 2023, at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The consultation engaged geospatial leaders from Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and South Africa, along with staff from UNECA and Secretariat, including the Head of the recently established United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre (UN-GGKIC), and SDG Data Alliance resource experts.

53. The group interacted as peers providing guidance and reviews on national efforts, challenges, and accomplishments towards implementation of the UN-IGIF in African countries, particularly through UN-IGIF Country-level Action Plans. This included sharing challenges and accomplishments in engaging and working with colleagues across government, including national statistical offices, to integrate geospatial information, statistics, and other relevant data to produce 'geospatially disaggregated' indicators for visualizing and 'story telling' national development priorities and the SDGs.

54. The opportunity to interact with the Head of the UN-GGKIC proved to be immensely valuable. Noting that the overarching goal of the UN-GGKIC is to work towards the ambitions of implementation of the UN-IGIF, and to provide technical assistance and capacity development for national SDG monitoring and reporting and allowing greater availability and visibility of country data at sub-national, national, regional and global levels, it was agreed that the UN-GGKIC will be a key 'implementation mechanism' of the UN-IGIF in the years ahead, and is also well placed to collaborate closely with the ongoing work of the SDG Data Alliance.

55. With the Secretariat, the SDG Data Alliance participated in and co-convened a series of regional expert consultations and meetings to enhance national geospatial information management arrangements and accelerate the achievement of the SDGs, held at INEGI's Headquarters in Aguascalientes, Mexico, 22-26 January 2024. The meetings included the third plenary meeting of the HLG-IGIF, a meeting of the UN-GGIM expanded bureau, and dedicated SDG Data Alliance Workshops.

56. With the Latin America SDG Data Alliance countries in attendance (Chile, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama) as well as several African countries providing support (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Mozambique, South Africa), the workshop provided a significant amount of Country-level interaction and engagement, providing immediate feedback on the UN-IGIF materials and approach, hearing specific country needs, and countries offering guidance and advice to avoid common challenges and pitfalls, and to advance their objectives. All of this had the added advantage of enabling the SDG Data Alliance to iteratively improve and streamline its training and recommended approaches. Importantly, the SDG Data Alliance learned a lot, as did the countries themselves, and the HLG-IGIF and expanded bureau. There was general consensus recognizing that the UN-GGIM leadership is now in a much better and more informed place with regard to UN-IGIF implementation, and that the SDG Data Alliance is in an ideal position to support and advise the HLG-IGIF on the development of the UN-IGIF and implementation approaches.

57. The SDG Data Alliance and PVBLIC Foundation also made a major contribution to the 4th International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4) in St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda, on 27-30 May 2024. This included convening two key side events on the structure and modalities for the establishment of a SIDS Center of Excellence and SIDS Global Data Hub with the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), and the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS). The SIDS Center of

Excellence and SIDS Global Data Hub were subsequently launched by H.E. Mr. Gaston Browne, Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, on 30 May in the SDG Media Zone.

58. As a key implementation pillar for the SIDS Center of Excellence, the SIDS Global Data Hub will address the many ongoing data challenges faced by SIDS, providing access to new data sources, enabling technologies, innovative dashboards and visualization tools, information systems, capacity development, resources, training, and global expertise – establishing an enduring repository for data on SIDS for SIDS. The SDG Data Alliance developed and demonstrated a ‘prototype’ SIDS Global Data Hub at SIDS4 that showcased data, maps and applications from global, regional, national, to local levels across SIDS regions. This included stories and demonstrations from several individual SIDS countries to provide tangible insights into what capabilities will be achievable within the Global Data Hub as it becomes established, operational and sufficiently resourced.

59. The SDG Data Alliance also participated in, and contributed to, the side event entitled ‘Geospatial Technologies for Sustainable Development of SIDS’ hosted by the UN-GGKIC and Government of China. The side event explored the multiple aspects of new and emerging data, platforms, frameworks and experiences for the benefits of countries, including SIDS, and how geospatial information and related technologies contribute to addressing national development priorities and sustainable development toward resilient prosperity. The side event also provided an opportunity for participants to discuss at length how global cooperation can foster innovation with geospatial technologies to enrich data resources and strengthen capacities for SIDS.

60. In order to capitalize on the momentum garnered from SIDS4, the SDG Data Alliance is planning to convene two dedicated regional SIDS Workshops during the remainder of 2024, and with support from the UN-GGIM Secretariat, and potentially the UN-GGKIC. A Caribbean SIDS Workshop will be convened in St. John’s, Antigua and Barbuda, on 21-25 October 2024 with the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, and a Pacific SIDS Workshop will be convened in Suva, Fiji, on 11-15 November 2024 with the Pacific Community (SPC). At this early stage, the modalities and substantive arrangements for both workshops are yet to be determined.

IX. Opportunities and Next Steps

Interlinkages with the UN-IGIF

61. As evidenced by the UN-IGIF Global Survey results, the UN-IGIF is being advanced in many Member States and it is now referenced in many national geospatial policies, plans, and strategies. Additionally, partners such as the World Bank and the SDG Data Alliance are embedding the UN-IGIF into their programs to help coordinate, develop, strengthen, and promote the efficient and effective use and sharing of geospatial information for policy formulation, decision-making, and innovation. The UN-IGIF is also embedded across the work programme of the Committee of Experts, as evidenced by the inclusion of the UN-IGIF across work group approaches, work plans, and as referenced in other reports provided to the fourteenth session of the Committee of Experts.

62. Since the overarching goal of the UN-GGKIC is to work towards the ambitions of implementation of the UN-IGIF set by Member States, it is critically important that the HLG-IGIF work in concert with the UN-GGKIC to complement each other’s work. For example, efforts towards technical assistance and capacity development should be coordinated between the two entities, as well as with the regional committees and implementing partners such as the SDG Data Alliance. Working together to develop concrete plans towards implementation will create powerful collaboration and partnerships to advance the Framework and its associated benefits.

63. With the new goal “Oversee Improvement and Review” being incorporated into the HLG-IGIF work plan, there is an opportunity for the HLG-IGIF to do a deeper dive into the UN-IGIF global survey results to better understand how the UN-IGIF is being used, to

identify opportunities for improvement of the UN-IGIF and its suite of documents, to gather support materials that Member States are creating on their own, and to better understand financial and capacity development support are being utilized. As noted in the summary of this present report, attention and resources need to be directed to finalize the remaining chapters of the Implementation Guide, Appendices, and the resource materials that support the UN Recommended Approach to Design and Develop Country-level Action Plans, so they can be translated and utilized by all Member States, irrespective of national languages. This is necessary to ensure the successful global implementation of the UN-IGIF.

64. The UN-IGIF is a globally accepted Framework for the advancement of geospatial information management in support of national and global development agendas. The UN-IGIF suite of documents serves as a key resource to help Member States succeed. Demand for these documents in different languages continues to increase. As such, completion of the UN-IGIF suite of documents and their translation remains a high priority for the HLG-IGIF.

X. Points for discussion

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

- (a) **Take note of the present report and express its views on the activities and progress of the High-level Group and the strategic leadership, coordination and oversight by the Group to ensure the sustained success of the Framework and its operationalization through country-level action plans;**
- (b) **Take note of and consider with a view to endorse the updated HLG-IGIF Strategic Plan, and to provide guidance on the implementation of the Strategic Plan including additional resources to complete the refinement and finalize the Implementation Guide, the Country-level Action Plan resource materials, and ensure the currency and translation of these UN-IGIF documents and materials;**
- (c) **Take note of and express its views on the two new goals incorporated into the present work plan, including potential opportunities to strengthen collaborative efforts with the UN Geospatial Network and the UN System; and opportunities for review and improvement of the UN-IGIF;**
- (d) **Express its view and provide guidance on the feasible mechanism for collaboration between the HLG-IGIF, UN-GGKIC and implementing partners such as the SDG Data Alliance;**
- (e) **Take note of the activities and progress of all three work groups of the HLG-IGIF including the UN-IGIF global survey and related survey report, the development of a Sustainable Funding Guide and related support materials; and**
- (f) **Take note of the offer from Saudi Arabia to host the in-person fifth plenary meeting of the Group on 2-3 February 2025 in Jeddah.**