



# Economic and Social Council

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## Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management

### Fourteenth session

New York, 7–9 August 2024

Item 8 of the provisional agenda\*

### Global geodetic reference frame

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### Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat has the honour to bring to the attention of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management the reports prepared by the Subcommittee on Geodesy and the United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence, which will be available, in the language of submission only, from the relevant web page of the Committee (<https://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/14th-session/>). The Committee is invited to take note of the reports and to express its views on the progress made by the Subcommittee and the Centre in their coordinated efforts to address complex issues facing the global geodetic community, to achieve the long-term sustainability and quality of the global geodetic reference frame and to implement General Assembly resolution [69/266](#).

### Summary of the reports

At its thirteenth session, held in New York from 2 to 4 August 2023, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 13/106, in which it welcomed the considerable efforts to continue to implement General Assembly resolution [69/266](#) of 26 February 2015 and grow the critical understanding, awareness and importance of the global geodetic reference frame as a vital foundation for global geospatial and Earth observation infrastructure. The Committee also welcomed the establishment and inauguration of the United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence at the United Nations campus in Bonn, Germany, in March 2023 and acknowledged that, as the first dedicated resource to support the implementation of resolution [69/266](#), the Centre would be an important platform to encourage investment in geodetic infrastructure, improve international cooperation, provide technical assistance and capacity development, and foster more significant planning and international coordination in pursuit of strengthening partnerships and opportunities enabled by geodesy.

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\* [E/C.20/2024/1](#).



The Committee of Experts noted the revised terms of reference of the Subcommittee and the establishment of three new working groups and welcomed the establishment of the International Advisory Committee of the United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence, which would provide the required guidance and advice on the development, implementation and review of the substantive annual programme of work of the Centre in a transparent and inclusive manner. The Committee reiterated the importance of consulting and engaging with Member States to determine their operational geodetic requirements and encouraged the Subcommittee to work with United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management regional committees and relevant partners.

In its report, the Subcommittee on Geodesy provides information relating to its activities during the intersessional period and on the outcomes of its fourth plenary meeting, hosted by the United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence at the United Nations campus in Bonn in March 2024. The meeting was attended by Member State representatives from all United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management regional committees, and participants from international and regional organizations, geodetic research institutions and relevant stakeholders. At the meeting, participants welcomed the role of the Centre as a coordinator at the global level, while also noting that a great deal of work was needed to make the global messages relevant to the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management regional committees and to Member States. Each regional committee has a working group or community of interest with a focus on geodesy. At the meeting, the regional working groups and communities of interest reported on their regions.

In its report, the United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence, jointly with its international advisory committee, provides updates of the Centre's first year of operation. The Centre was focused on working closely with the Subcommittee on Geodesy to understand the operational geodetic requirements of Member States. These efforts included convening nine virtual "listening" sessions and two in-person expert consultation sessions with over 550 registered participants from 110 Member States, including representatives from the government, science, policy and defence sectors, as well as partner organizations. The operational geodetic requirements of Member States have been compiled as part of a global geodesy needs assessment and translated into goals, objectives and activities in the first joint development plan for global geodesy. The plan includes actions to first stabilize the global geodesy supply chain and then take steps to make it more robust. The global geodesy needs assessment and the joint development plan are provided as background documents to the report.

In its report, the United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence discusses efforts to demonstrate the importance of geodesy. The Centre has produced a document on hidden risks, which discusses the weaknesses in the global geodesy supply chain that could have catastrophic impacts on critical infrastructure and national economies. The document is provided as background information to the report. In the report, the Centre recognizes the important role played by Member States, regional committees, and international and regional geodetic organizations in the geodetic community. In particular, the enormous contribution of Member States and organizations is highlighted in developing, operating and sustaining vital elements of the global geodesy supply chain. To recognize this contribution to the global geodesy supply chain, the Centre has created the United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence Partnership Programme, which is described in a background document to the report.