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Policy and legal frameworks, including issues related to authoritative data

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Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat has the honour to bring to the attention of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management the report prepared by the working group on policy and legal frameworks for geospatial information management, 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 report and to express its views on the progress of the working group in addressing policy and legal issues in geospatial information management, including issues related to authoritative data and the challenges within a rapidly evolving technological environment.

Summary of the report

At its thirteenth session, held from 2 to 4 August 2023, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 13/112, in which it appreciated the efforts of the working group to engage and collaborate with other functional groups and key partners of the Committee. The working group was encouraged to continue its engagement and communication with the Committee and its regional committees to promote and raise awareness on the importance of sound and robust policy and legal frameworks for achieving the societal, environmental and economic benefits from geospatial information management. The Committee also endorsed the paper entitled “Authoritative data in an evolving geospatial landscape: an exploration of policy and legal challenges” and noted that the paper was intended as a policy and legal guide to help national geospatial entities, including national mapping, cadastral and land registration authorities, as well as the private sector and civil society, to better produce, sustain and govern the use of geospatial information that was deemed authoritative and trusted. The paper was to be used as a supplement in the

* E/C.20/2024/1.



implementation of the strategic pathways of the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework relating to the authority and authoritativeness of data.

The Committee of Experts further acknowledged that, given the increasing global challenges and the related need for reliable data, the working group's planned activity related to addressing the issue of geospatial information for public good, authoritative data and exploring fit-for-purpose authoritative geospatial data and applications in crises and disasters was timely. The Committee encouraged the working group to continue analysing the complex policy and legal issues in geospatial information management and to further consider the concept of trust in data, the associated data quality and metadata standards, and ensuring responsible and ethical utilization of data. Lastly, the Committee of Experts noted the convening of the next meeting of the working group in Belgium in February 2024 in partnership with the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Regional Committee for Europe and EuroGeographics, to be held back to back with the meeting of the EuroGeographics Policy Knowledge Exchange Network to maximize the participation of and input from Member States, relevant stakeholders and policymakers.

In the report, the working group discusses its leadership, its membership, its activities and progress made during the intersessional period. The working group also provides information on the discussions and recommendations from its second in-person expert meeting, held in Leuven, Belgium, from 20 to 22 February 2024, including: (a) to develop policy and legal frameworks that can be implemented; (b) to communicate about the frameworks in clear and intelligible language; (c) to engage further with the wider community (in the areas of data, artificial intelligence, legal issues, technology and innovation) on how ongoing policy and legal developments could benefit from and incorporate a geospatial "lens" or consideration; and (d) to further strengthen interlinkages, joint activities, interactions, seminars and meetings related to policy and legal frameworks and authoritative data with other functional groups of the Committee of Experts, such as the Subcommittee on Geodesy, the expert group on land administration and management and the working group on marine geospatial information. In the report, and in the context of its second in-person meeting, the working group also notes the need to consider policy and legal gaps related to geospatial information management at the national and subnational levels, and to address these gaps collaboratively, together with the wider community. The working group calls for the overall consideration of diversity, equity and inclusion principles in developing policy and legal frameworks.

In the report, the working group provides an overview of progress made in the development of the draft paper titled "Authoritative, fit-for-purpose geospatial data for crises", which has been shaped through valuable feedback by members of the working group. This paper, a continuation of the paper entitled "Authoritative data in an evolving geospatial landscape: an exploration of policy and legal challenges", is aimed at addressing policy and legal considerations related to authoritative data within the context of crises, building on a fit-for-purpose approach and leveraging the "control-trust continuum" presented in the earlier paper in an evolving geospatial landscape to explore how policy and legal instruments can establish the "preconditions for trust". The working group notes that research and consultation will continue, with the goal of presenting and discussing preliminary findings at the fourteenth session of the Committee of Experts, with the final version to be presented to the fifteenth session of the Committee, in August 2025, following a global consultation process during the next intersessional period.

The working group also discusses its concept paper entitled "Geospatial data for public good", which is part of its efforts to offer guidance to Member States. The concept paper is based on a review of key legal and policy aspects of the "public

good”. The working group is presenting the concept paper to the Committee at its fourteenth session, while simultaneously seeking views and guidance from the Committee.

The report also includes a discussion of the future priorities of the working group aligned with its workplan for the period 2023–2024 aimed at addressing complex and emerging policy and legal issues in geospatial information management, including the implications of artificial intelligence. The working group seeks to continue to engage with the policy and legal community, as well as a broad range of experts across domains.
