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Item 5 of the provisional agenda*
**Contribution of thematic networks to the global geospatial
information agenda**

Contribution of thematic networks to the global geospatial information agenda

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 containing the contributions of the four United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management thematic networks to the global geospatial information agenda, which will be available, in the language of submission only, from the relevant web page of the Committee of Experts (https://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/14th-session). The Committee is invited to take note of the report and express its views on the activities and achievements of the thematic networks.

Summary of the report

At its thirteenth session, held from 2 to 4 August 2023, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 13/103, in which it expressed its appreciation for the continuing and valuable contributions of the thematic networks to its programme of work, including in research and the use of innovative technologies, education and capacity development in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals with geospatial products and services. The Committee appreciated the increased collaboration and partnerships between the four thematic networks and their collective efforts to achieve common goals towards promoting and strengthening the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework and other global geospatial frameworks of the Committee of Experts.

The Committee recognized the important role of the regional networks to strengthen the global network through a stronger representation of the regions in the governance structure of the United Nations Geospatial Network, ensuring ongoing education for geospatial professionals and that relevant knowledge, innovation and creativity can be better transferred and shared. The Committee of Experts

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acknowledged the significant use and increasing role of artificial intelligence and the work of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Academic Network on geospatial artificial intelligence in collaboration with the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Private Sector Network, including on considering its ethical use and towards creating a body of knowledge on geospatial artificial intelligence, and noted that the discussion should lead to concrete actions and taking next steps in authoritative geospatial artificial intelligence and its associated trust and use in the geospatial domain.

The Committee of Experts further noted the accomplishment of the United Nations Geospatial Network in strengthening the coherence of geospatial activities through an increase in its membership within the United Nations system and ongoing consultations on the One United Nations geospatial situation room, and also noted that this capability should provide a means to share data with Member States, build upon the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework and the global networks of the Committee of Experts, and, in this regard, could benefit from use cases that include a closer relationship with Member States.

In the report, the four thematic networks, namely, the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Academic Network, the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Geospatial Societies, the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Private Sector Network and the United Nations Geospatial Network, give the Committee of Experts an update on their contributions and achievements during the intersessional period, accompanied by their technical reports as background documents, which provide in-depth analysis and discussion on their progress, activities and contributions to the global geospatial information agenda. The report includes the interlinkages and joint activities among the thematic networks, regional committees and functional groups of the Committee.

In the report, the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Academic Network provides an update on its intersessional activities, including an update on its membership, aims and objectives. At the time of reporting, the Academic Network has 70 members and associate members from 36 countries, with 9 members admitted since September 2023, and 2 new members pending acceptance. The Network is focused on organizing in-person and virtual seminars and workshops to engage its members on the topics of geospatial and Earth observation artificial intelligence and convened regular board meetings to discuss and plan its activities. The Network, in collaboration with other thematic networks, aims to establish a common body of knowledge on geospatial and Earth observation artificial intelligence and to help identify challenges and opportunities. The report includes results from two global surveys on geospatial and Earth observation artificial intelligence conducted in 2023 that served to expand the activities of the Network in developing its body of knowledge. Furthermore, the Network continued to expand the repository of educational material that helps its members in their work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, the Network actively contributed to events of the International Telecommunication Union on geospatial and Earth observation artificial intelligence for good, and supported a workshop in July 2023 entitled "Building a foundation for geospatial AI: defining a syllabus and body of knowledge". The report contains information on collaborative initiatives pursued by the Network, including the assignment of members to support the work programmes of the Committee of Experts functional groups and regional committees. The Academic Network reports on its active participation in the 12th plenary meeting of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Regional Committee for Asia and the Pacific, held in November 2023, and the 10th plenary meeting of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Regional Committee for Europe, held in Brussels, also in November 2023.

In the report, the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Geospatial Societies network provides an update on its activities during the intersessional period. The Geospatial Societies network established a new liaison with the International Geographical Union, revised its key representatives, as detailed on its website, and accepted two new international societies: the Open Source Geospatial Foundation and the International Science Council Committee on Data. The 11 international geospatial societies are creating and furthering synergies by conducting joint engagements and activities, focusing on education, in collaboration with the Academic Network and the Private Sector Network. An updated joint Geospatial Societies calendar of activities is now available on its website. This improves coordination of that network's educational and scientific workshops and meetings related to the programme of work of the Committee. The report includes details on the contribution of its members to the following groups and activities: the International Advisory Committee of the United Nations Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence; the annual plenary meetings of the regional committees; the activities of several functional groups of the Committee of Experts; consultations and meetings on enhancing geospatial information management arrangements and accelerating the implementation of the sustainable development goals; and the preparation of the seventh High-level Forum on United Nation Global Geospatial Information Management, to be held in Mexico in October 2024. The Geospatial Societies network also provides details on its collaboration with the Academic Network and the International Telecommunication Union on the staging of the above-mentioned workshop.

The report provides an update by the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Private Sector Network on its capacity-development pursuits and collaborations with regional committees and functional groups of the Committee of Experts during the intersessional period, and contributions related to the future of geospatial information ecosystem and geospatial and Earth observation artificial intelligence. In the report, the Network highlights its engagement with the efforts of all five regional committees to advance the global geospatial information management agenda. The Network highlights the Caribbean Geospatial Development Initiative seminar hosted by the Private Sector Network for the Americas, as well as its participation in the thirteenth session and the meeting of the Committee's expanded Bureau. The report includes information on the engagements and activities of the Private Sector Network with all regional committees of the Committee of Experts. For the Americas, the Network bridged the industry-academia gaps by collaborating with the Academic Network for the Americas to convene a well-attended seminar, and supported the planning and staging of other side events during the tenth session of the plenary meeting of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Regional Committee for the Americas, held in Chile in October 2023. The Private Sector Network strengthened its involvement at the plenary meeting of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Regional Committee for Europe and its webinar series. Business models for private sector engagement were presented at the plenary meeting of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Regional Committee for Africa, held in August 2023. The Network suggested potential public-private partnerships to support the geospatial ecosystem at the plenary meeting of the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Regional Committee for the Arab States, held in February 2024. The Network engaged the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Regional Committee for Asia and the Pacific and is supporting the creation of a regional private sector committee.

The report also provides information on the activities of the United Nations Geospatial Network, including progress on the implementation of its strategy for the period 2020–2025 entitled "Blueprint: geospatial for a better world – transforming the lives of people, places and planet" and the upcoming five-year strategic document

for the period 2025–2030, both of which are aligned with accelerating the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and are informed by the frameworks, norms, principles and guides developed and adopted by the Committee. The report includes details on the Geospatial Network's current priorities, which are: (a) to obtain sustainable sources of funding from the private sector; (b) to increase communication and awareness on the relevance of geospatial information through events and seminars; and (c) to work towards the availability and accessibility of coordinated geospatial information through its One United Nations geospatial situation room, effectively delivering, collectively, "One Map" of integrated geospatial data services. The report also contains information on other priorities, including the organization of the Geospatial Network's upcoming activities and the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework for the strengthening of national geospatial capacities, especially in developing countries and the most vulnerable communities; and the priority to strengthen geospatial data management, innovation, foresight and science to build a United Nations system that can better support Member States in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

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