

# Fourth Plenary Meeting of the High-level Group of the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (HLG-IGIF) Summary Notes

5-6 August 2024

Conference Room 11, UNHQ New York

## 1. (a) Welcome, background and introductions

The Co-Chairs of the High-level Group of the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (HLG-IGIF) Ms. Deirdre Dalpiaz Bishop from the United States of America, and Mr. Fernand Guy Isseri from Cameroon, welcomed members of the HLG-IGIF, representatives, and participants.

## (b) Adoption of Agenda, organization of the meeting, related organizational matters and announcements

The Co-Chairs of the HLG-IGIF highlighted the expectations for the meeting and the [provisional agenda](#) was adopted. The Co-Chairs introduced the new representative of Argentina, and Member States new to the HLG-IGIF, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, and expressed their appreciation to outgoing members Algeria and Jordan.

## 2. HLG-IGIF Business

The Co-Chairs of the HLG-IGIF provided an [overview](#) of the HLG-IGIF Third Plenary Meeting, and reviewed work group progress, upcoming meetings, updates to the Strategic Plan, priorities, and next steps.

The Co-Chairs noted the significant progress made by the HLG-IGIF Work Groups, including a decision maker flyer, convening of regional work group collaboration meetings, the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF) Global Survey, document translation, Sustainable Funding Guide and flyer, and updates to the GeoVSI online tool.

The Co-Chairs provided an update on current modalities of meetings and noted the upcoming HLG-IGIF Fifth Plenary Meeting in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 2-3 February 2025. The Co-Chairs also noted the continued monthly leadership team meetings with the Co-Chairs, Work Group Co-Leads, Secretariat, and SDG Data Alliance representatives. These virtual meetings will be expanded twice per year to include Regional Committee Chairs and the Head of the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre (UN-GGKIC), to encourage collaboration and synergy.

The Co-Chairs noted the review of the HLG-IGIF Strategic Plan that occurred during its Third Plenary Meeting in Aguascalientes, Mexico from 26-28 January 2024. The HLG-IGIF Strategic Plan was updated based on recommendations made in Aguascalientes, streamlining the number of goals from 6 to 4. The updated [Strategic Plan](#) is included as a background document of the Fourteenth session of the Committee of Experts.

The Co-Chairs presented the current priorities, including the need to finalize and translate the UN-IGIF documents, develop communication materials to raise awareness, have a centralized repository for UN-IGIF materials, adopt a more strategic approach, ensure synergy between the HLG-IGIF and the UN-GGKIC, and ensure sustainable leadership for the HLG-IGIF Work Groups.

The next step is to further refine the HLG-IGIF Work Plan to ensure alignment with the UN-GGKIC and other partners, to ensure a more fully resourced work plan.

### 3. UN-GGKIC Update

The overarching goal of the UN-GGKIC is to work towards the ambitions of implementation of the UN-IGIF set by Member States.

The Head of the UN-GGKIC provided an [overview](#) of the Centre, and highlighted its vision, mission, priorities, goals from its Strategic Plan, and proposed activities for 2024/25. The Head of the UN-GGKIC also noted the [Strategic plan of the UN-GGKIC](#) was adopted by its International Advisory Committee on 3 July 2024 and shared as a background document to the Fourteenth session of the Committee of Experts.

Participants welcomed the progress towards operationalizing the Centre and expressed their support towards its success. Participants also noted the importance of working in collaboration with the HLG-IGIF, other functional groups, and thematic networks of the Committee of Experts. Some participants expressed concerns about the possible overlap of activities with other groups including the HLG-IGIF.

The Head of the Centre welcomed the support for any activities including through formal proposals and appreciated the establishment of partnerships with the wider community. The Head of the Centre noted that any overlaps would be avoided through the close coordination of Centre activities by the Secretariat.

The Co-Chairs welcomed the open and frank dialogue on synergies and duplication challenges, and further appreciated efforts to increase alignment between the work of the HLG-IGIF, International Advisory Committee of the UN-GGKIC, Regional Committees and the UN-GGKIC.

The Director of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) noted the need for a coherent work programme across the Committee of Experts, the Centres, and thematic networks, and agreed that the role of the Secretariat is to ensure good governance and coherence on activities, and to take corrective actions if necessary.

### 4. Work Group Updates

The respective HLG-IGIF Work Group Co-Leads provided an update on their activities and preliminary work plans.

Mr. Mohammad Almabrook and Ms. Odete Semiao, Co-Leads of the Sustainable Funding Work Group shared that the draft Sustainable Funding Guide is finished and currently under Co-Chair review. Following full HLG approval, the group will promote the guide to Member States and UN-GGIM bodies and conduct a Sustainable Funding webinar. A one-page flyer on investing in the UN-IGIF was shared and will be sent to the HLG-IGIF along with the Sustainable Funding Guide for approval. The group shared updates that have been made to the GeoVSI online inventory of geospatial value studies, including improved searchability and new value studies provided by Member States. Participants were encouraged to send feedback and additional value studies to [info@geoVSI.org](mailto:info@geoVSI.org).

Mr. Jamie Clark, Co-Lead of the Communications Work Group welcomed Mr. Tandang Yuliadi Dwi Putra from Indonesia as a new Co-Lead. Information was shared on upcoming UN-IGIF events and the bi-monthly collaboration meetings held with the regional UN-IGIF Work Group Leads to share information and coordinate UN-IGIF activities across the regions. Mr. Clark shared a new UN-IGIF flyer for decision makers and asked for feedback by the end of the Fourteenth session of the Committee of Experts. He expressed the need for action on the central repository to maintain all our important documents and communication materials.

Mr. Marcelo Emery, Co-Lead of the Capacity Development Work Group shared the progress of the Translation Team, which is comprised of 40 volunteers from 13 Member States. Of the 8 documents available for translation, 91 percent have been translated, 63 percent reviewed, and 21 percent have been published on the website. Mr. Emery asked the Co-Chairs and Secretariat to consider proposed ideas to expedite document publication and to implement document version procedures (utilizing track changes) to make it easier for Member State volunteers. Mr. Emery shared highlights of the UN-IGIF Global Survey, including 67 percent of respondents are currently using the UN-IGIF and 75 percent indicated the UN-IGIF documents were useful. The final report will be published in fall of 2024. The survey also identified available materials from Member States implementing UN-IGIF, and these materials will be collected and shared on the UN-IGIF website.

The Co-Lead presentations are available at:

- [Sustainable Funding](#) Work Group and related Funding Guide
- [Communications](#) Work Group
- [Capacity Development](#) Work Group

The Co-Chairs welcomed the progress of the HLG-IGIF Work Groups. Participants noted the significant contributions of the Translation Team, which has expanded the availability of the UN-IGIF in multiple languages. Some participants emphasized that translation efforts should be broadened to extend beyond UN-IGIF materials, to include the full program of work of the Committee of Experts. Participants reinforced the importance of publishing translated materials promptly to ensure wider use of the UN-IGIF. The HLG-IGIF agreed with the recommendation of posting documents as unofficial translations as soon as they become available.

Participants also noted that videos, podcasts, and seminar references should be made available in the principal languages of each region to ensure broader access to information and knowledge on the UN-IGIF and ensure that no one is left behind.

Participants also requested the Secretariat update and publish the three remaining chapters of the Implementation Guide (Strategic Pathways 2: Policy and Legal, 4: Data, and 5: Standards) with updates from the global consultation.

The Secretariat thanked the Member States and the Translation Team for their efforts and expressed its confidence in the process established, observed the need for due diligence, and noted the need to accelerate the uploading of the documents and related translations.

Regional Committee Chairs and the Head of the UN-GGKIC expressed the need to have access to the raw data from the UN-IGIF Global Survey to help assess the current situation in the regions and to avoid duplication of efforts.

## 5. Regional Committee Chair Updates and Group Discussion

The Regional Committee Chairs and Presidents provided an update on their current activities, work programme, and upcoming events related to the UN-IGIF. Their respective presentations are available below:

- [UN-GGIM: Europe](#) Mr. David Henderson, Co-Chair UN GGIM: Europe
- [UN-GGIM-AP](#) Mr. Antonius B. Wijanarto, President UN-GGIM-AP
- [UN-GGIM: Arab States](#) Mr. Mohammed Yahya Al Sayel, Chair UN-GGIM: Arab States
- [UN-GGIM: Americas](#) Ms. Sofía Nilo Crisóstomo, President UN-GGIM: Americas
- [UN-GGIM: Africa](#) Ms. Maroale Martha Chauke, Chair UN-GGIM: Africa

Participants welcomed the presentations and sharing of experiences across the different regions and noted that collaboration, partnership, dialogue, and communication are key to advancing the UN-IGIF and strengthening national geospatial capacity.

Participants noted the importance of investing in people and sharing experiences across Member States and highlighted the need to have materials more widely available in other languages. Participants also noted the critical role of the SDG Data Alliance to support the development of Country-level Action Plans, and further emphasized the importance of the upcoming support from the UN-GGKIC, in particular for developing countries. Participants agreed that the implementation of UN-IGIF is a complex process that is extremely dependent on government priorities and noted that final government endorsement remains a challenge. Participants agreed that working together on challenges is beneficial and that collaboration is key.

All Regional Committee Chairs and Presidents agreed that sharing of the raw data from the UN-IGIF Global Survey would be tremendously helpful to avoid duplication of efforts in the regions.

## 6. Member State Experiences Utilizing the UN-IGIF

Member States shared their experiences, current work, accomplishments, and challenges advancing the UN-IGIF to address climate and marine initiatives and the SDGs:

- [Implementation of UN-IGIF Framework](#) Mr. Alue Dohong, Indonesia
- [South African MSDI](#) Mr. Clinton Heimann, South Africa
- [UN-IGIF Cameroon](#) Mr. Fernand Isseri, Cameroon

The session was moderated by Mr. Hamed Al Kaabi from the United Arab Emirates and focused on the opportunities and challenges of bringing together a wide range of stakeholders to integrate data and advance the UN-IGIF to achieve national priorities and the SDGs. The presenters emphasized the importance of collaboration with various stakeholders, including the private sector, research institutions, and academia. They highlighted the need to establish a governance and data ownership mechanism, and work towards a unified “one map” deliverable to enhance decision making.

The presenters also pointed out the importance of maintaining a thorough documentation process during implementation. This ensures that goals are achieved and that the approach can evolve to accommodate any changes. The presenters concluded by emphasizing the importance of ongoing efforts to bring people together, both nationally, to aid implementation, and globally, to gain insights on the successful approaches in other regions.

The moderator concluded that the UN-GGIM community was like a village where everyone is interconnected. He noted consistent approaches are needed to create ripple effects across continents for implementation of the UN-IGIF. Finally, he reiterated the critical importance of sharing best practices and experiences as invaluable knowledge for overcoming challenges everywhere.

## 7. Summary, Next Steps, and Close

The Co-Chairs summarized the main points of the meeting, decisions, and next steps including:

- Reviewed and approved the updated HLG-IGIF Strategic Plan.
- Commended the efforts of the HLG-IGIF Work Groups, Regional Committees, thematic networks, partners, and the Secretariat.

- Encouraged the HLG-IGIF Work Groups to finalize and publish materials currently under development so Member States can start to benefit from their efforts.
- Acknowledged the urgency to finalize the three remaining UN-IGIF Implementation Guide chapters and the Country-level Action Plan resource materials. The Secretariat agreed to prioritize these tasks, targeting 2 of the 3 remaining chapters, time allowing given other competing priorities, to be completed by the end of August/September.
- Reiterated the importance of translation and prompt publication of all UN-IGIF documents and support materials and thanked the Secretariat and UNSD for agreeing to promptly publish the translated documents for immediate use and dissemination to the wider community
- Reminded the Working Group on Communication asked for feedback on the flyer for decision-makers by the end of the week, on 9 August 2024.
- Approved the Sustainable Funding Guide for distribution to the HLG-IGIF for comment.
- Noted the need for sustainable leadership on the HLG-IGIF Work Groups and asked HLG-IGIF members to consider a leadership opportunity in the Capacity Development Work Group.
- Noted the importance of a centralized web repository for all UN-IGIF support materials and encouraged the Communications Work Group to work closely with the Secretariat to quickly address this matter so materials can be published and accessible to all.
- Noted the upcoming activity to further develop and align the HLG-IGIF Work Plan based on the updated [HLG-IGIF Strategic Plan](#), and consider the plans of the UN-GGKIC and other partners.
- Commended the work on the UN-IGIF Global Survey and thanked the Secretariat and UNSD for their agreement to share the raw data from the survey with Regional Committees and the UN-GGKIC, to optimize the use of the results and avoid duplication of efforts.
- Appreciated the strong collaboration amongst Regional Committees, including efforts across the regions, and engagement on promoting the UN-IGIF.
- Thanked Indonesia, South Africa, and Cameroon for the detailed presentations on their approaches and experiences advancing the UN-IGIF at a national level.
- Highlighted the strong program planned for the Seventh High Level Forum in Mexico City scheduled for 8-10 October 2024 and encouraged participation.
- Thanked Saudi Arabia for agreeing to host the HLG-IGIF Fifth Plenary Meeting to be held 2-3 February 2025 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

The Director of UNSD closed the meeting noting the importance of sharing experiences, good and bad, and encouraged all Member States to share their challenges so that they can be overcome with the support of the wider community.