UN-GGIM
UNITED NATIONS
COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON
GLOBAL GEOSPATIAL
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Fourteenth session

UN-GGIM Thematic Networks

"Geospatial data, analytics and GeoAI Accelerating the SDGs and Impacting National Priorities"

Monday, 5 August 2024
11:30 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.
Conference Room C (CR-C Conference building)

Concept note

Background

At its thirteenth session, in making decision 13/103 (a), the Committee of Experts welcomed contributions and background documents prepared by the four thematic networks on the global geospatial information agenda and expressed its appreciation for their continuing and valuable contributions to the programme of work of the Committee of Experts, including in research and the use of innovative technologies, education and capacity development in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals with geospatial products and services.

At its thirteenth session, in making decision 13/103 (e), the Committee of Experts acknowledged the significant use and increasing role of artificial intelligence and the work of the UN-GGIM Academic Network on geospatial artificial intelligence in collaboration with the UN-GGIM 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.

At its thirteenth session, in making decision 13/103 (f), the Committee of Experts noted the accomplishment of the United Nations Geospatial Network in strengthening the coherence and coordination of geospatial activities through an increase in its membership (from initial 25 to 42 entities) within the United Nations system and ongoing consultations while implementing 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.

The four UN-GGIM Thematic Networks (UN-GGIM Academic Network, UN-GGIM Geospatial Societies, UN-GGIM Private Sector Network and UN Geospatial Network) have increased their collaboration and partnerships towards promoting and strengthening the programme of work of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM). During the inter-sessional period, as detailed in its report, the four thematic networks have been conducting activities related to the rapid advancements of technology including the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI), exploring the means of sharing data globally, promoting the global frameworks of the Committee of Experts, and considering innovative approaches and capacity development for accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

This is an open event and all delegates and observers are invited

While AI has been around for years, its capabilities are emerging at rapid, unprecedented pace, and offer extraordinary potential. At the United Nations, an Advisory Body on AI was created in August 2023, issued an interim report on "Governing AI for Humanity" on December 2023, and will publish its final report soon, ahead of the Summit of the Future in September 2024. The current rapid changes due to the rise of AI are rapidly affecting the wider digital ecosystem and therefore geospatial information management. With its long-standing experience with emerging technologies, machine learning and other automated techniques, the geospatial community should be well prepared to adapt to the rapidly changing landscape of geospatial information management and its operating environment. The topic of AI is now found into many work streams of the Committee of Experts such as the Working Group Policy and Legal frameworks, the Writing Team on the Future geospatial information ecosystem, or the Working Group on Marine Geospatial Information.

The geospatial community must be aware of the impact of AI-driven technologies for enhancing geospatial information management, or GeoAI, while preserving the benefits for Humanity and Member States. AI can enhance the efficiency of mapping, spatial analysis, predictive modeling, enabling more informed decision-making and deliver rapid solutions, yet it must do so while addressing complex national and global challenges. With AI, geospatial data can be processed in real-time, providing timely insights into natural disasters, urban development, environmental monitoring, and resource management. The integration of data, geospatial information, Earth observations and AI will facilitate the development of smart cities, advanced transportation systems, virtual digital worlds, and improved public services, reflecting a significant leap in managing geospatial data and harnessing its potential for sustainable development.

The contribution of the United Nations, the private sector, academia, and geospatial societies are pivotal in this transformative journey. The UN-GGIM Private Sector Network is at the forefront of innovation, the UN-GGIM Academic Network is advancing research, education and developing syllabi on geospatial information and GeoAI to prepare the skills of tomorrow, the Geospatial societies is supporting these efforts, and the UN Geospatial Network within its mission to strengthen coherence and coordination on geospatial information management, aims to harness these technologies and support countries and communities to address national priorities and realize the Sustainable Development Goals. Together, these stakeholders can contribute to advance these technological advancements for global development goals and benefits of countries.

Objectives

The aim of the side-event is to present the progress of the four UN-GGIM Thematic Networks during the inter-sessional period on different aspects of geospatial data and information, Geo-AI, and harnessing technologies for impacting countries and to support accelerating the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The objectives include to consider:

- the role of geospatial data, technology and services to advance and accelerate the implementation of national priorities and global agendas.
- current technological advancements and changes caused by AI; and
- the needs and progress towards syllabi and body of knowledge on GeoAI.

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Provisional Agenda

1. **Setting the scene** **11:30 – 11:40**

   - **Mr. Alexandre Caldas**
     Chair, UN Geospatial Network

2. **Short introduction, presentation and panel members** **11:40 – 12:10**

   - **Ms. Maria Brovelli**
     Chair, UN-GGIM Academic Network
   - **Ms. Céline Rozenblat**
     Chair, UN-GGIM Geospatial Societies
   - **Mr. Zaffar Mohammed-Ghouse**
     Chair, UN-GGIM Private Sector Network
   - **Mr. Alexandre Caldas**
     Chair, UN Geospatial Network

3. **Moderated panel discussion** **12:10 – 12:45**

   Moderator:

   Ms. Ingrid Vanden Berghe *(tbc)*
   National Geographic Institute Kingdom of Belgium
   Co-Chair – Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management

4. **Summary of the discussions**

Organizers

The side-event is co-organized by the four UN-GGIM Thematic Networks.

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