

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

MR. LIU ZHENMIN
UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Opening remarks
Seventh Session of the United Nations Committee of Experts
on Global Geospatial Information Management

New York, 2 August 2017, UNHQ, CR4

Dear Co-Chairs,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates and Observers,

In my first official duty as Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, I am delighted to welcome you to this seventh session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM). Many of you have travelled to New York from different corners of the world, to share your expertise in the spirit of global cooperation. Your presence is a testament to the vibrant professional community that you have created over the past few years. I commend you all for your continued interest, energy and contribution to this essential topic.

2016 was a watershed year for the Committee of Experts. The ECOSOC resolution on ‘Strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management’ acknowledges the considerable achievements of the Committee, including its contribution to the strengthening of geospatial information in developing countries. It also stresses the important role of geospatial information in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework, and other global development agendas.

You have been given the mandate to report to ECOSOC on all matters relating to geography, geospatial information and related topics. In this regard, I see that several substantive items on your agenda this week demonstrate your efforts to implement the resolution, and to strengthen geospatial information management for Member States. These efforts include developing frameworks, guides, norms, standards and methodology along with capacity building for geospatial information management.

In your deliberations, you will address issues that are closely aligned to the needs of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These include:

- strengthening geospatial information management;
- land administration and management;
- global fundamental geospatial data themes;
- geospatial information and services for disasters;

- marine geospatial information; and
- implementing the 2030 Agenda through geospatial information and its integration with statistics.

Distinguished Delegates and Observers,

The broad and transformative nature of the 2030 Agenda has ushered in a new era in thinking about sustainable development. It requires new and innovative data sources and means to address development challenges to ‘leaving no one behind’. Therefore, the way countries collect, process and manage data must undergo a similar revolution to adequately inform decision-making and monitor progress towards the SDGs.

This will require coordinated efforts at the global, regional and national levels. Efforts to increase the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data – disaggregated by a range of metrics, including geographic location – will be critical to track progress, and to make informed decisions.

Strengthening geospatial information management means strengthening countries’ coherence and integration of statistics, geospatial information, earth observations, environmental and other Big Data to form a new ‘data ecosystem’ for development. Such an ecosystem, made up of comprehensive and integrated information systems, will ensure that all countries can effectively measure and monitor the state of people and planet. It will inform the decisions of citizens, organizations and governments with timely data. That is why your Committee’s work is more important than ever before.

Distinguished Delegates and Observers,

As you may know, the Secretary-General of the United Nations has made it a top priority to ensure the United Nations work together more coherently and efficiently. As head of DESA, it is my job to ensure the Department does its utmost to support Member States in their efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. I can assure you of my Department’s full support of your important programme objectives.

In closing, I recognize and thank the co-Chairs of your Committee, all the Chair persons and leaders of the regional committees and working groups and expert groups, the authors of technical reports, and the Rapporteur. I commend your continued strong commitment to this important work.

I wish you a productive session, and look forward to your deliberations and outcomes over the next three days, and in making real progress on critical geospatial and development issues.

I thank you for your attention.
