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# Economic and Social Council

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## Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management

### Ninth session

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Item 3 of the provisional agenda\*

### Strengthening of geospatial information management

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### Note by the Secretariat

#### Summary

The present paper contains the report of the Secretariat on strengthening geospatial information management for consideration by the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management.

At its eighth session, held in New York from 1 to 3 August 2018, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 8/101, in which it welcomed the efforts of the Secretariat and Expanded Bureau of the Committee to take practical and strategic action pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2016/27 on strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management. The Committee welcomed the extrabudgetary resources provided to support efforts to improve and strengthen national geospatial information capacity-building in developing countries and noted the updated strategic framework for the period 2018-2022 and suggestions to ensure that the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework remained aligned with the strategic framework, as a reference point for coordinating, harmonizing, and prioritizing the work programmes and activities of the Committee. The Committee agreed to take a strategic leadership role in guiding the geospatial aspects of the federated information system with regard to the Sustainable Development Goals, taking into account the existing work achieved in national spatial data infrastructures and the need for flexibility in the development of geospatial information at the national level. In this present report, prepared with assistance from the Expanded Bureau, the Secretariat provides information on the efforts to take practical and strategic actions to implement the resolution and strengthen geospatial information management in Member States. The report details about the outcome of the United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress, held in Deqing, China, from 19 to 21 November 2018, and the ensuing proposal to establish a United Nations global geospatial knowledge centre of excellence in Deqing; progress towards the Sixth High Level Forum on Global Geospatial Information Management, to be hosted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from 20 to 22 April 2020; and the continuing development and consultation of the report by the United Kingdom on future trends in geospatial information management.

## I. Introduction

1. In July 2016 and following a comprehensive review of the Committee of Experts<sup>1</sup>, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted resolution 2016/27 entitled ‘Strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management’<sup>2</sup>. This resolution acknowledges the considerable achievements of the Committee over its first five years including: its contribution to the strengthening of geospatial information management capacities and utilization in developing countries; the efforts to streamline the work of the subsidiary bodies of the Council in the field of geospatial information management; and its role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework, and other global development agendas within the purview of the United Nations.

2. Noting the increasing role and relevance of the Committee of Experts and its acknowledged efforts in streamlining the subsidiary bodies of the Council on geospatial information management, the Council has requested that the Committee report back within five years on the implementation of resolution 2016/27, and to examine the strengthening of the institutional arrangements of the Committee.

3. At its eighth session in August 2018, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 8/101, in which it welcomed the efforts of the Secretariat and the Expanded Bureau of the Committee to take practical and strategic action to strengthen geospatial information management for Member States in line with the broadened mandate of the Committee of Experts, and welcomed the extrabudgetary resources provided to support efforts to improve and strengthen national geospatial information capacity-building in developing countries. The Committee additionally noted the updated strategic framework for the period 2018-2022 and suggestions to ensure that the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework remained aligned with the strategic framework.

4. At its eighth session in August 2018, the Committee commended the initiative of the Statistics Division and Esri with regard to the research exercise conducted in a number of pilot countries aimed at establishing a federated information system of national and global data hubs for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), encouraged national geospatial information authorities and national statistical offices to continue to collaborate and develop the valuable initiative further, and agreed to take a more prominent and strategic leadership role in guiding the geospatial aspects of the federated information system with regard to the SDGs.

5. At its eighth session in August 2018, the Committee requested that the Regional Committees of UN-GGIM continue to explore practical steps towards achieving greater coordination and collaboration among themselves, as well as with the Committee of Experts, the thematic networks, partner organizations, and in particular the regional commissions of the United Nations system. The Committee further acknowledged the urgent need to further mobilize extrabudgetary resources for the operations of the Committee of Experts and the Secretariat and to support and sustain actual long-term capacity and capability development, including to cover the cost of participation by developing countries in the annual sessions of the Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> Programme review of the work of the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, E/2016/47. <https://undocs.org/E/2016/47>

<sup>2</sup> Strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management, E/RES/2016/27. <https://undocs.org/E/RES/2016/27>

6. The present report informs the Committee of Experts of efforts by the Expanded Bureau and Secretariat to take practical and strategic actions to implement resolution 2016/27 and strengthen geospatial information management in Member States. In addition, the report provides details about the outcome of the United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress, held in Deqing, China, from 19 to 21 November 2018, and the ensuing proposal to establish a United Nations global geospatial knowledge centre of excellence in Deqing; the fifth and sixth meetings of the UN-GGIM Expanded Bureau in November 2018 and April 2019; progress towards the Sixth High Level Forum on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management, to be hosted by the United Kingdom from 20 to 22 April 2020; and the continuing development and consultation of the report by the United Kingdom on future trends in geospatial information management. The Committee of Experts is invited to take note of the report and to express its views on the way forward for strengthening geospatial information management. Points for discussion and decision are provided in paragraph 49.

## **II. Strengthening the global coordination and coherence of geospatial information management**

### **Funding and Contributions**

7. In adopting resolution 2016/27, ECOSOC stressed the need to strengthen the coordination and coherence of global geospatial information management in capacity-building, norm-setting, data collection, data dissemination and data sharing, among others, through appropriate coordination mechanisms. This includes strengthening capacity-building in the area of geospatial information and relevant statistical integration, especially in developing countries. The Council has further recognized that sustainable funding and support, particularly for the operations of the Committee that focus on the SDGs, is needed to strengthen and ensure the continued progress and effectiveness of the Committee.

8. The Council has encouraged Member States to provide voluntary contributions, and otherwise requested the Secretary-General to try to mobilize extra budgetary resources, including through the means of trust funds and other sources as appropriate to support the activities of the Committee. It is specifically intended that such additional resources extend to covering the cost of participation in the annual Committee sessions by developing countries, and to ensure full and effective participation of countries in special situations.

9. The People's Republic of China extended its initial Trust Fund in April 2018 for a further five years, from 2018-2022, to support capacity-building efforts across Member States, and to continue to connect and integrate the global geospatial information community. The main objective of this second China Trust Fund project is to continue to improve and strengthen national geospatial information management, systems and capacities in China and other developing countries, especially to meet the needs of national development priorities and national implementations of the SDGs. China's leadership role in supporting such capacity-building efforts is well recognized by Member States and the international geospatial community.

10. The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) is continuing to execute a project under the 11<sup>th</sup> tranche, 2018 to 2021, of the Development Account with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), and the Regional Committees of UN-GGIM for Africa and Asia and the Pacific (UN-GGIM: Africa and UN-GGIM-AP) as co-operating entities. The Development Account is a capacity development programme of the United Nations

Secretariat, aimed at enhancing the capacities of developing countries in the priority areas of the United Nations Development Agenda<sup>3</sup>.

11. This Development Account project focuses on improving and strengthening national geospatial information management capacities towards implementing the 2030 Agenda and evidence-based policy and decision-making. It achieves this through increasing awareness and understanding by developing and strengthening mechanisms for the implementation of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, and other agreed frameworks, principles and guides developed by the Committee. The project aims to support national geospatial agencies from developing countries to adopt and apply internationally agreed frameworks, principles and guides, and develop implementation strategies and plans to improve and strengthen their technical capabilities and capacities to collect, produce and disseminate timely and reliable geospatial information.

12. The UNSD/World Bank Collaborative Agreement, signed at the seventh session of the Committee of Experts in August 2017, is a tangible mechanism to formulate a joint vision to create an enabling environment for geospatial data, infrastructure and related policies and processes to be embedded more holistically within concessional financing, technical assistance and knowledge-sharing services, and their subsequent implementation in developing countries. This is being delivered through the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, described in detail within a separate report before the Committee at this ninth session.

13. These mechanisms are being further developed and enabled through resources made available for 2019 from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-fund<sup>4</sup> of the United Nations Trust Fund for Peace and Development.<sup>5</sup> This extrabudgetary resource is enabling crucial capacity development vis-à-vis the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework. This is achieved through in-depth regional consultations that ensures developing countries and regions can establish and enhance their own national geospatial capabilities by using appropriate frameworks, methods, and guidelines and standards which can be piloted, replicated and delivered.

14. In adopting resolution 2016/27, ECOSOC noted the increasing role and relevance of the Committee of Experts and its acknowledged efforts in streamlining the subsidiary bodies of the Council on geospatial information management matters, and requested that the Committee report back to ECOSOC, no later than in five years' time, on the implementation of the resolution. To fulfil this requirement by ECOSOC, the Committee will need to submit a report within the next year in preparation for 2021. Given the expansive report submitted to ECOSOC in 2016, it is intended that this next report will be short and focused, no more than 6-8 pages.

## **Regional Architecture**

15. From the outset, a major objective of the Committee of Experts was to build consensus towards a global regional architecture that included the five geographic regions of the world and a number of related thematic global networks, which are strongly linked to the mandates of the Committee. This global regional architecture is now complete,

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<sup>3</sup> Development Account: [www.un.org/development/desa/da/](http://www.un.org/development/desa/da/)

<sup>4</sup> 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-fund Project "Strengthening National Geospatial Information Management Capacities towards Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."

<sup>5</sup> Established in 2016 following the pledge by the Government of the People's Republic of China to contribute to the United Nations over a ten-year period with the aim to work together to achieve the goals of the Charter of the United Nations through implementation of innovative, forward-looking and pro-active projects and activities financed by the Trust Fund.

following the formal establishment of the United Nations System Network at the eighth session of the Committee of Experts in August 2018. Each of the five UN-GGIM Regional Committees, the UN-GGIM: Geospatial Societies, the UN-GGIM: Academic Network, the UN-GGIM: Private Sector Network, and the UN-GGIM: United Nations System Network that report to the Committee of Experts, encapsulate the importance of strengthening coordination, capacity-building and coherence of global geospatial information management, especially in developing countries.

16. To effectively strengthen geospatial information management holistically, and through leveraging existing United Nations system mechanisms and structures, ECOSOC resolution 2016/27 requested that the United Nations Regional Commissions provide relevant support, upon request and as appropriate, to the work of the regional technical geospatial information committees of the Committee of Experts, and that the outcomes and benefits of the activities of those bodies be equally disseminated to all Member States in each region. As part of strengthening regional capacity, at its seventh plenary meeting on 22 November 2018 in Deqing, China, UN-GGIM-AP resolved to transfer the secretariat support for the Regional Committee to UNESCAP from a Member State.

17. It is now being realized that greater coordination and collaboration between the Regional Committees of UN-GGIM and the Regional Commissions will facilitate an increased involvement of all Member States, regionally and globally, in the work of the Committee of Experts. Moreover, this will be a key communication and implementation mechanism towards achieving the Committee's goals of promoting the global use and delivery of geospatial information and solutions for evidence-based decision making. Such engagements would also build upon the Council's importance of strengthening capacity-building in the area of geospatial information management and relevant statistical integration, especially in developing countries, as well as the Committee's continued efforts to work with the Statistical Commission and with the entire United Nations system.

### **III. United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress**

18. At its eighth session in August 2018, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 8/101, in which it expressed its continued commitment and support for the forthcoming United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress, to be convened in Deqing, China, in November 2018, as a milestone global event that would continue to enhance the coherence and coordination of global geospatial information for Member States

19. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), through UNSD as the Secretariat for the Committee of Experts, in collaboration with the Government of China, through the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Zhejiang Provincial Government, successfully hosted the first United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (UNWGIC)<sup>6</sup> in Deqing, Zhejiang Province, China, from 19 to 21 November 2018. With an overarching theme 'The Geospatial Way to a Better World', the UNWGIC provided a convening, participatory and inclusive environment for over 2,000 participants to intensify collaboration at the regional and global level; enhance the communication, understanding, knowledge and application of geospatial information management; discuss the policy relevance and challenges to advance geospatial science and technology; promote the creation and sharing of more reliable geospatial data; and to enhance value-added applications and services to address local, regional and global challenges.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress. <http://ggim.un.org/unwgic>

20. The convening of the UNWGIC arose from ECOSOC's mandate<sup>7</sup> to the Committee of Experts to convene global forums to promote comprehensive dialogue on global geospatial information management with all relevant governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. As such, to fully address and ensure that geospatial information reaches its widest and fullest utility in service of social, economic and environmental development, the UNWGIC convened a diverse group of geospatial leaders and actors brought together from all stakeholder groups, including: national and international geospatial agencies and systems; academia; industry; the business community; the private sector; and, civil society. This spirit was fully encapsulated by Ministerial statements at the UNWGIC, which stressed the importance of working together across borders, pointing to the benefits of partnerships and cooperation in sharing of good practices and transfer of technology in order to meet the growing national, regional and global demand for geospatial information.

21. In his opening statement, the Secretary-General of the United Nations emphasized that “geospatial data, methods, frameworks, tools, and platforms is urgently needed, and that reliable, timely, accessible and disaggregated geospatial information must be brought to bear to measure progress, inform decision-making and ensure effective and inclusive national and subnational programs that will chart the path towards the ‘Geospatial Way to a Better World’, to assist in the implementation of the SDGs, and transform our world for the better”.<sup>8</sup>

22. The UNWGIC featured a high-level Opening Session and 4 Plenary Sessions dedicated to: Attaining Sustainable Development; Sharing the Digital Economy; Building Smart Societies; and Growing International Cooperation. Through 7 thematic areas and 35 technical sessions, the UNWGIC will then discuss: Measuring and Monitoring the SDGs; Digital Economy, Location Analytics and Big Data; Smart, Resilient and Sustainable Societies; Growing Global Geospatial Capability and Capacity; Geospatial Innovation, Science and Technology; Digital Silk Road and International Partnerships; and, Sustainable Development in Action.

23. At the conclusion of the UNWGIC, participants issued the Moganshan Declaration<sup>9</sup>, resolving to work together to build a human data and geography community for a shared and better future, and to keep the promise to leave no one behind by fostering effective cross-sector and interdisciplinary international, regional and local collaboration and partnerships, and to support national development priorities. Recognizing the immense value that the UNWGIC brought to common understanding, building geospatial capacity and innovation within governments and institutions, and in galvanizing the global geospatial community to further the utilization of trusted geospatial information and location enabled decision-making in realization of the 2030 Agenda, participants requested that a second UNWGIC be convened in four years' time to consider and stimulate global geospatial development progress.

24. Through the Moganshan Declaration, participants also supported the establishment of Global Centers of Excellence on Geospatial Knowledge, including in Deqing, to promote and build global geospatial capacity and capability, develop collaborative knowledge and innovation hubs for harnessing contemporary methods, technologies and analytics in geospatial information, facilitate access to regional and global information and data sources including earth observations, and to improve and strengthen national geospatial information management to assist developing countries to implement the SDGs.

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<sup>7</sup> ECOSOC resolutions 2011/24 and 2016/27

<sup>8</sup> <http://ggim.un.org/unwgic/>

<sup>9</sup> [http://ggim.un.org/unwgic/documents/Moganshan\\_Declaration\\_Draft\\_Final.pdf](http://ggim.un.org/unwgic/documents/Moganshan_Declaration_Draft_Final.pdf)

## IV. United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre

25. Building on the support and momentum of the technical cooperation and capacity building activities under the UN-China Trust Fund Project on UN-GGIM, in early 2019 the Ministry of Natural Resources of China (MNR) and DESA developed an initial proposal to jointly advance the establishment of a substantive mechanism to improve and strengthen national geospatial information management, systems and capacities in China and other developing countries.

26. On 28 April 2019, in Beijing, China, the MNR and DESA signed a Memorandum of Intent to establish a United Nations led Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre in Deqing, China. As a globally recognized collaborative and action-oriented knowledge, technology and innovation hub for bringing contemporary methods in geospatial information together, the objective of the Centre is to provide a much-needed platform to strengthen and advance national geospatial information management, systems and capacities in China and other developing countries, and to support ongoing capacity-building programs to meet the needs of national development priorities and national implementations of the SDGs with new and innovative sources of data, enabling technologies, and associated frameworks, guides, standards and methods.

27. The MNR and DESA are now advancing in more detail the arrangements and cooperation modalities to operationalize the Centre, including to expedite a Memorandum of Understanding and associated Host Country Agreement between the Government of China and the United Nations. Operating like several other such establishments around the world within the United Nations system, the Centre will have governance and operational mechanisms established in line with normal United Nations protocols. This will include a Governing Council, an International Advisory Committee, and a National Cooperation Committee.

28. The Centre's overarching goal will be to work towards the ambitions of implementation of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework<sup>10</sup> set by Member States, to develop capacity, promote and support the required innovation, leadership, coordination and standards to develop, strengthen, integrate and deliver national geospatial information policy, data, systems, tools, services and capabilities into their national government development policies, strategies and arrangements.

29. It is envisioned that the Centre will focus on three initial thematic priorities:

- (a) **Technical assistance and capacity building**, including developing and disseminate methodological guidance and tools for countries to collect, manage, strengthen and communicate policy-relevant, actionable SDG data and information in an integrated, standardized and consistent manner.
- (b) **Knowledge centre** to link and promote collaborative actions within the global UN-GGIM community through the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, its Implementation Guide, and Country-level Action Plans; and to build upon, scale, implement and lead the development of a global network of interoperable and country-led SDG data hubs, a Federated Information System for the SDGs (FIS4SDGs).

<sup>10</sup> The Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF) was adopted by UN-GGIM at its eighth session in August 2018. <http://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/8th-Session/documents/Part%201-IGIF-Overarching-Strategic-Framework-24July2018.pdf>

- (c) **Technology and innovation hub**, leveraging enabling technologies, research institutes, think tanks and UN-GGIM community to convene international technical **seminars**, symposia and fora to develop specific innovation projects on selected topics and countries to implement new concepts and methods in geospatial information for the SDGs within reliable, secure and scalable platforms.

30. At its April 2019 meeting, the Expanded Bureau supported the concept and importance of the Centre as a tangible means to strengthen the technical capacity of national geospatial agencies and statistical offices to produce and disseminate reliable and enduring geospatial and SDG information. The Committee of Experts may also wish to recognize and support the establishment of the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre in Deqing, China, and consider the role of the International Advisory Committee as a governance mechanism that will prepare reports for the Committee to ensure coherence of the aims and activities of the Centre with those of the Committee of Experts.

## V. UN-GGIM Expanded Bureau Meetings

### Fifth Meeting

31. The UN-GGIM Expanded Bureau convened its fifth meeting immediately following the UNWGIC in Deqing, China, on 23 November 2018. The meeting was kindly hosted by the Ministry of Natural Resources of China and the Zhejiang Provincial Government.

32. The key elements that were discussed at length by the Expanded Bureau, and which are either captured in detail separately in this report or in other reports before the Committee, included *inter alia*: a review of the UNWGIC and recommendations for the ongoing modalities of the UNWGIC by the International Advisory Committee; the progress of operationalising the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework; a review of the Committee of Experts' programme of work, including updates regarding the progression of work undertaken by its Subcommittee, Expert and Working Groups; updates of plenary meetings of the Regional Committees of UN-GGIM, specifically the sixth plenary meeting of UN-GGIM: Arab States in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on 18-20 February 2019 and the eighth plenary meeting of UN-GGIM-Asia Pacific in Canberra, Australia on 4-5 November 2019; the first session (after being reconstituted by ECOSOC) of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) at UNHQ, New York, from 29 April to 3 May 2019; and initial preparations for this ninth session of the Committee of Experts. The agenda and full report of the fifth Expanded Bureau meeting is available on the Bureau's web page<sup>11</sup>.

### Sixth Meeting

33. The UN-GGIM Expanded Bureau convened its sixth meeting on 1 April 2019 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands on the margins of the 2019 Geospatial World Forum. Hosted by the Dutch Kadaster and Geospatial Media and Communications, the meeting considered the following items: updates from each of the Regional Committees of UN-GGIM; the programme of work for the ninth session of the Committee of Experts; key updates on the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework; preparations to fulfil the requirement to report back to ECOSOC on the implementation of resolution 2016/27 by

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<sup>11</sup> Report of the Fifth Meeting of the UN-GGIM Expanded Bureau, 23 November 2018, Deqing, China.  
[http://ggim.un.org/meetings/Bureau\\_Meetings/2018\\_Expanded\\_Bureau\\_Meeting\\_Summary\\_Report.pdf](http://ggim.un.org/meetings/Bureau_Meetings/2018_Expanded_Bureau_Meeting_Summary_Report.pdf)



2021; an in-depth review of the UNWGIC, provided by the Congress International Advisory Committee; the proposal to establish a United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre in Deqing, China; the third edition of the Future Trends in Geospatial Information Management report; the Sixth High Level Forum on UN-GGIM, to be convened in the United Kingdom in April 2020; and updates regarding the first session of UNGEGN. The agenda and full report of the UN-GGIM Expanded Bureau meeting is available on the Bureau's web page.<sup>12</sup>

34. A key item discussed by the Expanded Bureau was the modalities for the UNWGIC going forward, and its relationship with the UN-GGIM High Level Forums. As is described in section VI of this present report, the Sixth High-Level Forum will be convened in the United Kingdom in April 2020. Therefore, the Bureau agreed at this stage to hold the UNWGIC and the High Level Forum on a 4-year rhythm and alternating every 2 years. This effectively means that there is an opportunity for a Member State to host the UNWGIC again in 2022 and the High Level Forum in 2024. Future iterations of the UNWGIC would then be 2026 and 2030, while for the High Level Forum, these would be 2028 and so on. The Committee may wish to note that the modalities for the selection process for hosting of the UNWGIC and High Level Forum were not considered by the Expanded Bureau at the time.

35. The UN-GGIM Expanded Bureau will hold a short informal executive meeting on the margins of this ninth session of the Committee of Experts and will convene its seventh annual meeting immediately following the Sixth High Level Forum of UN-GGIM in April 2020.

## **VI. Sixth High Level Forum on UN-GGIM**

36. At its eighth session in August 2018, the Committee of Experts adopted decision 8/101, in which it welcomed the convening, in the United Kingdom in April 2020, of the Sixth High Level Forum on Global Geospatial Information Management, to be hosted by the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain on behalf of the United Kingdom.

37. Planning for the Sixth High level Forum is progressing in earnest, with strong commitment and leadership being provided by the Ordnance Survey of Great Britain. The High Level Forum will be convened at Royal Holloway College, University of London, Windsor, United Kingdom from 20 to 22 April 2020. The third day will be a joint day with the Cambridge Conference, the quadrennial meeting of national mapping, geospatial and cadastral agency leaders that takes place from 22 to 24 April. Provision will be made for global and regional meetings over the weekend of 18 to 19 April.

38. With the overarching theme 'Changing the World – Geospatially' the Forum will focus on delivering positive social, economic and environmental outcomes through the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework and the revised Future Trends report, whilst considering how the rapidly changing geospatial environment gives opportunities to accelerate progress towards delivering the 2030 Agenda.

39. The Concept Note for the Sixth High Level Forum is provided as a background document to this present report, and announcements will be sent to the global geospatial community within the next weeks. The Committee of Experts is invited to note the dates of the Forum.

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<sup>12</sup> Report of the Sixth Meeting of the UN-GGIM Expanded Bureau, 1 April 2019, Amsterdam, the Netherlands.  
[http://ggim.un.org/meetings/Bureau\\_Meetings/2019\\_Expanded\\_Bureau\\_Meeting\\_Summary\\_Report.pdf](http://ggim.un.org/meetings/Bureau_Meetings/2019_Expanded_Bureau_Meeting_Summary_Report.pdf)

## VII. Future trends in geospatial information management

40. At the first session of the Committee of Experts, held in the Republic of Korea in October 2011, the Committee decided that there was a need to document the thoughts of leaders in the geospatial world as to the future of the industry over the next five years and, looking further out, its development over the next ten years. As a result, two editions of 'Future trends in geospatial information management: the five to ten year vision' have been produced by the Committee of Experts with the support of the United Kingdom, through the Ordnance Survey; the first edition in July 2013<sup>13</sup>, and the second edition in December 2015.<sup>14</sup> These two Future Trends reports have proved to be an important reference document for the global geospatial community. They have been appreciated by many different users and have provided a consensus view for the professional geospatial community to keep abreast of new trends in geospatial information; particularly with the impact of the many emerging geospatial technologies.

41. These Future Trends reports are considered an important output for the Committee of Experts, covering emerging trends across topics from policy to technology, data collection to service consumption. In 2018 the United Kingdom, again through the Ordnance Survey, kindly offered to lead and coordinate the next revision of the Future Trends report. Therefore, at its eighth session in August 2018, the Committee of Experts, in adopting decision 8/101, noted with appreciation the leading role of the United Kingdom, through the Ordnance Survey, in efforts to revise the report on Future Trends, taking into account new and emerging technologies, and welcomed the offers by Member States to contribute towards updating the report.

42. The current edition of the report is being developed through 5 stages: 1) Wide consultation to build a scope and identify key themes that meet the needs of Member States and observers; 2) Write the document through wide consultation and support from the UN-GGIM community; 3) The circulation of a draft report to gain feedback and consensus; 4) The report's anticipated adoption by the Committee; and 5) Dissemination. The report will complement the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework helping to ensure that the Framework integrates and takes advantage of the latest innovations and trends, underling its status as a living document.

43. The consolidated Future Trends report is expected to be launched at the Sixth High Level Forum in April 2020 and is expected to be presented to the Committee for adoption at its tenth session in August 2020. The Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Europe is supporting the revision. The Secretariat and the United Kingdom urge Member States and the geospatial community to support and contribute to the present global consultation<sup>15</sup> to the fullest extent possible.

## VIII. Considerations going forward

44. A key consideration for the Committee of Experts going forward continues to be its role in supporting and informing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other global development agendas. The 2030 Agenda has recognized the need for new data acquisition and integration approaches to improve the availability, quality, timeliness and disaggregation of data to support the implementation of the new development agenda at all levels, benefiting from the contribution to be made by a wide range of data, including

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<sup>13</sup> Future Trends First Edition: <http://ggim.un.org/documents/Future-trends.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Future Trends Second Edition: [http://ggim.un.org/documents/UN-GGIM-Future-trends\\_Second%20edition.pdf](http://ggim.un.org/documents/UN-GGIM-Future-trends_Second%20edition.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> <http://ggim.un.org/future-trends/>

Earth observations and geospatial information, while ensuring national ownership in supporting and tracking progress. As a means to implement the many geospatial aspects of the SDGs, including critical geo-statistical integration, the guides, methods, standards and frameworks being developed by the Committee of Experts contribute enormously to this mission. For developing countries, this is particularly the case. However, in terms of being able to provide the ‘glue’ to bring all of these different elements together, it is through the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, its Implementation Guide, and the subsequent Country-level Action Plans, that real and tangible actionable outcomes are able to be achieved.

45. As described in this present report, the Expanded Bureau and the Secretariat, and within existing resources, are continuously looking at means to facilitate the strengthening and capacity-building of global geospatial information management in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Many of the efforts being reported to the Committee at this ninth session, as in past sessions, are aligned to providing the required frameworks, methods, standards and guides to assist strengthening national geospatial information capacity-building in developing countries. However, implementation often requires extra-budgetary resources be made available. Whilst some funds have been realized thus far, such as the 11<sup>th</sup> Tranche of the Development Account and the Trust Fund for Peace and Development to further support the operationalisation of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework and related capacity-building, much more needs to be done to support and sustain real long-term capacity and capability development.

46. The Committee of Experts is now nine years young, and will convene its milestone tenth session in 2020, in the same year that the 2030 Agenda is one-third complete. In this relatively short period of time, the Committee has achieved many substantial and effective outcomes. Even more importantly, the Committee has provided the guidance, methods, frameworks and intellectual capacity, the required recipe’s, for developing countries to strengthen their national geospatial arrangements and to bridge the geospatial digital divide. Yet, too few countries have so far had the vision and leadership to fund the substantive work of the Committee; to connect and integrate the global geospatial information community, and to continue to improve and strengthen national geospatial information management, systems and capacities in developing countries, especially to meet the needs of national development priorities and national implementations of the SDGs. This is not sustainable if we are to truly make a difference.

47. The Integrated Geospatial Information Framework is now so important to the Committee that it is a dedicated item on the agenda of this ninth session. It is a “fundamental and enabling methodological Framework and infrastructure for creating greater social, economic and environmental understanding, evidenced based decision making, design and delivery of projects and services, and implementing and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”<sup>16</sup> Many of the technical reports before the Committee at this ninth session will reference the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework as the fundamental and enabling methodological Framework for the substantive work of the Committee. But, as a Framework, it needs to be implemented.

48. As detailed in section IV above, being able to ‘implement’ the outcomes of the Committee of Experts was the foundation for establishing a United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre. A tangible means to leverage data, technology and capability in order to grow and implement the much needed technical cooperation and capacity building activities, and to advance the establishment of a substantive and enduring mechanism to improve and strengthen national geospatial

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<sup>16</sup> [http://ggim.un.org/unwgic/documents/Moganshan\\_Declaration\\_Draft\\_Final.pdf](http://ggim.un.org/unwgic/documents/Moganshan_Declaration_Draft_Final.pdf)

information management, systems and capacities in developing countries – to be able to respond appropriately to the needs of the 2030 Agenda before it is too late to do so.

## **IX. Points for discussion**

**49. The Committee is invited to:**

**(a) Take note of the present report and express its views on the efforts of the Expanded Bureau and Secretariat to take practical and strategic actions to strengthen geospatial information management for Member States;**

**(b) Take note of the efforts to improve and strengthen national geospatial information capacity-building in developing countries, and the extra-budgetary resources made available via several funding options and mechanisms;**

**(c) Express its views on the establishment of the United Nations Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre in Deqing, China, and the role of the Committee in contributing to the aims and activities of the Centre;**

**(d) Take note of the outcomes of the United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (UNWGIC) convened in Deqing, China; the upcoming Sixth High Level Forum on UN-GGIM in the United Kingdom in April 2020; and the revision of the Future Trends report;**

**(e) Provide guidance on the possible modalities of the selection process for hosting future iterations of the UNWGIC and High Level Forum's; and**

**(f) Provide guidance on further strategies and pathways the Committee may need to consider in its preparations to report back to ECOSOC within the next 1-2 years.**