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

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Dear Co-Chairs of the United Nations Committee
of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates and Observers,

I am pleased to welcome you to this ninth session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM). As experts representing the global geospatial community, you have travelled here from around the world to share your knowledge in the spirit of global cooperation. Your presence is a testament to the vibrant professional community that you have created over the past nine years. I commend you all for your continued interest, energy and contribution to this essential topic.

Just a few weeks ago, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development met during the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) annual session, to review progress on the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. A key message that resonated throughout the Forum, was that SDG progress continues to be slow. The world is not yet on a trajectory to achieve the Goals by 2030, and it is the most vulnerable people who continue to suffer the most.

Yet, there is, and continues to be, a strong response by countries to mainstream the SDGs into their national planning efforts. In fact, geospatial information is being used in an increasing number of countries to support SDG implementation and review progress, showing in particular, the impact of human activities on the environment. But we need to dramatically accelerate progress over the next decade.

To this end, data and enabling technologies are critical. This requires:

- investing in data;
- realizing the benefits of science, technology and innovation;
- strengthening national data and information systems;
- implementing integrated frameworks and solutions; and
- solving challenges through international cooperation

Distinguished Delegates and Observers,

It is within this context that I am pleased to recognize your hard work in developing geospatial frameworks and methods. These efforts – to strengthen national geospatial information management arrangements – will see the realization of some major strategic activities this week.

Let me just name a few here:

First, the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework is being developed in collaboration with the World Bank. It provides all countries, but especially developing countries, with a practical guide that helps translate high-level strategic geospatial information concepts into concrete action.

Second, the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework enables a range of data to be integrated from both statistical and geospatial communities. Through the application of its five Principles and supporting key elements, it permits the production of harmonized and standardized geospatially enabled statistical data to enable data-driven decision making.

Third, the Framework for Effective Land Administration is being developed as a policy guide for developing, strengthening or modernizing land administration and management systems within Member States.

Forth, the Global Fundamental Geospatial Data Themes, now complete, are the 14 data themes that provide the foundation to support global geospatial information management and the frameworks just mentioned.

And fifth, the Foundational Guide to National Institutional Arrangements, initially with a focus on the Asia-Pacific region, provides guidance in the use of national institutional arrangements for national geospatial information agencies.

All of these, and the other topics on your agenda, highlight the great potential of geospatial information:

- to increase data integration, and
- to ensure a sustainable flow of high-quality, timely and accessible data in support of the SDGs.

Dear colleagues,

As many of you know, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs – with the support of the Government of China, through the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Zhejiang Provincial Government – convened the first United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress in Deqing, China, in November last year. With over 2000 participants and exhibitors, the Congress improved and strengthened the role of geospatial information management towards implementing the 2030 Agenda and its core promise to leave no one behind. I wish to thank the Government of China for their dedication and vision for realizing this first

World Congress, especially for the tremendous work in preparing the Congress, including the facilities, administration, logistics and the many volunteers. I also wish to thank all participants for their active participation and contribution to the successful convening of the Congress.

Distinguished Delegates and Observers,

In closing, I recognize and thank the co-Chairs of your Committee, all the Chair persons and leaders of the regional committees, subcommittee, expert groups, working groups, networks, the authors of technical reports and the Rapporteur. I commend your strong and productive sense of global cooperation and coordination.

I look forward to your deliberations and outcomes and wish you a productive session.

Thank you.
