

## **Inputs to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in 2024**

### **Inputs from functional commissions of ECOSOC, other intergovernmental bodies and forums to the 2024 HLPF**

#### **United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management**

##### **Impacts of multiple crises on the implementation of SDGs 1, 2, 13, 16 and 17 from the vantage point of your intergovernmental body.**

The annual themes of ECOSOC and the HLPF directly inform the work of the Committee of Experts. This work is conducted in the context of developing geospatial frameworks, norms, principles and guides to assist Member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, other global and regional development agendas, and national development priorities. The 2030 Agenda provides a transformative framework and integrated approach to sustainable development, and presents countries and the global development community with a set of significant monitoring and reporting metrics that are almost entirely geographic in nature. This requires new and innovative data sources and data integration approaches to address the world's development challenges and to 'leave no one behind'. Although not readily apparent, the SDGs are highly dependent on geospatial information and enabling technologies as the primary data and tools for relating people to their location, place and environment, and to measure 'where' progress is, or is not, being made, particularly at sub-national and local levels. To fully implement and monitor progress on the SDGs, decision-makers everywhere need geospatial data and statistics that are accurate, timely, relevant and accessible. Specifically for the SDGs of focus for the HLPF:

- SDG 1 – End poverty in all its forms everywhere. The most vulnerable countries continue to face the greatest challenges in collecting, analyzing, maintaining and using quality, timely and reliable geospatial and other location-based data and services to tackle poverty. It remains the need to significantly increase the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data, disaggregated by geographic location and several other metrics, and to exploit geospatial information and a wide range of other data is enshrined in the 2030 Agenda and other global development agendas.
- SDG 2 – End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. By example, target 2.3 aims at doubling the productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers including in particular women, Indigenous Peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, through secure and equal access to land. Access to land and other resources is fundamental to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. Geospatial information relates people to land and provides the insight for data-driven decision making with respect to this target and almost all of SDG 2 targets and goals.
- SDG 13 – Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. At its thirteenth session, the Committee established a Task Team on Geospatial Information for Climate Resilience to strengthen interlinkages between geospatial, statistical, climate and other relevant communities and to develop a more detailed concept paper that expands on the relevant initiatives, activities and

frameworks under the purview of the Committee of Experts. The thirteenth session agreed on a new agenda item, geospatial information for climate and resilience for its fourteenth session.

- SDG 16 – Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Effective land administration provides humanity with better access to and security of land and property rights, to mitigate issues relating to land as a root cause triggering conflict, and supports leaving no one behind - the commitment of the 2030 Agenda. The Framework for Effective Land Administration (FELA) provides a reference for Member States when developing, renewing, reforming, strengthening, modernizing, or monitoring land administration, a key component of SDG 16.

- SDG 17 – Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the criticality of international col

**Three key areas where sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions for achieving the SDGs are being effectively delivered, especially related to the cluster of SDGs under review in 2024, bearing in mind the three dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages across the Goals and targets.**

- The United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF) is the anchor for the Committee's work and the overarching strategic framework for strengthening integrated geospatial information management across governments. It is a multi-dimensional Framework that assists countries in improving their informed policy-development and decision-making processes to address the many development challenges we have. Be they poverty reduction (SDG 1), agriculture/farming (SDG 2), climate change/disaster resilience (SDG 13), secure land and property rights (SDG 16), strengthening collaboration and partnerships (SDG 17), all these crucial fields of attention, and all other aspects of the 2030 Agenda, have a common key element: geographic location.

- UN-GGIM has been taking a direct approach to strengthening partnerships between governments, civil society, the private sector, and international organisations. For example, geospatial information directly empowers geodesists to measure sea level rise and is the basis for modelling different climate scenarios, among many other cases. In this regard, at its thirteenth session UN-GGIM welcomed the discussion paper entitled "Geospatial Information for Climate Resilience – What Does UN-GGIM Do?", which articulates the intersectional nature of geospatial information with the valuable role of the frameworks and policies of the Committee of Experts in addressing climate related challenges, and draws attention to the potential role that national geospatial and mapping agencies could play in delivering data and technologies that assist countries in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

- UN-GGIM works across ECOSOC to establish and strengthen partnerships with other ECOSOC subsidiary bodies to help them also realize the transformational benefits that arise from taking a geospatial approach. Through the United Nations Expert Group on the Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information, the Committee has a bridge with the Statistical Commission to work on common aims. Furthermore, the Committee reiterated its continued support for

strengthening collaboration between the Committee of Experts and the Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), in the standardization of geographical names.

Ultimately, to reach those behind, especially those furthest behind, we need to know where they are.

**Three examples of specific actions, policies and measures that are most urgently needed to effectively deliver sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions to eradicate poverty and reinforce the 2030 Agenda, building on interlinkages and transformative pathways for achieving the SDGs.**

1. The anchor for the Committee's programme of work, the United Nations Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (UN-IGIF), is the key to strengthening integrated geospatial information management across all national institutions and agencies. It is a multi-dimensional Framework, provides a basis, a guide and a mechanism for developing, integrating, strengthening and maximizing geospatial information management and related resources in all countries. UN-IGIF focuses on location information that is integrated with any other meaningful data to solve societal and environmental problems, acts as a catalyst for economic growth and opportunity, and to understand and take benefit from a nation's development priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals.

2. The Committee is supporting multi-stakeholder partnerships, including the SDG Data Alliance, for the implementation of the UN-IGIF at the country level. The SDG Data Alliance is a multi-stakeholder partnership involving philanthropic foundations, donor technological organisations and the Committee's secretariat. This multi-stakeholder partnership enables partnering countries to acquire resources and support, including geospatial methodologies, processes, technologies and tools, to modernise national geospatial capabilities and thus accelerate the achievement of the SDGs and support the follow-up to and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda with geospatial information that connects people to their location, activities, and environment.

3. In response to the transformative nature and broad needs of the 2030 Agenda the Government of Mexico, through its National Institute of Statistics and Geography, will host the seventh High-level Forum on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management, in Mexico City in October 2024, with the theme "Accelerating implementation: achieving resilience". The seventh high-level forum confirms the support and commitment of the Committee of Experts to deploy its consensus-based frameworks, norms and principles to address sustainable development and climate related challenges for the benefit of all people, planet, prosperity and peace.

**Follow-up actions and measures being undertaken by your intergovernmental body or forum to support implementation of the Political Declaration of the SDG Summit.**

Geospatial information applies not only to development agendas. It applies to many thematic areas and disciplines, be it poverty reduction, sustainable agriculture, climate adaptation, secure land and property rights, the blue economy, resilient supply chains, sustainable health, food security, human

rights and technology development, to name some. All these crucial areas have one crucial aspect in common: geographic location. Everything happens somewhere, and location now underpins everything we do, every minute of every day. By integrating geospatial information and location data with information on societal changes and changes in the landscape we can inform insights today and into the future by establishing a sound basis for understanding what is happening when, where, why and how that impacts specific communities. Thus, knowing location – what is happening where – is knowing who is to take what action when and how. The integration of location-based information with other data of relevance to people's lives and livelihoods is crucial to providing better and useful information for better insights leading to shared understanding, which in turn will enable us to better achieve local, national and international goals and informed decision-making for the benefit of all.

We must ensure that we foster equitable, inclusive and sustainable development that reduces the digital divide, not increases it. There has been an explosion of technology, and most, if not all, of this technology is inherently geospatially enabled. Our Committee's message is simple: To leave no-one behind, we must leave nowhere behind too. The Committee of Experts is promoting collaboration, partnerships and innovation to fill the blank spots on the map, both literally and figuratively, seeking to cooperate with other subsidiary bodies of the Council. The Committee is also seeking to embrace innovations like artificial intelligence, which is not without risk. The Committee is fostering good policy and legal arrangements to ensure a sound, robust and enabling legal and policy environment for geospatial information management that does not leave others behind.

The UN-IGIF provides the framework of strategic actions to address means of strengthening nationally integrated geospatial information management arrangements within and across Member States at the institutional level and supporting the implementation of the SDGs, especially in developing countries.

### **Recommendations and key messages for inclusion into the Ministerial Declaration of the 2024 HLPF.**

- Geospatial information underpins each of these focus SDGs, as it underpins all SDGs. The cross-cutting and interlinked nature of geospatial information to global development agendas and national priorities is the focus of the Committee since its inception.
- Geospatial information is at the heart of informing sustainable local, national, and global decisions; our future is a geospatial future and UN-GGIM is at the heart of driving this agenda forward.
- Whether modelling future climate scenarios, optimising ever-limited resources, or improving connectivity to healthcare or education facilities, an understanding of location underpins everything we do.
- Strengthening nationally integrated geospatial information management offers an unparalleled opportunity for countries to produce, disseminate, and apply geospatial information for national priorities and global development agendas, a key means of ensuring the accelerated achievement of the SDGs.

- Much more needs to be done, especially with regard to support for countries in implementing the Committee's decisions and recommendations to strengthen their national geospatial information management capacities and capabilities, resources and leadership.