



**Economic Commission for Africa
Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial
Information Management for Africa**

Fourth meeting
Addis Ababa
3-5 October 2018

Concept note

I. Background and justification

1. The Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management is a formal intergovernmental mechanism to discuss, enhance and coordinate geospatial information activities at a global level by involving the States Members of the United Nations. The Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Africa was set up to address the issues of developing the capacities of African nations in the generation and dissemination of authoritative, accurate and sustained geospatial information on the continent.

2. The Regional Committee plays a leading role in making joint decisions and providing direction on the use of geospatial information within national, regional and global policy frameworks. It also works with governments to improve policy, institutional arrangements and legal frameworks, addressing global issues and contributing to the collective knowledge as a community with shared interests and concerns. It facilitates and advocates the availability and capability of geospatial information and proposes work plans and guidelines to promote awareness of how geospatial information can contribute common principles, policies, methods, mechanisms and standards for geospatial information interoperability.

3. The Regional Committee also works to develop effective geospatial capacity in African countries and promote the use of that information to meet key global challenges such as sustainable development.

4. During the past five years, the Regional Committee has developed regional frameworks to deal specifically with relevant issues at various levels and support geospatial development. The current list of active topics for the Regional Committee includes the following:

- (a) African regional spatial data infrastructure as a framework with policies and structures to facilitate the availability of and access to spatial data, facilitating data-sharing among data producers and users;
- (b) African Geodetic Reference Frame, which is used to develop a regional geodetic reference frame, aligned with the Global Geodetic Reference Frame, to enable direct and seamless applications of all geospatial information on the continent;
- (c) Second Administrative-level Boundaries, which helps to build authoritative and accurate second administrative-level boundary

databases with validated data sets from Member States that will be used in a number of applications, including census data analysis and disaster management;

- (d) GeoNyms, which is used to create an African gazetteer populated with Member State data and input through the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names;
- (e) Fundamental geospatial data sets to develop a well-structured and comprehensive data foundation that would be consistent, comparable and compatible at the local, national, regional, and global levels;
- (f) Integration of geospatial information and statistics to mainstream geospatial information applicability into the various sectors and subnational constituents of statistics;
- (g) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is used to develop common tools and data for applications of geospatial technologies for monitoring and tracking progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

5. The establishment of the Regional Committee has allowed the decisions and discussions of the Committee of Experts to cascade to a regional level and focus on the issues facing Member States on the continent.

6. The third meeting of the Regional Committee was held as a back-to-back event with the Africa GIS 2017 conference in Addis Ababa from 20 to 24 November 2017. The gathering was attended by more than 50 participants, comprising delegates from 14 African countries, as well as observers from international organizations, including the United Nations, the Africa Union, academia, regional organizations and networks and the private sector. The following critical areas for the implementation of the Regional Committee's activities were reviewed: the modalities for engaging the working groups to effectively deliver; a strategy for resource mobilization; fostering the development of national data infrastructure in Africa; the role and place of geospatial information in the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda; and the adoption of the African action plan on global geospatial information management.

7. The Regional Committee has therefore made substantive progress in terms of gaining some momentum and assuring the global community that Africa is serious about contributing to the implementation of the initiative. In order to pursue strong advocacy towards policymakers in Africa and strengthen efforts to turn geospatial information into a real sustainable development enabler, the Executive Board is organizing the fourth meeting of the Regional Committee as a back-to-back event with the Statistical Commission for Africa conference, to be held in Addis Ababa from 3 to 5 October 2018,

II. Objectives

8. The main aim of the meeting is to review progress achieved on the recommendations and action emerging from the previous meetings of the Regional Committee. There will again be opportunities to share knowledge and best practices on the development of geospatial information on the continent; raise awareness of the benefits to be derived through the utilization of geospatial information for sustainable development; and assess policies, measures and steps that African countries could take to ensure a successful implementation of the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management in the region. The meeting outcomes shall contribute to consolidating the consensus and promote the political will in leveraging the enabling capabilities

of geospatial information technology to meet the African development agenda and support emerging global challenges.

III. Issues to be addressed

9. The issues to be examined at the meeting will include, but are not limited to, the following:
- (a) Promoting the participation of Member States in the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management at the national, regional and global levels;
 - (b) Aligning and prioritizing the region's work programme with that at the global level and in line with the United Nations global agenda;
 - (c) Supporting Africa's participation in the work of the various expert and working groups;
 - (d) Defining the means of implementation of the activities outlined in the Africa action plan;
 - (e) Engaging the working groups to effectively develop activities on the ground;
 - (f) Making effective the governance and functional mechanisms for the management of the Regional Committee with a clear strategy for resource mobilization.

IV. Outcomes

10. The outcomes will contribute to achieving the vision of the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management globally and encouraging that more substantive progress be made for the African region. It is expected that the meeting will also contribute to consolidating the consensus and critically review the structure, functions and operations of the Regional Committee and defining its funding mechanisms.

V. Venue and date

11. The three-day meeting will be held at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa from 3 to 5 October 2018.

VI. Participants

12. Participants at the meeting will include the following:
- (a) Members of the Executive Bureau of the Regional Committee;
 - (b) Convenors of the working groups;
 - (c) National public officials responsible for mapping, cartography, surveying and statistics;
 - (d) High-level experts selected from academia, research institutions, government and the private sector;
 - (e) Representatives of subregional and regional organizations.

VII. Administrative arrangements and logistics

13. Contacted participants are requested to confirm their participation to ECA as soon as possible, but not later than 10 August 2018. ECA will organize the local logistics arrangements, including hotel reservations, airport pickup and transportation to and from hotels. Participants will be responsible for organizing their entry visas and vaccinations prior to their travel.

VIII. Contact Information

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