

Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence

In February 2015 the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution “A Global Geodetic Reference Frame for Sustainable Development” – the first resolution recognizing the importance of a globally-coordinated approach to geodesy.

At the UN-GGIM Ninth session, the UN-GGIM Subcommittee on Geodesy presented the second iteration of the position paper defining appropriate governance arrangements and recommended to establish a Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence to strengthen the capacity of this resolution.

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GLOBAL GEODETIC CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE (GGCE)

A new benchmark for global geodesy

On August 9 2019, Member States of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management commended the Subcommittee on Geodesy on the revised proposal to establish a global geodetic centre of excellence under the auspices of the United Nations.



PHOTO: ANNE JØRGENSEN

UN-GGIM, NEW YORK: Strong support for the proposal of creating a global geodetic centre of excellence under the auspices of the United Nations.

The Subcommittee on Geodesy has reached a new milestone on the road towards a sustainable global geodetic reference frame (GGRF).

A strong mandate for global geodetic excellence

At the Ninth Session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), the GGRF accounted for the most interventions which signaled a strong interest in advancing the Subcommittee’s work program. Of the Member States intervening on GGRF, 67% strongly supported the establishment of a Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence (GGCE). This gives the Subcommittee a strong mandate on the way forward. In addition, three Member States – the Russian Federation, Germany, and India – announced their interest in hosting or supporting the activities of the future GGCE.

“This is a significant contribution to the enhancement and sustainability of the GGRF”, say the UN-GGIM Subcommittee on Geodesy co-chairs Alexey Trifonov (the Russian Federation) and Gary Johnston (Australia).

What the centre will do

The GGCE will be an operational hub with the intention to strengthen the capacity to implement the UN General Assembly resolution ‘A global geodetic reference frame for sustainable development’. The centre will support the objectives of UN-GGIM and the Subcommittee on Geodesy, provide technical assistance and capacity building, and encourage and facilitate open geodetic data sharing. By also providing advocacy and outreach, the centre will enhance the capacity of the Subcommittee to effectively and efficiently manage global cooperation in the area of geodesy.

More information on the GGCE can be found in the [GGRF Position Paper on Governance](#), or scan the QR code to the right:

Article continues on the next page.

The journey towards a global geodetic centre of excellence (GGCE):

2015: UN General Assembly resolution on the GGRF

2016: UN-GGIM Committee of Experts requested a position paper on governance

2018: UN-GGIM Committee of Experts requested a broad consultation of the position paper on governance

Intersessional period:

Position paper consultations with UN-GGIM regions, interalia proposal to establish coordinating unit

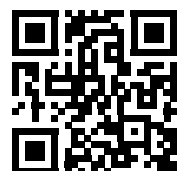
2019: UN-GGIM Subcommittee on Geodesy revised the position paper based on the consultations and published it as part of the UN-GGIM Ninth session meeting documents and presented at side event; Forum on GGRF

2019: UN-GGIM Committee of Experts supported the proposal to establish a GGCE

Coming period:

Work to fill the requests from UN-GGIM Committee of Experts

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Continued from front page:

Broad consultations ahead

The subcommittee is planning to undertake consultation on the practical implementation of the Centre, that is, to decide on modalities, function, financial arrangements, and a programme of work.

In order to ensure coherence and avoid duplication of effort, consultation will be made in direct coordination with the Committee of Experts and relevant geodetic stakeholders, including the International Association of Geodesy (IAG), International Federation of Surveyors (FIG), and the regional geodetic committees of the UN-GGIM.

The plan is to present the initial centre work program to the UN-GGIM Bureau in April 2020, with ongoing progress and status to be reported at the UN-GGIM Tenth session in August 2020.

Encouraging more participation of Member States

The Subcommittee on Geodesy welcomes all Member States to take part in the practical implementation of the GGCE. By informing the co-chairs in writing of what they want to contribute, all UN-GGIM Member States are welcome to do so. NGOs can participate in the meetings and working groups of the subcommittee if they ask to become observers.

GGCE three thematic priorities:

Enhance global cooperation

- Bring stakeholders together to build continuity and commitment

Provide operational coordination

- Coordinate and guide the implementation of the GGRF road map in the Member States

Provide capacity building

- Provide advice, communication, and management support
- Guide Member States to better utilize GGRF infrastructure to improve national to global prosperity

Leaving no one behind

There is an increased awareness by the diplomatic community of the criticality of location-based information as a foundation for decision-making.

This criticality became evident at the Forum on Global Geodetic Reference Frame for Sustainable Development, which was a side event convened by the UN-GGIM Subcommittee on Geodesy alongside the UN-GGIM Ninth session.

Distinguished representatives from the Permanent Missions to the United Nations from France, Mexico, Norway and Tonga sponsored the side event and elaborated on their opening remarks on the crucial role of the GGRF; the importance of geodesy as an area for global cooperation and information sharing to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

“Decision makers need to know the safest place for people to stay and live and where to evacuate to in time of disasters. Linking of local positioning systems to the Global Geodetic Reference Frame provides these much-needed accurate positions. Even though there is a gap between the Small Island Developing States and developed countries in terms of having a modern positioning infrastructures and systems and also in technical capabilities, it can still be narrowed.”

H.E. Mr. Viliami Va’inga Tōnē, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Mission of Tonga to the United Nations

Participation – contacts:

UN-GGIM Subcommittee on Geodesy invites you to contribute to the GGCE work program. Don’t hesitate to contact the Subcommittee’s co-chairs:

Alexey Trifonov (the Russian Federation): trifonovav@economy.gov.ru

Nicholas Brown (Australia), Nicholas.Brown@ga.gov.au

Nicholas Brown has taken over as co-chair from Gary Johnston due to his retirement. The Subcommittee on Geodesy extends their thanks to Gary for his work through the years.

Agreement on ITRS/ITRF

The UN-GGIM Committee of Experts also supported at its Ninth session the Subcommittee’s agreement on the adoption of the International Terrestrial Reference System (ITRS) and the International Terrestrial Reference Frame (ITRF) as the standard for scientific, geospatial, and operational geodetic applications.

The motivation of the agreement is to formalize the adoption of the ITRS and ITRF by the Committee of Experts in the definition of their national reference frames and geo-referencing applications.

