

CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

Approved

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Item 4(c) of the Provisional
Agenda

**FOLLOW-UP TO CES 2016 SEMINAR ON GEOSPATIAL INFORMATION
SERVICES BASED ON OFFICIAL STATISTICS**

Note by Statistics Austria

*This note presents proposals for the follow-up to the CES seminar on geospatial information services based on official statistics, held in April 2016. **The Bureau discussed the issues raised and decided on the follow-up actions to the seminar.***

1. This paper presents proposals on how to follow-up on the issues raised during the seminar on “Geospatial information services based on official statistics” held at the 2016 plenary session of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES). The Conference requested the Secretariat and the CES Bureau to discuss at its next meeting how to implement the proposed follow-up actions.
2. The document prepared by the seminar organizer Statistics Austria presents some first proposals for discussion at the CES Bureau meeting.

I. ACTION BY THE CONFERENCE

3. Recognizing the growing importance of integrating statistical and geospatial information to meet the policy needs and other user requirements, the Conference discussed the following possible actions for the way forward:
 - (a) Develop communication by using success stories and promote the use of geospatial data for population and housing censuses and for SDGs to better serve policy makers and other users;
 - (b) Consider guidance on a sound, global framework and common language to be used by national statistical offices and geospatial agencies;
 - (c) Identify common criteria and develop recommendations for improving collaboration among statistical offices, geospatial agencies and other providers of geospatial data and services;
 - (d) Reinforce the link to statistical modernization activities and integrate geospatial issues into the work being progressed under the High-Level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics;
 - (e) Support professional fora for statistical and geospatial experts to share good practices and learn from one another;

- (f) Consider the potential contribution of UNECE to the international geospatial initiatives globally and regionally in close cooperation with UN-GGIM and its regional representatives.

II. PROPOSALS FOR THE WAY FORWARD

4. The proposals presented below are based on the following considerations:

- (a) Currently the issues of integrating statistical and geospatial information and the related topics are dealt in quite a lot of international fora. Efficient coordination and collaboration, as well as avoiding parallel structures, should be a basic principle.
- (b) Any discussions on future activities of UNECE in this respect have to consider the recent ECOSOC resolution for strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information. This resolution specifically requests “that the regional commissions provide relevant support, upon request and as appropriate, to the work of the regional bodies of the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management, and that the outcomes and benefits of the activities of those bodies be equally disseminated to all Member States in each region”. Clearly, any follow-up proposals should not only be based on the actions taken by the Conference alone.
- (c) The proposals should help to support the national statistical offices to integrate the geospatial information into their actual statistical production processes, so that the growing user requests could be met in that respect.
- (d) It was aimed that the proposals are as concrete as possible to serve as a basis for elaborating a coordinated action plan at international level.
- (e) Highest priority is seen in the implementation of SDGs and the use of geospatial data for the 2020 population and housing census round.
- (f) Implementation of concepts and methodology for the integration of statistical and geospatial information on a comprehensive basis in the countries of the ECE region is, however, equally important, but will probably need a longer-term perspective.

5. The following proposals based on the seminar outcomes might be considered by the CES Bureau. In our view these proposals are also in line with the work of the UN-GGIM: Europe. However, additional actions might emerge from the request of ECOSOC to support the regional bodies of GGIM.

6. The proposals presented below are structured in line with the actions recommended by the Conference. Please note that certain proposals may fall into more than one category:

A. On communication and promotion

- (a) Prepare an inventory of the various international fora (in Europe) that deal with integration of statistical and geospatial statistics and their terms of reference.
- (b) Create a website to provide overall information on the ongoing activities in the various international fora by providing appropriate links where possible. The website could also include the “success stories” of integration of statistical and geospatial information and the increase of the value of official statistics resulting from the integration. (UN-GGIM: Europe has collected such examples.)

B. On guidance on framework and common language; professional fora

- (a) Open the ESS GISCO working group to the non-ESS countries of the UNECE region. The GISCO working group deals with the integration of statistical and geospatial information where both statisticians and experts from NMCA work together. It is a forum for exchange of methodologies, expertise and experience, and thus an excellent forum for support and capacity-building. Since 2015 the GISCO working group include also sessions by UN-GGIM: Europe.
- (b) Adopt the Statistical Geospatial Framework that was developed by the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistics and Geospatial Information adopted by the Committee of Experts on UN-GGIM in August 2016 also for the whole UNECE region and promote its use.
- (c) Provide support to the countries on the implementation of those SDGs that can only be implemented by a geospatial database and thus contribute to capacity-building in integrating statistical and geospatial information, especially to those countries of the UNECE region where it would be most urgently needed.
- (d) Cooperate with Eurostat with respect to the ongoing initiatives related to the use of geospatial data for the 2020 round of population and housing census.

C. On coordination and collaboration

- (a) Coordinate work on the integration of statistical and geospatial information and geospatial information management in the UNECE region, in close cooperation with UN-GGIM: Europe and the other relevant stakeholders. This would include proposals how the relevant international bodies can collaborate.
- (b) Include the activities on the integration of statistical and geospatial information into the joint statistical work programme of the international organizations in the UNECE region.
- (c) Develop recommendations for improving or setting up cooperation between national statistical institutes and the mapping and cadaster agencies, based on experience and good practice in the countries. UN-GGIM: Europe set some initiatives in collecting such information.

D. On link to the statistical modernization activities

7. Ask the High-Level Group on Modernisation of Official Statistics to consider the Statistical Geospatial Framework that was developed by the Expert Group on the Integration of Statistics and Geospatial Information adopted by the Committee of Experts on UN-GGIM in August 2016 and promote their use. Integrate the Statistical Geospatial Framework into the international standards.
