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**3RD SESSION OF THE UN COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON GLOBAL GEOSPATIAL
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT - REPORT**

References:

- A. CL 21/2013 dated 12 March - *IHO Contribution to the Preparation of the Third Session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM)*.
- B. CL 45/2013 dated 8 July - *Third Session of the UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM)*.
- C. CL 17/2013 dated 27 February - *Second Chengdu Forum on UN-GGIM Global Map for Sustainable Development*.

Dear Hydrographer,

1. The third session of the UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) took place in Cambridge, UK from 24 to 26 July. The purpose of the UN-GGIM is to advance international cooperation in geospatial information management by making accurate and authoritative geospatial information readily available, particularly in support of advancing sustainable development. References A and B informed Member States about the IHB contribution to the preparation of the session and on the agenda items of specific interest to the IHO.

2. The UN-GGIM reports to the UN Assembly via the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). ECOSOC has instructed UN-GGIM to work according to a five-year programme and to provide its first report in 2016.

3. The work of GGIM is based on a list of key issues. These are:

- Developing a global strategic framework for geospatial information
- Establishing institutional arrangements, legal and common frameworks
- Building capability and capacity, especially in developing countries
- Assuring the quality of geospatial information
- Promoting data sharing, accessibility and dissemination
- Embracing trends in Information Technology
- Promoting geospatial advocacy and awareness
- Partnering with civil society and the private sector

4. Over 70 UN Member States were represented at the third session of UN-GGIM together with representatives from nearly 20 international organizations, including the IHO. President Robert Ward represented the IHO.

5. A number of the agenda items generated discussions that were of relevance to IHO Member States, particularly those that are planning or are already contributing hydrographic data and services to their national spatial data infrastructure. The following notes summarise the key points of relevance to IHO Member States:

Establishment and implementation of standards for the global geospatial information community

The Committee reviewed a comprehensive report on the state of global geospatial information standards. The report had been compiled by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in collaboration with the IHO and the Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC). The report noted that while the IHO's hydrographic standards have been universally adopted, the international standards for land-based data were much less well adopted.

Integrating land and marine geospatial information

The discussion on integrating land and marine geospatial information was led by a paper presented by the President. The paper was based on separate submissions from the IHO and the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG). The paper highlighted the fact that comprehensive international standards exist for geospatial information covering the land and the sea and that work was continuing to enable the underlying data to be interoperable, through such operations as the transformation of datums, particularly vertical datums. The President laid particular emphasis on the fact that for many parts of the world's seas, oceans and coastal waters, there is little or no underlying geospatial information. This fact appeared to be previously unknown by most of the delegates.

Status of mapping in the world

The International Society of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS) introduced its report on the status of mapping in the world. The ISPRS report only covered land-based mapping. The IHO had not been invited to make a submission on this subject. However, as a result of the other reports and submissions provided by the IHO and the interventions made by the President, the Committee agreed that, in the future, reports on the status of mapping should cover both the world's land mass and the seas, oceans, coastal waters and navigable inland waterways.

Developing a global map for sustainable development

As reported earlier (Reference C), a UN-GGIM Work Group was formed in 2012 to develop the framework and guidelines for a global map for sustainable development (GM4SD). In order to make this map a reality, each State would be required to make certain layers of information available. At present, work is concentrating on the layers required to support terrestrial urban disaster management, but in future the map may call upon data in the maritime domain.

Future trends in national institutional arrangements for geospatial information management

A report, compiled by a small working group established at the second session of UN-GGIM, covering future trends in national institutional arrangements for geospatial information management was reviewed. The report entitled "*Future trends in geospatial information management: the five to ten year vision*" has been reproduced as a booklet by the UK delegation headed by the UK Ordnance Survey. The report covers five broad themes: trends in technology and the future direction of data creation, maintenance and management; legal and policy developments; skills requirements and training mechanisms; the role of the private and non-government sectors; and the future role of governments in geospatial data provision and management.

A copy of the report has been posted on the IHO Maritime Spatial Data Infrastructure WG (MSDIWG) web page for the reference of Member States.

6. The 3rd session of UN-GGIM was attended by the greatest number of UN Member States so far. This helped to raise awareness of the importance of geospatial information, both at a national and a global level. Of particular importance for IHO Member States is the growing acknowledgement and awareness by UN-GGIM of the relevance and the potential contribution of hydrographic information in the context of global geospatial data infrastructures. This places even greater relevance on the continuing work of the IHO MSDIWG and its task in assisting Member States in their role as custodians of national hydrographic data sets and their obvious part in national and global spatial data

infrastructures. It also emphasises the importance of the IHO-IOC GEBCO project as a fundamental part of the global geospatial information infrastructure.

7. All documents related to the session are, or will be, available on the UN-GGIM website.

8. The next related event will be the Chengdu Forum on UN-GGIM, with a focus on urban hazard mapping. Initially planned from 24 to 26 April (Reference C) the Forum was postponed following the earthquake which struck the Sichuan Province on 20 April. The Forum has been rescheduled and will be held from 16 to 18 October 2013. The IHB does not plan to attend, due to other commitments. As indicated in Reference C, Member States are encouraged to consider attending the Forum or alternatively ensure that their respective delegations at the Forum are aware of the experience and developments related to maritime hazards such as storm surges, tsunamis and other causes of sea-level rise.

9. The fourth session of UN-GGIM is planned to take place in New York in August 2014. The Directing Committee will follow up on the outcomes of the third session of UN-GGIM and continue contributing on behalf of the IHO as appropriate. The Directing Committee will also invite further consideration of the impact on and the coordination of the relevant IHO programmes, particularly the IHO-IOC GEBCO Project and the MSDIWG work plan, at the forthcoming meetings of the GEBCO Guiding Committee and of the Hydrographic Services and Standards Committee respectively.

On behalf of the Directing Committee

Yours sincerely,



Robert WARD
President

Copy :

- Chair of the GEBCO Guiding Committee
- Chair of MSDIWG