

UN-GGIM: A Mature Initiative



For the last seven years, there's been even more of a buzz in steaming-hot New York in the midst of summer, writes Durk Haarsma, publishing director of 'GIM International'. Every summer, several hundred policymakers, directors of cadastres and national mapping agencies, ministers and secretaries of state, permanent representatives and other delegates from Member States plus a large contingent of observers from the private sector and non-governmental organisations come together there. As the UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), they shape the future implementation of geospatial information at the very heart of government decision-making right around the globe. Why, one could ask? Well, because good information forms the basis for better decision-making – whether by governments, society or citizens. And, these

days, almost all good information must contain a 'geo' component. Therefore geoinformation needs to be at the core of the decision-making process. UN-GGIM has become an increasingly mature initiative over the past seven years, gaining more and more traction among decision-makers.

Last year the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted a resolution acknowledging the fundamental role that geospatial information plays in global sustainability and development. In the meantime the United Nations has also set the Sustainable Development Goals, including an immediate set of goals to work towards. During this year's UN-GGIM meeting the focus was once again on shaping the work programme, with interaction on topics like the Global Geodetic Reference Frame, the fundamental geospatial themes, legal and policy frameworks and issues related to authoritative data and geospatial information for sustainable development as well as land administration and management. We will provide an extensive report on the work done during the 7th Session of UN-GGIM in an upcoming edition of *GIM International*.

It is certainly worth mentioning that the 7th Session of UN-GGIM welcomed and applauded the establishment of a Working Group on Marine Geospatial Information, as proposed by the USA's NOAA and supported by the International Hydrographic Organization. It was subtly mentioned that two-thirds of the globe is covered by water, and such a large area of the world certainly deserves a group of experts devoted to it. The new Working Group will work on linking geospatial information in the very important coastal areas where land and sea meet and where the majority of the world's citizens are living.

On behalf of *GIM International*, I would like to once again take this opportunity to congratulate Dorine Burmanje, CEO of the Dutch Cadastre, who was elected co-chair of UN-GGIM. Ms Burmanje was instrumental in heading up the session in a cheerful but effective way! Ms Burmanje was nominated by UN-GGIM Europe and took her place amongst her colleagues Tim Trainor of the US Census Bureau for UN-GGIM Americas and Mr Li Pengde of the Chinese National Mapping Agency for UN-GGIM Asia-Pacific. The UN-GGIM Committee of Experts, delegates, co-chairs, secretariat and observers are really taking this initiative forward in a determined, mature way for the betterment of the world, its citizens and – let's not forget – the geospatial business as a whole.